

Caravans

Ready to Roll

It is so much fun driving our **Maui Platinum 4-berth motorhome** from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast. For a short person like me, being able to see everything out of the front windscreen is pure luxury.

Packing

Being campers, we're used to over-packing everything but the Maui comes with everything, including a TV and air conditioning. It's fitted out with all cooking equipment, utensils and linen so all we need to do is swing by the supermarket and purchase food for three days.

Sleeping

Ethan's excited about sleeping in the cubby house (the bed over the driver's cabin). After endless peek-a-boos and good nights, he finally crashes and we're not too far behind. Leaving the air conditioning on we snuggle up and have a wonderful night's sleep.

Eating

I whip up dinner in an oven better than mine. Breakfast is cereal, toast and coffee under the awning and we utilise the camp kitchen for a barbecue lunch.

Camping Ground Facilities

Upon arrival to **Big4 Forest Glen** the first thing we see is the nine hole putt putt golf course and giant jumping pillow. Husband and child take off for some fun and I drive Maui to the allocated spot. It's a cinch to plug the motorhome into the power supply.

Other great facilities are two tennis courts, kids' play area and the Vault Cinema. During Queensland school holidays they have a kids' club, bingo and talent quests for the whole family.

What to do

It's so easy to drive around in your motorhome - you can see the sights and base yourself in a different location each night. We take a detour toward the Glasshouse Mountains; the views are breathtaking and it's a nice break from the highway. We also spend a few hours at Australia Zoo, where we all have a fabulous time getting up close and personal with Goliath the tortoise!

More information

www.forestglensort.com.au
www.maui.com.au



BIG4
HOLIDAY PARKS

BIG4 Forest Glen also suggests seeing some other great local attractions nearby:

Aussie World	Underwater World
Big Pineapple	Eumundi Markets
Bellingham Maze	Ginger Factory
Big Kart Track	Bli Bli Castle

If you have a **BIG4 Membership card**, some of these attractions offer member benefits. Check with reception at Big4 prior to planning your day.

Cabins

Not quite the simple life

My husband and I plus our three sons set out for a weekend at **Ocean Beach Holiday Park**, a Free Spirit resort on the beachfront of Umina, approximately one hour north of Sydney. We sample a two bedroom, two bathroom, two-storey townhouse cabin, which seems more at home in a resort than a camping ground.



Packing

I throw together two bags of gear with minimal thought. There is nothing much we really need except pyjamas and extra set of clothes plus a few books, nappies, scooters and food to keep us happy. I bring my laptop, which hardly makes it feel like we're camping.

Sleeping

The boys fall asleep easily at their usual bedtime, after exhausting themselves on the jumping pillows. They sleep in bunk beds (always a hit with kids) and a porta-cot provided. We have a separate room with a comfortable double bed, a small deck and where, blessedly, you can hear the ocean from under the covers.

Eating

I cook our meal quickly and easily using the full kitchen with all the basic equipment provided. I do feel the need to clean up like at home, wiping benches and sweeping crumbs, which I wouldn't do so much in a tent. As a tea addict and with a baby, the microwave and kettle are god-sends. The kids also appreciate that the freezer means we have ice cream on hand.

Campground facilities

The jumping pillow is the kids' all-time favourite. They enjoy the playground and we spend a few hours in the large pool complete with waterslide, heated spa and toddler's area. For breakfast we visit the café on-site for bacon and egg rolls with great coffee, and I'm impressed by the activities scheduled for kids, especially during school holidays, including treasure hunts, crafts and sports.

What to do

Daylight hours are spent adventuring outdoors. We go on a tractor ride, which hugs its way around the holiday park and then follow that with bursts of activity in the pool, the playground and then retire to our veranda to watch the boys' scooter and search for bugs. We spend hours on the supremely beautiful beach, just walking, swimming and playing lazily in the sand. We attempt to attend the kid's movie in but the boys are squealing in our enormous spa, absorbed in their game of 'knights of the triangle bath'.

