

...more on the Gold Coast

Today the Gold Coast is a vibrant city of 400,000, a surf, sun and rainforest mecca for tourists from all over the world. It conjures up different images for different people, but whether you adore it or detest it, you can't ignore it. From its nightclubs to its beaches, from its towering apartment buildings to soaring rainforest, from its myriad golf courses to its theme parks, the Gold Coast is brash, it's young and it's exciting.

Gold Coast is a city and local government area in the southeast corner of Queensland. It is the second most populous city in the state and the sixth most populous city in the country. Gold Coast City is renowned for its sunny subtropical climate, popular surfing beaches, expansive waterway and canal systems, a skyline dominated by high-rise apartment buildings, active nightlife and wide variety of tourist attractions.

The hinterland's red cedar supply attracted large numbers of people to the area in the mid 1800s. The western suburb of Nerang was surveyed and established as a base for the industry. Later in 1875, Southport was surveyed and established and quickly grew a reputation as a secluded holiday destination for the upper class Brisbane residents. In 1925, tourism to the area grew rapidly when Jim Cavill established the Surfers Paradise Hotel, which transformed to Circle on Cavill neighboring with Towers of Chevron Renaissance shopping mall and resort apartment complex. The population grew steadily to support the tourism industry and by the 1940s, real estate speculators and journalists were referring to the area as the "Gold Coast." The true origin of the name is still debatable. The name "Gold Coast" was officially proclaimed in 1958 when the South Coast Town Council was renamed "Gold Coast Town Council."

During the 1970s, real-estate developers gained a dominant role in local politics, and high-rises began to dominate the area now known as Surfers Paradise and later in 1981 the airport was established. In 1994 the Gold Coast City Council and the Shire of Albert amalgamated to create new city boundaries under the administration of the City of Gold Coast Council.

Gold Coast City stretches from Beenleigh on the southern fringe of Logan City, for approximately 60km (38 miles) south to Coolangatta situated on the New South Wales border, and extends west to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range in World Heritage listed Lamington National Park. Tweed Heads and sections of Beaudesert are also commonly referred to as being a part of 'The Gold Coast' region. However, they do not fall into the statistical boundaries of Gold Coast City.

The major river in the area is the Nerang River. Much of the land between the coastal strip and the hinterland was once wetlands drained by this river, but the swamps have been converted into man-made waterways and artificial islands covered in upmarket homes. The heavily developed coastal strip sits on a narrow barrier sandbar between these waterways and the sea.

To the west, the city is bordered by a part of the Great Dividing Range commonly referred to as the 'Gold Coast hinterland'. A 206 km<sup>2</sup> section of the mountain range is protected by Lamington National Park and has been listed as a World Heritage area in recognition of its "outstanding geological features displayed around shield volcanic craters and the high number of rare and threatened rainforest species.

Tourism is Gold Coast City's main industry, generating total revenue of \$2.5 billion per annum. Gold Coast is the most popular Queensland tourism location. The Gold Coast hosts over 830,000 international tourists a year and approximately 3.6 million domestic overnight visitors. Almost half of the international tourists to the Gold Coast are from Japan and New Zealand but the region is also getting increased visitation from places such as India, the Middle East and China.

Gold Coast City is the major film production centre in Queensland and has accounted for 75% of all film production in Queensland since the 1990s, with an expenditure of around \$150 million per year. Gold Coast is the third largest film production centre in Australia behind Sydney and Melbourne. Warner Brothers have large studios located just outside of the city, at Oxenford which have been the filming locations for films such as the Scooby Doo films and The House of Wax (2005).

The **Lexmark Indy 300** is a car racing event held annually, usually in October. The course ventures through the streets of Surfers Paradise and Main Beach. The **Magic Millions** carnival is the brainchild of entrepreneurs Gerry Harvey (of Harvey Normans) and John Singleton. Each June, Coolangatta hosts the **Wintersun Festival**, a two-week 1950s and 1960s nostalgia festival with free entertainment and attractions, including hot rods, restored cars and revival bands playing music of the era. The **Gold Coast Marathon** each July, more than 16,000 congregate on the Gold Coast from around the world to participate. Major tourist attractions include internationally renowned surf beaches, World Heritage listed hinterland national parks, and theme parks including, Dreamworld, Sea World, Wet'n'Wild, Warner Bros. Movie World, White Water World, Currumbin Sanctuary, Fleays Wildlife Park, Australian Outback Spectacular and Paradise Country.

The city consists of 57 kilometres of coastline.