

THE WIND IS BENEATH YOUR SAILS

Sail the Whitsundays with extended family in tow for a real adventure

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
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Despite the kind invitation to join my boyfriend, his brother's family with two young children under six, and their grandparents for a week sailing the Whitsundays, I did have reservations. Could I survive in a small space with little kids and big personalities with no escape — apart from swimming my way out of there?

I did say yes and our challenge was to maintain harmony, while keeping everyone happy with enjoyable activities. We discovered that with a little careful planning, wholesome old-fashioned fun is the easiest way to keep the sailing smooth.

Bareboat chartering is popular in the Whitsundays. While some sailing experience is preferred, it's not essential. Our boat was chartered through Cumberland Charter Yachts at Airlie Beach, an established operator.



CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: The expanse of Whitehaven Beach; Catseye Beach is safe for the little ones; gentle Butterfly Bay; enjoying the breeze on deck; the *Sunset Lady*



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:
Grandfather navigating; bush
walking to Passage Peak; paddle
boarding at Catseye Beach



The best part about Hamilton Island is hanging out together on the beach

TAKE ME THERE

BEACH CLUB RESORT

9 Resort Drv,
tel: +61 (2) 9433 044

BOMMIE RESTAURANT

Tel: +61 (7) 4948 9422

CUMBERLAND CHARTER YACHTS

Hire the *Sunset Lady*, with 10 berths, from AU\$4,500 for five to seven days. Snorkels and fins are included in the boat hire. You can sail the Whitsundays all year round, stinger suits are required at certain times. Mobile phone coverage is patchy.

Tel: +61 (7) 4946 7500

HAMILTON ISLAND

GOLF COURSE

Dent Island,
tel: +61 (7) 4946 8305

HELIREEF HELICOPTERS

Tel: +61 (7) 4946 9102

PALM BUNGALOWS

14 Resort Drv,
tel: +61 (2) 9433 044

SPA WUMURDAYLIN

Tel: +61 (7) 4946 8669

The Cumberland team took us through everything we need to know and devised an itinerary maximising tides and weather. Once we'd sorted finer details like food, beds, toilets and the "quaint" showers, we set sail in the bright turquoise waters. Lounging on the foredeck, all the stresses of the city, work and school start to melt away.

Daydream Island is our first night's mooring. You can book moorings through Cumberland, or be one of the lucky ones, like us, who score a free public mooring (can be used for up to two hours, or overnight after 5pm). But beware, mooring rage exists in the islands! Heading towards the buoy from 500m away, we see another yacht tack and take the same path. We easily arrive first but the tension of the chase

is enough to get the "crew" up on deck from both vessels to watch proceedings. Booking a mooring ahead of time will save the tension, but the thrill of the chase was admittedly quite fun!

Whitehaven Beach is a Whitsundays must-see; even Oprah visited when she was in the neighbourhood. It's a busy beach, but at over 6km long, it feels private.

Walking the white sand, we see a couple get engaged, then another couple taking off on a helicopter flight to the famous Heart Reef. This romantic place is definitely one for the couples.

Snorkelling is excellent in the Whitsundays; head to Manta Ray Bay for some of the region's best. Sighting reef sharks, stingrays, a turtle, schools of brightly coloured fish and beautiful coral is the highlight of my trip. Even though children can easily snorkel, a guiding hand through sharp coral will avoid scrapes.

We spend our final night in Cid Harbour, a sheltered bay with sandy beaches. Our pick is Sawmill Beach — safe swimming for kids and there's a great hike to Dugong Inlet.



Everyone bonded on the trip

Sunsets light up the sky like fire in this part of the world and the view from Cid Harbour is one of the best. The kids organise a concert for our final night, followed by an epic game of cards with the grandparents teaching us how to play “500”. We’ve all bonded over the shared experience.

After five days’ sailing we dock at Hamilton Island Marina, happy to be back on terra firma. My boyfriend and I book into the Beach Club Resort, an over-18s four-star boutique hotel, looking for some alone time. We relax in the heated infinity pool with cocktails and laze about our comfortable garden suite. The rest of our crew stay at the three-star Palm Bungalows, perfect for family groups with studio kitchens and a front deck overlooking the palms.

There is so much to do on Hamilton Island. Booking everything ahead is key. Kids will love the go-karting, mini-bowling, zoo, the many child-friendly cafés and the Clownfish Club.

Adults should head to Spa Wumurdaylin for a restful

massage, take in a round of golf and lunch at the breathtaking golf course on Dent Island, or just relax with a cocktail in one of the many bars and restaurants. Our pick is Bommie Restaurant for its six-course degustation menu, and the informative and fun “Talk and Taste” sessions at qualia resort at sunset.

The best part about Hamilton Island is hanging out together on the beach. At Catseye Beach, the home of watersports on Hamilton, we try stand-up paddling, mini catamarans, kayaks, snorkelling and windsurfing.

Hamilton Island’s CEO, Glenn Bourke explains: “At Hamilton Island, we want guests of all ages to have a fantastic holiday. What I love most is that within 15 minutes of touching down, you can be relaxing on the beach.” I couldn’t agree more. ★

FROM ONLY AU\$99

Jetstar flies direct to Whitsunday Coast from Brisbane, and to Hamilton Island from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Book online at Jetstar.com ★

風に乗って セイリング

ウィットサンデーからの航海は本物のアドベンチャー

ウィットサンデーからのポートチャーターが人気だという。このチャーターは、自分が船長となって航海をするタイプ。ヨットの経験はなくても挑戦できる。今回は、エアーリー・ビーチのカンパランド・チャーター・ヨットで船を借りた。

準備が整うと鮮やかなターコイズ色の海原に乗り出す。デイドリーム・アイランドが一日目の停泊地だ。宿泊施設は島の様々な場所にある。ブイから500mのところ、私たちと同じ停泊地を目指しているヨットを発見。双方共に乗船者が総出で成り行きを見守るほどに緊張した時間ではあった。こうした競争のスリルを楽しむのもいい。

ウィットサンデーで見逃せないのが、ホワイトヘブン・ビーチ。あの、オブラも訪れたという場所だ。

白い砂浜を歩いていると、新婚カップルがいた。ヘリツアーを楽しむのもいい。

ウィットサンデーのもう一つの取っておきは、シュノーケル。特に、マンタ・レイ・ベイがおすすめのポイントだ。リーフシャークやアカエイ、ウミガメ、色鮮やかな魚の群れ、美しいサンゴ礁など、美しい自然が迎えてくれる。

最後の夜を、シド・ハーバーで過ごす。ソーミル・ビーチは、子供でも安全に泳ぐことができる上に、ジュゴン・インレットまでのハイキングも楽しめる。ルートは45分ほど。

夕日で空が燃えるように染まるのは、この地域独特の光景。5日間の航海のあと、ハミルトン・アイランド・マリナーに帰港。大地を踏みしめる感覚は、久しぶりだ。アクティビティやスパ、ディナー、ウォータースポーツの予定を立てる。ワニやコアラ、ウォンバットがいる動物園は、子供たちの一番のお気に入り。ゴーカートやミニ・ボートもある。

大人たちは、スパ・ウマー・テイリンでのマッサージへ。デント・アイランドの絶景のゴルフコースでゴルフとランチを楽しむのもいい。キャッツアイ・ビーチはハミルトンのウォータースポーツの中心地。スタンドアップ・パドルリング、ミニ・カタマラン、カヤック、シュノーケル、ウィンドサーフィンなど、好みのアクティビティにチャレンジしてみよう。でも一番のおすすめては、ビーチでのんびりと過ごすこと!