



SPACE TO SPOIL YOURSELF

Amy Cooper discovers that on Norfolk Island luxury comes naturally, self-catering doesn't mean cooking for yourself and Tin Sheds can provide the most perfect luxury.

Up on Mount Pitt, Norfolk Island's 320 metre-high lookout, the entire world appears to be yours. Spread at your feet is limitless blue; 360 degrees of horizon extending beyond the island's golden beaches and rugged cliffs into places only sailors and seabirds know.

This endless space is perhaps Norfolk's finest luxury. The island's position in the Pacific, 1400 km east of Australia and with the nearest land 767km to the north in New Caledonia, means that you are a dot on a speck on the map, dwarfed by nature. It's a rare, soothing feeling.

Even at high season (November to February), the eight by five kilometre island never feels crowded. Just 1900 people live here and the total population can reach 3500 in peak tourist season. There's enough lush forest, golden beach and dramatic cliff top for everyone.

These natural wonders have tended to be overshadowed by Norfolk's manmade history. After two incarnations as a penal settlement, the remote island in 1856 became the adopted home of the *Bounty* mutineers' families, whose direct descendants still form the core of today's community.

Recently, though, stressed city dwellers and anyone in search of an easy, simple indulgence, are rediscovering the joys of Norfolk's extraordinary landscape and its rich bounty. Eating, exploring and simply wandering are preferred pastimes here.

The first indication of food's central role in Norfolk life is the spectacular kitchen at our accommodation, Apartment One at The Tin Sheds, Norfolk's first AAA Tourism Australia accredited five-star property. A symphony of design and gadgetry, this gleaming self-catering set-up is even more enticing than the super king-size bed or the hot tub with a view.



02

01 Norfolk Island at its most serene
02 The stunning Emily Bay
03 Accommodation at The Tin Sheds is pure luxury

At Two Chimneys Winery you can sample wines made on Norfolk (the 2009 Durif is an obvious standout) and feast on a platter of local produce that's as visually stunning as it is delicious.

A uniquely Norfolk culinary experience is the cliff top fish fry – locals gather for these impromptu al fresco cook-ups at Puppy's Point on the west coast, where the sunsets are spectacular.

Norfolk's rich history greets you at every step. We acquire knowledge organically wandering through storied locations and chatting to locals, many of whom are directly descended from the *Bounty* mutineers. Our favourite historical immersion is Norfolk Island Museum, housed in the world-heritage-listed Kingston. Artefacts resonate with energy and we gaze long at the wedding ring that married all the mutineers to their Tahitian sweethearts, and chuckle at the kettle from the *Bounty* which was used for brewing liquor. The humble receptacle and its contents caused a booze-fuelled vision which transformed tipsy mutineer John Adams into a Christian educator and the founding father of Norfolk.

And then it's back to The Tin Sheds to reflect upon it all while Naomi Thompson, owner of The Olive Cafe, is busy preparing a spread of the island's delicious local produce. We're happy relaxing with a local Shiraz and devouring fresh fish, vegies and a white chocolate and macadamia cheesecake while Naomi cleans up so it looks as if no-one's been there.

We're lulled to sleep by perfect silence, resting easy in the knowledge that tomorrow this island demands nothing of us but relaxation. ♦

Travel file

Accommodation
www.tinshedsnorfolkisland.com

Getting there

Air New Zealand flies to Norfolk Island from Brisbane, Sydney and Auckland.
www.airnewzealand.com.au



03

But here's the best part: you don't need to use it. The Tin Sheds are, technically, self-catering, but if that sounds far too arduous for a luxury break, fret not – no finger need be lifted here. Like me, you can marvel, then sink into a leather La-Z-Boy armchair and watch an accomplished chef come in and rustle up a feast for you.

The three apartments are designed to anticipate your every need and any remaining wishes can be granted by an attentive but discreet manager. You might perhaps make the effort to journey a few steps out your back gate to The Tin Sheds' Pleasure Centre for an infrared sauna, an outdoor SwimSpa (hot tub with a teeny pool attached where you swim against a jet – the pool equivalent of a treadmill) or an expert massage from a local beauty therapist.

Just around the corner is the island's hub, Burnt Pine, with pretty cafes, galleries and browse-friendly trinket

shops. Beaches and cliffs are a short drive away and I can hop into a powder blue 2013 model Fiat 500 convertible, fully insured, that comes with the apartment. There are no traffic lights on Norfolk and every passing motorist waves hello. This could be the last place on earth where driving is actually fun.

Quickly, we discover that Norfolk's fertile land produces food bursting with flavour. "The fruit and vegetables here," one local tells us, "taste good enough to make you weep." She's right. After one bite of a sweet, intense Norfolk Island tomato, it's hard to settle for anything else.

There are more than 35 eateries on the island, each with their own take on the local bounty. Dino's Restaurant, run by couple Helen Bartholomew and Dean Bosley, is a 1880s homestead surrounded by beautiful gardens. The menu is sourced daily from the island's growers, fishermen and farmers.



THE TINSHEDS
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...on Norfolk Island

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