

## TRAVEL GUIDE: LORD HOWE ISLAND

A little over 600km from the coast of New South Wales, rising through the clear waters of the southwest Pacific Ocean, lies the remains of an extinct volcano – Lord Howe Island, one of Australia's best kept secrets. Unspoilt, charming and utterly gorgeous, from the moment the QantasLink service flies over the glistening crystal clear waters that hug the coastline of Lord Howe Island, visitors know they're about to discover a paradise like none other.

Stepping off the light aircraft onto the tarmac, I found myself very lucky to spend time discovering this sacred Australian island, which has long been on my bucket list. My first impression was a mixture of awe, wonder and curiosity. With its secluded beaches, hiking trails, mossy rainforests, coral reef lagoon, endemic nesting seabirds, oceanic basalts and misty sea cliffs – I felt like was immediately stepping into another world entirely.



### HISTORY

Lord Howe Island is a remnant of an extinct volcano, dating back seven million years. Now eroded to one-fortieth of its original size, Lord Howe is about 10km long and 2km wide at its broadest section. Whilst most of the tiny population lives in the north, the south of the island is dominated by Mount Gower (rising 875m above sea level) and Mount Lige field (rising 777m above sea level).



- TAKE A BREAK -

Lord Howe Island forms part of a group of 28 islands, islets and rocks. Apart from Lord Howe, the most notable is the volcanic and uninhabited Ball's Pyramid, as well as the uninhabited cluster of islands, the Admiralty group. The first reported sighting of Lord Howe Island was on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1788 when Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, commander of the HMS Supply was on its way from Botany Bay to found a penal settlement on Norfolk Island. Lord Howe was permanently settled in June 1834 and began worldwide export of the endemic kentia palms in the 1880s.

Fast forward to today, Lord Howe is a World Heritage Site of global natural significance with most of the island left virtually untouched, and many of the local plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. It truly is, a spectacular island.

## STAY

Perhaps one of the most charming aspects of Lord Howe Island is that only 400 tourists are able to stay on the island on any given day. With only 350 residents, expect no loud bars, trendy cafes, noisy traffic and stalls selling tacky souvenirs on Lord Howe – only secluded beaches, quiet hiking trails and fine dining. Because accommodation is limited, it's important you book your flights and accommodation at the same time. There is a range of lodges, guesthouses and self contained apartments on the island to suit all budgets, and below are a few suggestions:

### CAPELLA LODGE

\$\$\$ [www.lordhowe.com](http://www.lordhowe.com)

The pinnacle of luxury, Capella Lodge is Lord Howe's premium boutique accommodation. Nestled under Mount Lidgfield and Mount Gower offering stunning ocean and mountain views, rates are per person and include breakfast, sunset drinks and canapés, a three course dinner with matching wines, as well as complimentary bicycles to get around the island.

### PINETREES LODGE

\$\$ [www.pinetrees.com.au](http://www.pinetrees.com.au)

With its pristine waterfront location, Pinetrees Lodge is the perfect place to relax and enjoy fine dining. Offering a great range of accommodation from luxury one bedroom cottages to four bedroom family cottages, Pinetrees provides exceptional service with all meals included in the cost of accommodation. Additionally, its private boatshed deck on the beachfront is the perfect place to enjoy a cold beer or champagne whilst watching the sunset.

