



broome

Surrounded by natural beauty and fascinating history, it's easy to relax into the pace of this town at the gateway to WA's Kimberley region.

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You know you're in a laidback kind of town when your most pressing appointment is to head down to the beach in time to catch the sunset over the water.

There's even a name for it – Broome Time.

Broome is the southern gateway to the Kimberley, and with Roebuck Bay on one side of the peninsula and the iconic Cable Beach stretching for 22km on the other, the area's natural beauty is the major drawcard. But for such an isolated spot it has plenty

more to offer, including indigenous culture and a romantic past as a pearling outpost with Japanese and Chinese connections. The town centre is still called Chinatown, and you can see Asian influences in both old and new Broome architecture.

In the 1980s, UK Lord Alistair McAlpine bought up huge chunks of the area and began the town's tourism-led revival. Broome now bustles (relatively speaking) in peak season from Easter to October, but is a beautiful place to visit any time of year.

the guide.



Clockwise from left: if you can't finish your woodfired pizza at Café Carlotta, take it on a picnic lunch the next day; explore Cable Beach's 22km of white sands; try a local delicacy in this pearl meat ceviche at The Club Restaurant; The Old Zoo Café's mango granola is a great tropical breakfast.



WHERE TO EAT

Aarli Bar, Shop 2/6 Hamersley St, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 5529.

Formerly in the kitchen at Melbourne's Stokehouse, chef/owner Nick Wendland opened this little outdoor restaurant in early 2004, bringing mate Dan McKay with him to manage front-of-house. They may have opted for a change of scene, but not a change of pace – Aarli's open from breakfast until late, six days. It's on a rather bare street corner by day, but the breakfasts make it worth the visit – try chargrilled figs on toast with spiced ricotta, or a bacon, scrambled egg and caramelised onion wrap. By night, the restaurant is transformed by tealights and the scent wafting from a huge overhanging frangipani. 'Aarli' means fish in the local indigenous language, and whole fish and seafood, fresh off the boat, is the specialty – think spicy Thai red emperor, tripletail perch with coriander and peanut pesto, or chilli mud crab. Tapas is also great: sample grilled eggplant with mint, tahini and yoghurt, and oysters with chilli sesame butter, and mop it all up with some woodfired garlic bread.

Café Carlotta, Jones Pl, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 7606.

You'll hear the sounds of Dean Martin crooning *That's Amore* before you see this

place, tucked away in a tropical garden in a quiet corner of Old Broome. There are a few noisier tables inside near the woodfired oven, but book ahead for the courtyard. Owners Mic Whatley and Charlotte Brown (after whom Carlotta is named) spend time in Chianti, Italy, every year and bring their foodie finds back home to the restaurant, where they work with head chef Norelle Oberin and the team. The crisp, thin pizzas – topped with combos like roast pumpkin, blue cheese and walnut – are excellent, as is the house-made pasta with four mushrooms, and a special of Margaret River venison osso bucco with saffron risotto. Desserts include panna cotta served affogato-style with a shot of espresso poured over, or a caramelised lemon tart (not caramelised on the night we visited thanks to an exploding blowtorch!). Dinner only, Easter to Christmas.

Noodlefish Roku, Shop 5/26 Dampier Tce, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 1697.

Stephan 'Mitch' Mitchell has opened six incarnations of Noodlefish (hence the 'Roku' – six in Japanese) in various spots around town since 1994. It's easy to see why the town keeps welcoming him – and his fantastic mod Chinese, Japanese and South-East Asian fare – back with open arms. The

blackboard menu at his latest digs, open since March, features local fresh produce and seafood wherever possible. Look for *namasu* (Japanese marinated fish salad); a twice-cooked Szechuan duck with citrus and beetroot sauce that buzzes with flavour; and grilled threadfin salmon with spicy green pawpaw salad. Dessert heads back into Western territory with the likes of golden syrup pudding, Belgian chocolate cake or a lime tart. Dinner only, Mon-Sat.

The Club Restaurant, Cable Beach Club Resort, Cable Beach Road, Cable Beach, tel: (08) 9192 0400.

