

## Things I love about Brisbane

I was born and raised in Brisbane and have lived here for most of my life. Although Brisbane does not have a harbour like Sydney, or shopping like Melbourne, or a road system like Perth, or psycho-killers like Adelaide, there are many things about Brisbane that I love. Apart from the city itself, Brisbane is close to some of the best beaches in the world. The Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast are about one hour away.

In no particular order, here's my list. If you would like to suggest other things to love about Brisbane, please send me an e-mail. The climate. Yes, it does get hot sometimes, especially in February, but Brisbane climate is absolutely fantastic. The best months are April, May, September and October. Click here for a weather summary including daily rainfall, temperature, hours of sunlight and so on.

The suburb of West End. Located across the river from Brisbane CBD, West End is an eclectic mix of interesting shops and restaurants. For an interesting dining experience, check out the many family owned eateries at the junction of Melbourne Street and Stanley Street. Pick up a bottle of Australian wine from the Melbourne Hotel and take your pick of restaurant. You won't be disappointed.

The Brisbane City Council online library catalog. This would have to be the best value in Australia for people who love and read lots of books. Just point your browser at [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/elibcat](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/elibcat) and try the catalogue. If you have a Brisbane City library card, for 55 cents you can have the book of your choice delivered to your local library for collection. There are not a lot of book shops (for new books that is), in Brisbane, now you know why.

Footpath dining. In some suburbs of Brisbane, footpath dining is all the rage. It's a very pleasant experience watching the world go by while you tuck into a T-bone steak the size of a small Pacific island.

Brisbane bikeways and bike paths. Brisbane's bicycle travel network gets better each year. I ride to work at South Brisbane each day on a bike track that runs parallel to the South-East Freeway. It takes me 20 minutes and it is a great way to start the day.

Virgin Blue and Boeing Headquarters. Both Virgin Blue and Boeing have chosen to locate their Australian head offices in Brisbane. Apart from the offer of generous tax concessions from the State government, Brisbane can offer these companies good infrastructure, a well-educated and dynamic workforce, and a healthy business climate. I think it's great that both these companies have chosen Brisbane.

32 perch housing blocks. After the Second World War, Brisbane property developers used 32 perches as a standard size of subdivision. On this size block you can fit a cricket pitch, swimming pool and garden shed. And there's still room left over for the Hills Hoist.

Galvanised roofs and open verandahs. The quintessential Brisbane house has a red galvanised roof and open verandahs. The open verandah is a very efficient way of adding to the floor space and assisting in ventilation. There should be a law mandating the addition of verandahs of at least 2 metres diameter around at least 50% of the perimeter of new homes.

The Story Bridge. Finished in 1940, the Story Bridge is a Brisbane icon. Stretching 281 metres across the Brisbane river, the Story Bridge took over 5 years to build at the cost of \$3.2 million and the lives of four workers. As far as bridges go, this one is a cracker.

Quest Community Newspapers. Each week Quest publish a free newspaper that is distributed to households via letterbox drops. It features local stories and is supported by classified and display advertising. It's only about 8% news, but it's free and it has a television guide. You can measure the economic health of Brisbane by the weight of the local newspaper.

Being in the flight path. My home is under one of the flight paths. Airservices Australia tries to share the pain across different suburbs through a process of rationing, but I rather like hearing the jets on approach to Brisbane airport. You can almost see the smiling faces of the Japanese tourists squished against the windows of the aircraft as they get their first glimpse of Brisbane. Brisbane's airport operates 24 hours a day. This is good for trade and tourism.

The Brisbane City ferries. There is nothing as relaxing as jumping on a ferry and scooting up and down the Brisbane River. Be it a slick Rivercat or an old timber chugger, a ferry ride on the Brisbane river is a must-do for visitors to Brisbane.

23 Squadron - City of Brisbane. As well as being home to the Lions, The Broncos, The Bears and The Bullets (all professional sporting teams), Brisbane is also home to the RAAF's 23 Squadron. 23 Squadron is an active reserve squadron that has freedom of the City of Brisbane. This means its officers, men and women have the right to march down the main streets of Brisbane with drums beating, swords slashing, rifles cocking, flags waving and F-111's doing

dummy laser-guided bombing sorties on Brisbane City Hall.

It's nice to know that one of the most capable fighter-bombing units in the world ( 1 & 6 SQN supported by 23 SQN), is located 46 kilometres from your front door.

Brisbane City Council. With a budget bigger than the state of Tasmania, Brisbane City Council is well funded and well run. Because it is big and mean, it can't be pushed around by more politically-motivated state and federal governments. This is good for the residents of Brisbane and means good planning for the future. Mayors Clem Jones, Sally-Ann Atkinson, Jim Soorley and Campbell Newman are great examples of the democratic process getting it right.

Brisbane State Schools, private schools and universities. Brisbane has a great selection of educational institutions both private and public. You will probably find that your local state or catholic school is staffed by bright and enthusiastic teachers and is reasonably well resourced. Brisbane boasts some pretty good universities too. U of Q, QUT and Griffith are all located within reasonable distance of the Brisbane CBD. Brisbane City Council's gas turbine, air conditioned buses. I just love the sound of these buses. One of the major breakthroughs in getting better patronage of buses was the introduction of clean comfortable buses with air conditioning. The journey-planner available at Translink , makes getting around the city reasonably easy for both tourists and locals alike.. Brisbane parks. Brisbane has many parks most with childrens' activity and climbing equipment. My favourites are Mott Park on the south side, and Newfarm Park on the north side. These parks can be booked for weddings and other social functions. Gloria Jean's Coffee at West End. If you want a relaxing coffee, try Gloria Jean's at West End (West End Markets). They serve great coffee very quickly. Grab a cup and start the day flicking through the day's newspapers on the covered balcony while you watch the passing parade of photocopier salesmen, check-out chicks, and local welfare recipients. Southbank. As the name suggests, Southbank is located on the southern shore of the Brisbane River just near the CBD. It features walk-ways, gardens, shops, restaurants, an artificial swimming beach and a bridge that links it with Brisbane's famous Botanic Gardens. It's a great place for a family picnic or a workers' outing. Seating and BBQs are available for public use. Here's some images of Brisbane taken along the bike path that runs through Brisbane.

Briz31. Brisbane's community television station is a cultural gem and national treasure. A strange mix of programming from middle-aged transvestite chat shows to fire and brimstone rhetoric for bible-thumping "born-again". These guys are so hard up for content that they are showing reruns of the Briz31 1995 Crazy-Crosswords show. Be afraid ... be very afraid.

Also features some classic black & white movies just out of copyright and some outstanding American and European public broadcasting content. Just think Wayne's World recast with some middle-aged Brisbane wanna-be's and has-been's. This is champagne television. Rupert Murdoch, watch out ! Bicycle Revolution. If you want to get your old bike repaired, or buy a great-value-for-money recycled bike, this is the place to go. I recently had the entire drive-train on my old Trek replaced, including new brake pads, new cables, new chain, new bearing cassette and a full service. Total cost was \$200. Best money I've spent in years. Don't be fooled by the hippie appearance of the shop on Montague Road, West End . These guys know what they are doing. So for bike repairs in Brisbane , see Bicycle Revolution .