



BYRON BAY

The Australian beach town has become a magnet for chefs and entrepreneurs.

by Serena Renner

WHEN TO GO In February, the tail end of Australian summer, the town hosts the Byron Bay Surf Festival (February 20–24), a celebration of surfing, music, and art.

WHY NOW Surrounded by tropical farms, jungle, and the turquoise waves of the Pacific, Byron Bay is a coastal paradise just two hours south of busy Brisbane. Hippies and surfers have known this for decades, but Byron’s “cheer up, slow down, chill out” mantra has recently attracted **a new generation of artisans, chefs, and entrepreneurs who are reshaping the small beach town.** Try on the Byron life at Rowie, a clothing boutique that emphasizes styles made from natural fibers, and Pop and Scott (pictured, left), stocked with minimalist furniture, ceramics, and clothing by Australian designers. The latter is part of Byron Arts and Industry Estate, a multi-block creative district where travelers can shop for handcrafted surfboards, picnic blankets, and locally designed homewares. But what’s really turning eyes to the area is the food and drink scene, which puts Byron Bay’s acclaimed produce to creative new use. The

team behind the farm-to-table restaurant Harvest Newrybar has created a mini dining empire that includes Chupacabra, a taquería that prepares Mexican dishes from regional ingredients. (Order the Yucatán-style grilled fish taco and a mango-chili slushie.) The vegetarian restaurant Folk, a local favorite for its plant-based dishes, recently added a sister café, Woods (pictured, above), 20 minutes away in the town of Bangalow. And the masterminds behind Three Blue Ducks—a restaurant on an 80-acre property known as the Farm—recently opened Locura, a Latin-inspired bar and restaurant serving *tepache* (a fermented pineapple drink) and fresh ceviche. In early 2019, watch for a new headquarters for craft brewing company Stone & Wood and tours from Cape Byron Distillery that begin with a cocktail made from Brookie’s gin, flavored with aniseed myrtle and finger limes.

HOW TO GET THERE Qantas and Virgin Australia offer direct flights between LAX and Brisbane. From Brisbane, rent a car and drive the two hours to Byron Bay.