Sit on the deck overlooking the pool for a cocktail, then head inside to the beautiful, Old Broome-style interior hung with art by the likes of Sidney Nolan. The Mod Oz menu was designed by Chris Taylor of well-known Perth restaurant Fraser's, with The Club's Andrew Wise. Start with crisp-fried soft-shell crab in a Malaysian curry sauce, or pearl meat ceviche with pickled ginger, wakame and sesame seed dressing, then move on to mains including tea-smoked salmon with confit potatoes, and chargrilled beef with mushroom gratin. This is one of the few licensed restaurants in town, so order something like a Shaw and Smith sav blanc that you won't find at the local bottle-o.



Clockwise from above: Chef/owner Nick Wendland at Aarli Bar; sand crabs get to work on the sands of Cable Beach; grab a coffee at The Old Zoo Café; find best range of fruit, vegies and organic produce at the Courthouse Markets on Saturday morning; sit down for lunch at Matso's or sample the brews with a tasting paddle.



The Old Zoo Café, 2 Challenor Drv, Cable Beach, tel: (08) 9193 6200.

Originally built by Lord McAlpine as a zoo to attract tourism to the area, this pleasant spot just back from Cable Beach now draws in the punters with an all-day menu. Sit outside on the sheltered deck and enjoy the excellent house-made mango granola for breakfast. At dinner, sample a menagerie of a different kind with a Kimberley Taste plate of crocodile, kangaroo, barramundi, camel and pearl meat. The coffee's up to scratch and there's a cocktail menu and wine list, too.

Town Beach Cafe (Town Beach, Robinson St, Broome, tel: (08) 9193 5585), is another top breakkie spot, with outdoor tables overlooking the water. Go for pancakes, or scrambled eggs on rosti with smoked salmon. It's a good lunch option for fish and chips or burgers, too.

Head about 20 kilometres up the Broome Highway and you'll find Todd and Dahn Barker's newly opened **Thai Tea House** (Yamashita Rd, 12 Mile, tel: (08) 9193 7364) on their mango farm. In an open-air rotunda with jarrah tables, Dahn cooks authentic Thai dishes, including a curry with three types of Thai eggplant grown, like almost everything else, on the property. Open Friday to Sunday, bookings essential.

WHERE TO DRINK

Matso's Broome Brewery, 60 Hamersley St, Broome, tel: (08) 9193 5811.

Broome's only micro-brewery – in fact, probably the only brewery for several hundred kilometres – serves its own beers on tap, including Smoky Bishop dark lager, River Rocks lager, Monsoonal Blonde, and an alcoholic ginger beer. There's also an all-day menu, bar snacks and a wine list.

The Tides Bar at The Mangrove Resort Hotel, 47 Carnarvon St, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 1303.

With its prime waterfront spot, the bar at the Mangrove Resort is a favourite daytime watering-hole with the locals. Grab a drink and watch the sea eagles and ospreys circle over Roebuck Bay as you sit at one of the plastic tables dotted around the expanse of lawn, or tackle the giant chess board. Pub grub includes burgers and chilli salt squid.

As the day draws to a close, tourists jockey for position at the **Sunset Bar and Cafe** (at the Cable Beach Club Resort, see Where to Stay) to watch the sun go down over the water with a cocktail in hand. Be sure to get there well in advance for a prime spot. If there's no room, stroll 100 metres up the beach to the little Surf Lifesaving Club kiosk instead, and lean on the railing with a beer to take in the spectacle.

WHERE TO SHOP

Courthouse Markets, cnr Hamersley and Frederick sts, Broome, Saturdays.

These markets have plenty of stalls selling arts, crafts and souvenirs, but head down early and you'll also find the best fresh produce in town, much of it from local growers at nearby 12 Mile. Try **Gray's Organic Produce** for fruit and vegies, plus incredible fat dates. Tanvier and Jason Fowler of **Fusion Herbs**, also heading towards organic certification, grow wonderful salad leaf mixes and Asian herbs and spices, and sell a range of teas including orange and native rosella (the flower, not the bird). **Seven Seas** sell dried mangoes and an interesting range of honeys, including a rich, caramelly mangrove honey collected from Beagle Bay, 120km to the north. You'll also find chef Liz Leigh of **Limpopo Gourmet** (tel: 0418 924 852), who has a market stall selling spice blends, as well as weekly specials such as dressings, chilli jam and onion relish. If you're in need of some mid-shopping refreshment, stop at the Fruit Things stall and create your own combo of tropical fruit ices.

