

7 DAY/7 NIGHT - COD HOLE, RIBBON REEFS & CORAL SEA ADVENTURE

Sleek and spacious, the 'Spirit of Freedom' offers the best in live-aboard dive cruising to the Coral Sea and Ribbon Reefs. This tour begins every Monday from Cairns, and travels 240km along the rarely visited Ribbon Reefs, to the Cod Hole. Along the 'Ribbons' you will encounter clouds of colourful tropical fish, an incredible variety of vibrant healthy corals, giant clams, anemones, huge schools of cruising pelagic fish, and a family of giant potato cod. Within your 7 days, you will also spend 2 days at Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea. An old volcanic atoll lying 220km off the coast, Osprey Reef is renowned for its spectacular walls to 1000m, its massive soft corals, shark action, and exceptional visibility. 'North Horn' at the tip of Osprey is a site where grey reef sharks, silvertips, and the occasional oceanic congregate. Here you can also experience a close encounter with the Spirit of Freedom shark attraction dive. This tour also includes an overnight stay in secluded Watson's Bay and a couple of hours ashore at Lizard Island. Return to Cairns 7 days later on the Monday morning.



Watson Bay - Lizard Island

Recommended Dive Experience Level: PADI Advanced or equivalent and above.

Adventure Level: Mid range to High level, depending on the winds, swells, and currents.

YOUR 7 DAY TRIP

Departs Cairns	12:00 noon Monday
Returns Cairns	07:30am Monday

YOUR 7 DAY TRIP INCLUDES

- Transfers to/from your Cairns city hotel
- Opportunity for up to 26 dives
- En-suite cabin with daily service
- Chef prepared gourmet meals - Australian style
- Australian wines and soft drinks with evening meals



Image by Alvin Reosenfeld

YOUR ITINERARY

Monday: The Spirit of Freedom courtesy bus will pick you up from your Cairns hotel around 11:00am to transfer you to Trinity Wharf, where you will board the vessel. You will be greeted by the Spirit of Freedom crew, who will give you an orientation of the vessel before a 12 noon departure. Enjoy lunch on board while we cruise to the outer Great Barrier Reef for an afternoon check-out dive and a twilight or night dive. After dinner we cruise north to the Ribbon Reefs.

Tuesday & Wednesday: These two days are spent diving at the most northern of the Ribbon Reefs, Number 9 & 10 Ribbon Reefs. Dive sites and sequence may vary depending on the weather conditions, but will always include at least one dive at the Cod Hole, where you encounter a family of massive and very friendly Potato Cod. Other sites may include Wonder-wall, Pixie Pinnacle, Challenger Bay, Two Towers, Lighthouse Bommie, and the Snake Pit, just to name a few. If the current is right, you may also take a drift dive at Dynamite Pass, well known as a channel for sharks to pass through. See the dive site page for site selection of some of our dive sites on the Ribbon Reefs. 4 to 5 dives will be available each day, including a night dive on the Tuesday. On Wednesday evening we overnight at Watson's Bay, Lizard Island, and enjoy a sunset BBQ dinner on the top deck.

Thursday: This morning after breakfast you will have the opportunity to go ashore at Lizard Island. A good chance to stretch your legs on land at this half way point, you can take the guided walk from Watson's Beach to Mary Watson's cottage over Chinaman's Ridge and back to the beach. Around 11.00am we will cruise back to Ribbon Reef Number 10 for two dives at a choice of sites including the Snake Pit, Cod Hole, Challenger Bay, Lighthouse Bommie, Pixie Wall, and Pixie Pinnacle. If the tide permits we may repeat a dive at the Cod Hole or visit new sites. We depart in the evening for a 10 hour crossing to Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea.

Friday & Saturday: Two days will be spent diving Osprey Reef (weather permitting). Australia's Coral Sea reefs are renowned for crystal clear water with visibility ranging 30 to 100 metres. The landscape is amazing with sheer walls laced with gorgonians, sea whips, and bright yellow soft corals, rising from the ocean floor thousands of feet below. 'North Horn' is a dive site at the tip of Osprey where grey reef sharks, silvertips, and the occasional oceanic congregate, and you can experience a close encounter with the Spirit of Freedom shark attraction dive. 4 to 5 dives will be available each day, including a night dive on the Friday. See the dive site page for site selection of some of our dive sites at Osprey Reef. On Saturday night we will depart Osprey Reef for overnight travel to the Ribbon Reefs.

Sunday: At Ribbon Reefs Number 3 we will dive such sites as the sensational Steve's Bommie, Temple of Doom, and Flare Point. A second option for this day, in special weather conditions, is to head south from Osprey to Bougainville Reef, known for its unusual underwater landscape or caverns, and its partially submerged wreck. On Sunday evening we will cruise overnight back to Cairns.

Monday: We arrive back into Cairns at 06:30am. Enjoy a light breakfast on board and a group photo opportunity before being dropped back to your Cairns hotel around 08.00am.

NOTES

1. **SNORKELERS.** The reefs of the Ribbon Reefs are relatively close to the surface, and with little current, offer excellent snorkelling at most sites. However, the (at times) deeper reefs tops and currents of the Coral Sea, make the Coral Sea reefs only suitable for experienced snorkelers and strong swimmers and you may not be able to snorkel at every site. Please note that while you be safe under the watchful eye of the 'look-out' crew, a snorkel buddy may not always be available.
2. This itinerary is a sample only and sites may vary or the sequence may change. Access to the Cod Hole and the Coral Sea is tide and weather conditional.



Image by Lisa Conyers



Image by Stuart Ireland