

## Australia

### Australia (</travel/australia>)

# Can't stand airports? Head to Lord Howe

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- From: escape
- March 03, 2013 12:00AM



The view over Lord Howe Island from Kim's Lookout. Picture: Johnston Brian  
Source: Supplied

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**LORD Howe Island has the world's best airport, and that's because you're barely in it enough time for it to annoy you.**

It's 10 steps from plane to terminal building, where a gaggle of welcoming islanders smile like gnomes at a garden convention. No waiting, no Kafkaesque corridors, no vast carparks.

Three minutes later, you'll have your suitcase and be in a car, and the airport is gone.

The speed limit on the island is 25km/h and you might have to stop to let one of the island's famous moorhens cross the road.

Even so, it's 15 minutes from snapping off the airline seatbelt to standing in your hotel lobby with a welcome drink.

That's only 15 minutes of your holiday gone. Now you have all the time in the world to unwind.

Capella Lodge nestles among kentia palms and frangipani and eyeballs the twin peaks of Lidgbird and Gower from every window. The outlook constantly changes. Sometimes this mini-Hawaii of mountains and sea is draped in mist, sometimes sharp and bold.

Capella Lodge has designer chic without sacrificing beach-house informality, and is all about the location and view.

Most of Lord Howe's 350 residents and maximum of 400 guests stay in the north of the island.

Capella is almost the last building to the south. After that, it's just rugged walking and screaming seabirds and the road's end.

Borrow a complimentary bicycle from the hotel and pedal off in the opposite direction, past a golf course, airport and a herd of cows.

In Sydney, passing cars would run you into a ditch.

On Lord Howe, arms sprout out windows and give you a wave.

There can't be more than 20km of tarred road on the whole island, but you'll want to cycle it again and again during your stay.

The scenery is never short of marvellous and, despite Lord Howe's boutique dimensions, surprisingly varied. One minute you're cycling through lush paddocks, then a tunnel of trees, then along the edge of the lagoon.

There are plenty of distractions.

At Neds Beach, mullet leap from the water and you can hand-feed fish as if they were pets. On Settlement Beach, children swim with turtles that come in at high tide to feed on seagrass.

Every bend forces you off your bicycle and behind your camera for another improbable vista.

The mountains are dramatic, the lagoon crazy blue, sunsets ooze orange before sizzling out in a purple sea.

Three-course dinners are part of the package at Capella Lodge, giving you a grandstand view of the sunset from its restaurant.

The unpretentious vibe at this luxury establishment sees guests chatting over pre-dinner drinks on the lounge sofas.

As you tuck into an entr aace of kingfish sashimi, Mt Gower is darkening against a pink sky.

By the time you're on a main of braised pork belly with scallops, stars are out and the surf reflects moonlight.

Lord Howe Island is an outrageously beautiful place, and you can linger until almost the last moment.

When it's time to head home, there's no time wasted at the world's best airport.

Turn up 20 minutes before your flight and have a coffee on the lawn as you watch your plane being prepared. In no time at all, you're up and away.

All travel should be this easy, and all holidays so good.

*The writer was a guest of Destination NSW and Capella Lodge.*

## Go2 - LORD HOWE ISLAND

**Getting there:** QantasLink flies to Lord Howe from Sydney and (in summer) Port Macquarie. Ph 13 13 13 or see [qantas.com.au](http://qantas.com.au) (<http://qantas.com.au>)

**Staying there:** Capella Lodge is the island's most up-market property, with an onsite spa and restaurant. Ph 6563 2008 or see [lordhowe.com](http://lordhowe.com) (<http://lordhowe.com>)

Pinetrees Lodge offers comfortable, mid-range, family-run accommodation with excellent all-inclusive meals. Ph 6563 2177 or see [pinetrees.com.au](http://pinetrees.com.au) (<http://pinetrees.com.au>)

**Doing there:** Islander Cruises offers snorkelling, glass-bottom boat and nature tours. Ph 6563 2298 or see [howeadivers.com.au](http://howeadivers.com.au) (<http://howeadivers.com.au>)

**More:** Ph 1800 240 937 or see [lordhoweisland.info](http://lordhoweisland.info) (<http://lordhoweisland.info>)

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