Roebuck Seafood, 953 Port Drv, Broome, tel: (08) 9193 5109.

Considering it's surrounded by water, there are few options in Broome to buy fresh

the guide.



WHERE TO EAT

1. The Club Restaurant
2. The Old Zoo Café
9. Aarli Bar
16. Café Carlotta
15. Town Beach Cafe

WHERE TO DRINK

1. Sunset Bar and Cafe
11. The Tides Bar at The Mangrove Resort Hotel
13. Matso's Broome Brewery

WHERE TO SHOP

5. Paspaley Pearls
6. Kailis Australian Pearls

WHERE TO STAY

6. Linneys
8. Yuen Wing Store
10. Courthouse Markets
18. Roebuck Seafood

WHERE TO STAY

1. Cable Beach Club Resort
3. Bali Hai Resort
4. Coco Eco
12. The Temple Tree Bed & Breakfast
14. McAlpine House

THINGS TO DO

4. Willie Creek Pearl Farm
7. Sun Pictures
6. Pearl Luggers
17. Japanese and Chinese cemetery

WHERE TO STAY

Cable Beach Club Resort, Cable Beach Rd, Cable Beach, tel: (08) 9192 0400, www.cablebeachclub.com

Established by Lord McAlpine in the late 1980s, this is still Broome's biggest and most luxurious resort, and the only one right on Cable Beach. Despite its size, there's no feeling of being crowded. In fact, the only stressful part of a stay here is losing your way on a winding path through the tropical gardens and finding yourself at the wrong pool. Rooms are fitted out in a modern interpretation of Asian-meets-Colonial-Broome style, with corrugated iron walls, polished floors, TV with in-house movies and air-conditioning. Choose from studio rooms, self-contained bungalows and villas, or the deluxe suites for a stay surrounded by artworks and antiques collected by Lord McAlpine on his travels. The resort's facilities include tennis courts, gym, a day spa, four dining options and a kids club. Best of all is the Beach Hut on the sand that provides towels, sunscreen, umbrellas and deckchairs. From \$337 per double for a garden studio in peak season.

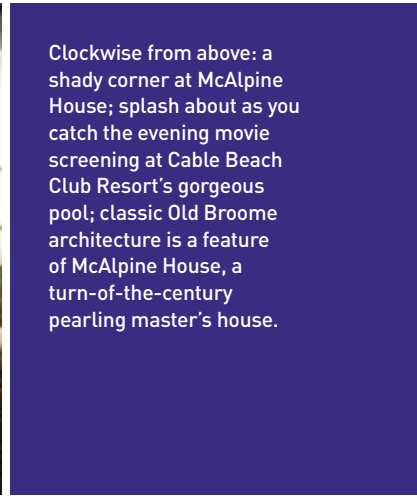
seafood. Shop here for barramundi, jewfish and lesser-known species including the white-fleshed threadfin salmon, and tripletail perch.

You'll hear talk around town about pearl meat, the flesh of the *Pinctada maxima* oyster that's almost as prized as the South Sea pearls it produces. The sad truth is that most fresh pearl meat is sent away from Broome and only returns in frozen form. You can sample it in restaurants and in tastings and tours at **Pearl Luggers** (see Things To Do). If you'd like to experiment yourself, they'll also sell it to you frozen at around \$100 per kilo.

The Asian influence is still visible in town, though the Chinese restaurants are mostly classic country-town takeaways. Scramble

past the camping gear at **Yuen Wing Store** (19 Carnarvon St, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 1267), for a great selection of Asian groceries and cookware. The Coles in Paspaley Plaza also has a good Asian food aisle, as well as an intriguing section labelled Indigenous Foods.