### EBBTIDE APARTMENTS

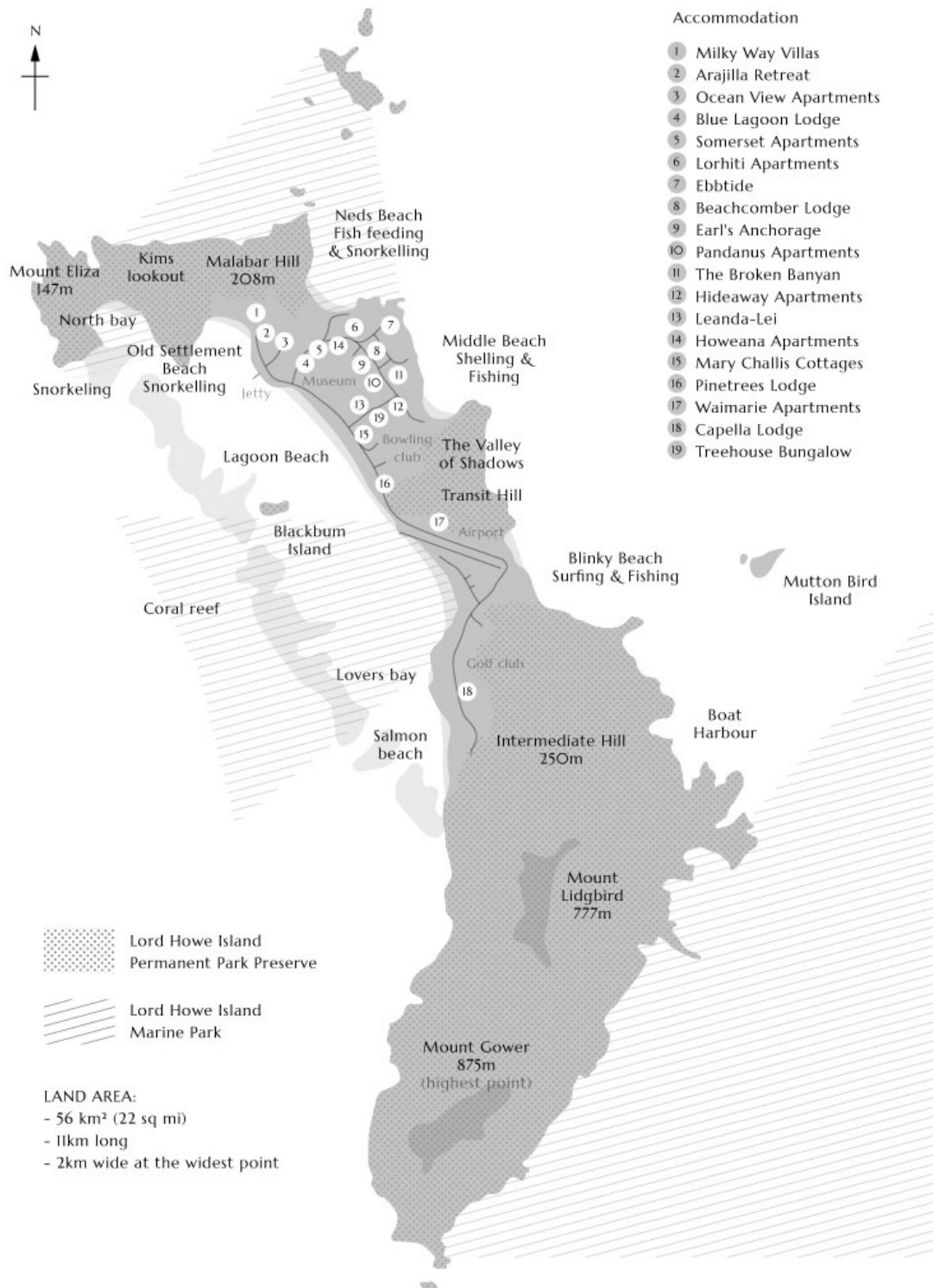
\$ [www.ebbtide-lhi.com.au](http://www.ebbtide-lhi.com.au)

Ebbtide Apartments offer delightful self-catering units and cottages surrounded by a gardens abound with frangipani trees, colourful hibiscus, palms, pawpaw's and bananas. Guests can enjoy a short private walk through a Banyan forest to Ned's Beach where they can snorkel or hand feed the local vibrantly coloured fish. With a fresh food store

# Mister Weekender

- TAKE A BREAK -

and four restaurants conveniently close to Ebbtide and the village area only ten minutes walk, it's the perfect place for couples, families and retired folk to enjoy.





- TAKE A BREAK -

## **SEE & DO**

There are an abundance of things to see and do on Lord Howe Island for adventurers and nature lovers alike.

### **DAY HIKE TO THE TOP OF MOUNT GOWER**

Although only 11km long and 2km wide, Lord Howe has many delightful, well-marked walking trails. In fact nearly two thirds of the island is a Permanent Park Reserve. If you have a full day to spare, organise a guided eight hour hike to the top of Mount Gower. The 875m climb is challenging, so make sure you wear proper hiking gear and footwear. Rated as one of the best day treks in the world, you can't leave Lord Howe Island without doing this epic hike.

### **ENJOY THE CORAL REEF LAGOON ON A GLASS BOTTOM BOAT TOUR**

Organise a glass bottom boat tour where you'll explore many different parts of the island. This is perfect for those who want a relaxing adventure but also wanting to indulge in a bit of snorkelling - this however is not mandatory. Some of the tours also stop at North Bay beach to serve you lunch or a snack. From here you can hike 300m to Old Gulch, which is a rocky inlet beach covered in large stones. The heat radiating off the rocks at the beach (there is no sand) is intense, so make sure you wear shoes!

### **HAND FED THE LOCAL FISH AT NED'S BEACH**

I love the many honesty systems at Lord Howe Island, and fish feeding at Ned's Beach is no exception. For a \$1 donation, you can grab a small packet of fish feed by which you can feed the bright, colourful and amorous fish swimming in the lapping crystal clear shores at Ned's Beach. They are hungry fella's and not shy at all!