More information

www.oceanbeachholidaypark.com.au

Tents vs Caravans vs Cabins

TENTS

Best thing for kids
Totally different experience to home, more freedom, fewer rules, relaxed pace and more interesting chores!

Worst thing for kids
Trying to stay quiet and inside the tent early in the morning so not to wake other campers.

Best thing for adults
Star gazing, enjoying the silence and tranquility of the bush and watching the kids so naturally happy without the need of mod-cons.

Worst thing for adults
Planning what to pack, setting up gear and packing it all up again can be time consuming and frustrating if you haven't put up your tent in a while! Communal toilets are never pretty and cold showers are also hard to bear, I'd rather take a swim.

In wet weather
Get out of there! If you have a large tent (one you can stand up in) you can hold out for a day or two tops, but after that it's pure misery. If you're near civilisation take the kids to a movie or something to give them a break from the rain before re-entering the wet zone. Keep upbeat and try to have fun with it.

Real Cost
Camp ground charge \$34 adult, \$7 child per night. Ferry \$10 adults, \$5 child (return). Our gear cost to buy approximately: Tent \$500, sleeping bags \$200 each, sleeping mats \$50.

Kids' comment
"We're playing all day! I love doing swimming races in my new sleeping bag and playing shadows on the wall of the tent with the torches."



CARAVANS

Best thing for kids
The novelty factor, TV and cubby house sleeping area.

Worst thing for kids
Can get a little cramped and have to listen to mum and dad's snoring.

Best things for adults
Not having to pack the camping equipment, put up and pull down the tent, and hubby not having to put up with the wife missing her home comforts.

Worst thing for adults
Dads can balk at being the slowest vehicle on the road and sometimes it's best to use the amenities block instead of the motorhome facilities, for the sake of your nearest and dearest.

In wet weather
Caravans are a cosy retreat from the rain especially if you attach an annex. Plus it's easy to pack up and drive elsewhere to get out of the rain!

Real Cost
Maui Platinum 4 to rent is \$280 per day + full insurance. To buy brand new they are approximately \$150,000. Fuel - being a diesel engine, the cost was minimal - approximately \$50. A motor home with ensuite site at Forest Glen Holiday Park is from \$50 to \$70 per night for two people, plus an additional \$12.50 per child.

Kids' comment
"I liked having the cubby house to sleep in and also I liked the TV, so dad and I could watch the Friday night football!"



CABINS

Best thing for kids
The boys relish running wild around the grounds then coming inside to the comfort and security of their own space, warm bath and TV.

Worst thing for kids
Cabins are not very exciting, it's a lot like home. Kids get the same meals and bedtimes instead of staying out and doing things like playing with torches, telling ghost stories and sleeping in sleeping bags.

Best thing for adults
We don't have to run to the toilet block. An easy holiday, especially getting up for night feeds and early starts, with the indispensable heater, kettle and morning cartoons.

Worst thing for adults
It isn't the authentic campground feel. At night we slip right into home habits; I work on the computer, my husband watches the footy.

In wet weather
Rag up with wet weather gear and have fun exploring outside then return back to the cabin for a hot bath, warm meal and to stay dry inside playing quietly or watching TV.

Real Cost
No equipment to buy, but our SeaBreeze Townhouse costs \$150 to \$505 per night (sleeps five) depending on season. Rates at Ocean Beach Park range according to style of cabin from \$99 per night for the Palm Treehouse (sleeps four) during low season up to \$640 per night for a Spa Villa (sleeps eight) during peak season.

Kids' comment
"The spa is cool! Can we get one of these in our room?"



WIN!

Fridge-To-Go packs make camping a breeze... Esbies are always a must for a family camping trip, but what about keeping things cool when you go on a bush-walk, or deal with warm, soggy sandwiches? Fridge-To-Go packs are not only compact, but can keep contents cool for up to 8 hours.

Out & About With Kids is pleased to announce that we have **FIVE Fridge-To-Go packs to give away** each valued at \$2995. To enter visit www.outandaboutwithkids.com.au