Every visitor to Broome toys with the idea of splashing out on South Sea pearls, and Dampier Terrace in Chinatown is the place to do it. There are plenty of touristy shops selling more affordable mementos, but if you're serious (or just seriously looking), head to **Linneys** (No. 25, tel: (08) 9192 2430), **Kailis Australian Pearls** (No. 23, tel: (08) 9192 2061) or, around the corner, **Paspaley Pearls** (2 Short St, tel: (08) 9192 2203).



Clockwise from above: a shady corner at McAlpine House; splash about as you catch the evening movie screening at Cable Beach Club Resort's gorgeous pool; classic Old Broome architecture is a feature of McAlpine House, a turn-of-the-century pearling master's house.

With pristine sands stretching for 22 kilometres, you could spend plenty of time exploring Cable Beach.

McAlpine House, 84 Herbert St, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 3886, www.mcalpinehouse.com.

This beautiful 1910 pearling master's house was bought as a home by Lord McAlpine (yes, another connection) in 1982, and some of his rare parrot collection remain in residence. The property has now come full circle – it's owned by Marilynne Paspaley of the pearl dynasty. From the shady verandahs and breezy outdoor areas to the Javanese furniture, every room and alcove here is thoughtfully decorated. The six air-conditioned suites are arranged around the central courtyard and pool. There's a kitchen, barbecue area and dining room for guest use, all set among tropical gardens. From \$350 per double per night in peak season, including breakfast.

Coco Eco, Lot 9 Williams Rd, Coconut Well, tel: (08) 9192 3103, www.cocoeco.com.au.

If you're here to experience the natural beauty of the area, a stay at this B&B – about 20 minutes drive from Broome and perched on a hillside above Cable Beach – is a must. Owners Helen and Simon Bradley opened a year ago, after building from scratch their stunning architect-designed, solar-powered home with

three guest rooms. The clever, eco-friendly design allows for both cooling cross-breezes and the best ocean views enjoyed by any holiday accommodation in the area. Enjoy Helen's breakfast (made with home-grown and organic produce) on the deck, and lunches and dinners by request. Some of the best local chefs also drop in to cook for guests on a regular basis. From \$240 per double in peak season, including breakfast.

Bali Hai Resort, 6 Murray Rd, Cable Beach, tel: (08) 9191 3100, www.balihairesort.com.

Five minutes walk from Cable Beach, this is a good self-catering option. The 31 rooms and 6 family rooms all feature private courtyards, barbecues, kitchens and TV with in-house movies, some with baths. Studios from \$248 per double in peak season.

The Temple Tree Bed & Breakfast, 31 Anne St, Broome, tel: (08) 9193 5728.

It's easy to see why Terry and Helga Crisp have received awards for their hospitality at this B&B within walking distance of Chinatown and Town Beach. Both double rooms (with DVD) are \$130, including Helga's wonderful breakfast on the verandah.

THINGS TO DO

With 22km of pristine sands, you could spend plenty of time exploring Cable Beach. Start at Gantheaume Point at the southern end and check out the ancient dinosaur footprints, then try a morning or sunset camel ride. Head out to **Willie Creek Pearl Farm** (Willie Creek, Broome, tel: (08) 9193 6000 – tours leave from town), and while you're there look for crocodiles and turtles. If you have a four-wheel-drive, continue on the dirt road past the Willie Creek turnoff and head to secluded spots including Quondong Point, and James Price Point at the beach's northern tip, where the red pindan dirt cliffs meet the sea.

For a glimpse of the town's pearling history, take a tour at **Pearl Luggers** (31 Dampier Tce, tel: (08) 9192 2059), then visit the **Japanese and Chinese Cemetery**, where hundreds of pearl divers are buried. Or take an indigenous tour of the area – try **Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Tours** (tel: (08) 9192 2660).

Everyone flocks to Town Beach to see the 'Staircase to the Moon' over Roebuck Bay – when the full moon rises over the exposed mudflats. There's the Staircase Markets, too. And pull up a stripy deckchair at Australia's oldest open-air cinema, **Sun Pictures** (8 Carnarvon St, Broome, tel: (08) 9192 1077). **d.**