

SUNSHINE GUIDE TO TOWNSVILLE AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

LOCATION: Australia's Great Barrier Reef is located off of its northeast coast. The reef stretches more than 1,200 miles, across twenty degrees of latitude, from Papua New Guinea southeast to the Tropic of Capricorn. As it progresses southeastward, its distance from the mainland of Australia increases. It is less than six miles offshore near Cape York, but more than sixty miles offshore near Cape Townsend. Within the reef area are thousands of small islands, keys, rocks, and shallows. None of them reach more than a few tens of feet above sea level. The headquarters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is in Townsville, as is the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT	13:09	12:45	12:13	11:41	11:14	11:00	11:06	11:28	11:59	12:32	13:01	13:16
HOURS OF SUNSHINE	7:47	7:11	7:14	7:50	7:18	7:55	8:23	9:02	9:29	9:40	9:17	8:49
AREA OF BLUE SKY	45%	42%	48%	56%	57%	63%	66%	69%	68%	65%	60%	54%
LOW FOR MONTH	71 °	71 °	68 °	62 °	54 °	48 °	46 °	49 °	55 °	61 °	67 °	70 °
SUNRISE TEMPERATURE	76 °	75 °	73 °	69 °	64 °	59 °	57 °	59 °	64 °	70 °	73 °	75 °
AFTERNOON TEMPERATURE	88 °	87 °	86 °	85 °	81 °	77 °	76 °	78 °	81 °	84 °	86 °	88 °
HIGH FOR MONTH	94 °	93 °	91 °	89 °	85 °	82 °	82 °	85 °	88 °	91 °	93 °	94 °
FROSTY MORNINGS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
AFTERNOONS OVER 90 °	32%	24%	14%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	5%	17%	33%
AFTERNOON HUMIDITY	67%	68%	66%	61%	58%	55%	54%	55%	56%	59%	61%	64%
NEARBY WATERS	82 °	82 °	82 °	79 °	76 °	74 °	73 °	73 °	75 °	77 °	79 °	82 °
DRY DAYS	54%	43%	57%	74%	80%	85%	90%	92%	93%	85%	79%	71%
REASONABLY DRY DAYS	70%	65%	76%	88%	92%	95%	96%	97%	98%	95%	89%	83%
5-DAY PRECIPITATION	1.77	2.02	1.24	0.51	0.22	0.20	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.18	0.33	0.84
SNOWY DAYS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
THUNDER DAYS	14%	13%	7%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	7%	12%
FOGGY DAYS	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%

COMMENTS: The reef stretches across too much geography to have a single climate, but the Townsville area is central and is representative of most of it. The climate is a marine version of the tropical wet-and-dry two-season year. The rainy season corresponds roughly with the high-sun period, and stretches from December to April. It is the cloudier, hotter, wetter, and more humid of the two seasons. In addition, the rainfall and runoff from the rivers can cloud the waters of the reef. The dry season runs from May through November, and has the best weather. It is sunnier, cooler, drier, and has the best water clarity. Out on the reef itself, temperatures will be much more moderate. The highs will be cooler, and the lows much warmer.