### **WATCH THE SUNRISE FROM GOAT HOUSE CAVE**

Sunrise anywhere on Lord Howe Island, but the most beautiful spot is from Goat House Cave – but you have to earn it. Get up early, grab a head torch, and pack a backpack with plenty of water, sunscreen and a camera. I would say to take your mobile but there is literally no reception on the island! Start your hike at 4.30am, which should leave plenty of time to make it to the cave for sunrise. It is a tough hike, very steep and rocky so you must be fit but there are ropes where it gets particularly steep. It shouldn't take more than an hour if you're fit, but leave one to two hours if you want to take your time. The views Goat House Cave were magical, unforgettable and totally rewarding.

### **HIKE TO MALABAR**

I absolutely love to solo hike. It's the perfect time to appreciate nature without the sounds of conversation distracting you from the beauty that lies ahead. It's also great for a little sole searching. The choice of solo hikes on Lord Howe Island ranges from easy strolls to intense hikes. Moderate cliff top hikes, such as Malabar Hill, where you'll see seabirds soaring around the stunning Admiralty Islands are great for those with some medium fitness levels. Start this hike from North Bay, walk up the steep hill past Kim's look out and finally to the top of Malabar. Continue along the track along the cliff and then eventually you'll pop out at the top of Ned's Beach for a well-deserved swim. This

# Mister Weekender

- TAKE A BREAK -

hike can take up to five hours, depending how fit you are and how quickly you want to hike. It took me about two and a half hours, but I easily spent an hour stopping, admiring and taking photos.

## **WATCH THE SUNSET FROM CAPELLA LODGE AND PINETREES LODGE**

Bubbly? Check. Tapas? Check. Sunrise? Check. My two favourite places to watch sunset was at Pinetrees and Capella. You'll have to see it for yourself to believe it...

## **EAT**

After exploring, relaxing and adventuring, eating will next be on your agenda! Lord Howe offers the best dining experiences. From seaside barbeques serving local grub, to contemporary cuisine offering sophisticated menus, there is something for every discerning foodie. A little quirk to Lord Howe is that you'll find all the restaurants on the island will drive you home after dinner in the evening – so yes, do open that second bottle of bubbles and treat yourself! And more often than not, you'll find the local, freshly caught Kingfish a fixture on almost every menu.

### **CAPELLA LODGE**

\$\$\$ [www.lordhowe.com](http://www.lordhowe.com)

Regardless if you're a guest of Capella or not, you can still enjoy a meal at the Lodge. I highly recommend the Kingfish Ceviche for lunch - it's divine!

+61 (2) 9918 4355

### **PINETREES LODGE**

\$\$\$ [www.pinetrees.com.au](http://www.pinetrees.com.au)

Open for lunch and dinner, bookings are essential. Order the 'fish fry' dinner, which has been served for over 70 years, it includes five sumptuous courses of soup, sushi, sashimi, kingfish and chips.

+61 (2) 6563 2177

### **PANDANUS**

\$\$ [www.pandanuslordhowe.com/pandanus-restaurant](http://www.pandanuslordhowe.com/pandanus-restaurant)

Perfect for couples, friends and families, Pandanus is located within walking distance of Ebbitide Apartments and serves up a great selection of pizza, pasta, fresh local fish and steak. And all meals are cooked with fresh ingredients and local produce.

+61 (2) 6563 2400

### **BEACH BBQ'S**

\$

For those looking for a more relaxed approach, Lord Howe Island has 11 stunning beaches perfectly suited to barbequing outdoors. No matter where you stay on the island, fresh fish can be delivered to your door as can pre organised picnic hampers, unless you want to organise your own ingredients, which is made possible due to the local convenience stores offering everything you need. There are numerous communal beachside BBQ's set in some of the most scenic spots on the island, including cut



- TAKE A BREAK -

firewood neatly stacked at each BBQ. Now doesn't that sound like heaven for friends, families and lovers!

### **HOW TO GET THERE**

Lord Howe Island forms part of New South Wales in Australia. Unless you want to arrive by yacht, which many do in summer, the only way to reach the island is by air with direct services operated by QantasLink. The flight takes just under two hours from Sydney and Brisbane, and there are connecting services with Qantas from all Australian capital cities and QantasLink from many regional centres.

### **HOW TO GET AROUND**

There are a limited number of cars on the island with most owned by locals. There is no car hire on the island so the best way to get around is by bicycle, which is either provided complimentary by some lodges or to hire for a small daily fee. Most if not all accommodation on the island offers lifts around the island at any time of the day or night, and there's always walking!

### **WHEN TO GO**

All year round! Due to its location, the summers aren't too hot and the winters aren't too cold. The most popular time to visit is between September and June, however the winter months between July and August also see lots of visitors.