

The Tamborine Mountain National Park

While staying at Witches Falls Cottages we understand that you might find it difficult to leave the cosy serenity of your private Mount Tamborine accommodation, however, we do encourage you to explore the beautiful surroundings of our unique location.

In particular, Tamborine Mountain is famous for its National Park. The Tamborine National Park covers eleven square kilometres of the mountain's plateau and foothills and its oldest section, the Witches Falls, is right on our doorstep. This area was first declared in 1908, making it Queensland's oldest National Park - over the years, additional reserves have been declared and today Tamborine National Park comprises 13 sections of land.

So why should you – literally - 'take a hike'? Well, first, the Tamborine National Park as a whole has much to offer walkers including sundappled picnic areas (many with BBQs), breath-taking lookouts and waterfalls, cliffs and gorges, sparkling rock pools and shady woodlands. The Park is also home to an astounding 85 percent of all fauna species and 65 percent of all flora species in the Gold Coast City area.

Now that they form part of Tamborine's National Parks, these rainforest areas with Piccabeen palm groves, wet Eucalypt forests, sky scraping flooded gums and open areas of bracken and ferns, are all protected. This protection extends to cover its fauna too, including the rare Albert's Lyrebird and one of the world's largest skinks; the glossy, black and very generously proportioned Land Mullet. Richmond Birdwing Butterflies, whose males are a dazzling iridescent green and Noisy Pittas, birds that hop on the rainforest floor in search of leeches and snails, both migrate seasonally to the park, making this an extremely significant area in terms of conservation.

We may be slightly biased, but we believe that the Witches Falls section of Tamborine's National Park is one of the most captivating to walk. Its 3.1 km circuit begins from the picnic area on Main Western Road. This lawned rest area has electric barbecues, picnic tables, toilets and is surrounded by soaring eucalypts.

The Witches Falls Circuit snakes down a steep incline through closed-in forest into a rainforest area that features cycad groves. Cycads are the most ancient plants on earth that still exist today and are known, through fossil findings, to have lived in the Permian era - over 200 million years ago - even before dinosaurs roamed the earth. Although once abundant across the globe, cycads are now greatly reduced in both numbers and distribution and much international attention is being drawn to protect these plants that are believed to be nearing extinction.

While en route to the waterfalls you will come across shimmering lagoons, palm groves and enormous strangler figs. After heavy rain, the lagoons fill with water and thrive with many species of frogs and insects. The Witches Falls waterfalls only flow after recent rain and can be viewed by taking a short 200m detour from the circuit to a lookout platform. The track then returns through the rainforest and ends behind the local cemetery.

For your own safety, walk only in daylight hours and wear sturdy shoes, a hat, protective clothing and sunscreen. Take along a mobile phone and drinking water as creek water may contain organisms that can cause illness. At a usual walking pace, 3km takes about an hour. If you are walking with young children however or if plan to take photographs or bird watch along the way, do allow extra time.