Queensland’s
FAMILY FRIENDLY DRIVES
Emerald – 7 Day Outback Giants

DAY 1: EMERALD TO ALPHA
(APPROX. 203KM / 2HR 14 MIN)
Welcome to Emerald, once famous for its reputation as a major sunflower producer, now home to the world’s biggest Van Gogh sunflower painting. Stop for a photo, with this superstructure, which stands 25 metres high! Emerald is the gateway to the largest sapphire fields in the Southern Hemisphere, and today you can try your hand at fossicking for your fortune. Rubyvale is your first stop in the Gemfields, and with the digging work already done, buy a bucket of wash to start searching straight away! Book a tag-a-long digging or underground mine tour. Pay a visit to the Australian Miners Historic Museum then take a short drive to the tiny town of Sapphire. If you love a photo opportunity, then ‘The Big Ring’, ‘Big Spanner’ and ‘Big Pick and Shovel’ can all be found in Sapphire, so keep an eye out for these fun icons.

In the afternoon, head west on the Capricorn Highway to Alpha, the Gateway to the West. Book a family villa at the Alpha Caravan Park, stretch your legs with a walk around the town’s 26 murals depicting rural life in the Shire and dine with the locals at the Alpha Golf Club.

Overnight Alpha

DAY 2: ALPHA TO LONGREACH
(APPROX. 248KM / 2HR 32 MIN)
Just ‘down the road’ in country miles, call in for a ‘cuppa’ at Jericho and take a stroll around the vintage machinery in Railway Park.

Next stop is Barcaldine, known as the Garden City of the West. The town’s most famous tree, the Tree of Knowledge, was a 180-year old ghost gum, celebrated as the site for the 1891 Shearer’s Strike. Sadly the tree was poisoned in 2006. It has been preserved under an eye-catching timber structure, impressive by day, but magnificent when viewed at night as the original tree canopy is recreated by clever lighting.

Spend time at the Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame where the stories of Australia’s working history come to life, then test your musical skills on the large scale outdoor instruments of the Thong-a-phone and Marimba. Not to mention the Outback Stockman’s Show is a must-do at the new Outback Entertainment Centre.

In Longreach, be sure to download the Longreach Regional Council App to get a heads up on the best things to see and do. Make sure that you arrive in town by early afternoon with time to join one of the popular Thomson River cruise and dinner options, the Drover’s Sunset Cruise or the Starlight’s Dinner Cruise.

Overnight Longreach

DAY 3: LONGREACH
According to the locals, Qantas was conceived in Cloncurry, born in Winton and grew up in Longreach. Therefore it’s an absolute must when in Longreach to visit the Qantas Founders Museum. Here you can join a guided Jets Tour and experience the F35 flight simulator. Allow plenty of time to wander the interactive displays, which tell the story of the founding of Qantas.

HIGHLIGHTS
- Fossick for your fortune at the Sapphire Gemfields
- Watch the entertaining Outback Stockman’s Show
- Join a guided Jets Tour at Qantas Founders Museum
- Glide on the Thomson River at sunset
- Gallop through the scrub on a Cobb & Co Stagecoach ride
- Meet the giants at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs
- Relive a 95 million year event at the Dinosaur Stampede Monument
- Learn about what was once the world’s largest sheep station
- Take a refreshing dip in an Artesian spa
Make time to read the storyboards at the historic Longreach Railway Station and meander along the 100-year old platform and imagine the travellers of yesteryear. 

Hear the pounding hooves of the Cobb & Co stagecoach horses as they gallop full-tilt along a stretch of the original Longreach-Windorah mail route then take your seat for the Harry Redford Old Time Tent Show, great fun for all the family.

Tonight at the Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame, watch the entertaining Outback Stockman’s Show, a tribute to the Australian Stockman performed by a third generation stockman. The package includes entry to the museum and the show plus a casual spit roast dinner.

Overnight Longreach

**DAY 4: LONGREACH TO WINTON**  
*(APPROX. 180KM / 1HR 40 MIN)*

Travel further west along the Matilda Way to Winton, famous as the birthplace of both Waltzing Matilda and Qantas, and more recently for its world-class dinosaur attractions.

About 24km before you arrive in Winton, visit the world’s largest collection of Australian dinosaur fossils at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs and join a guided interpretive tour of the laboratory and collection room. When you arrive, purchase a copy of the ‘Who Killed Matilda’ activity book and solve all the problems to discover who really killed the giant sauropod. If you’re feeling hungry, grab a bite to eat at the Cretaceous Café before continuing your drive to downtown Winton.

In town, take a stroll along the Opal Walk and call into Corfield and Fitzmaurice, Winton’s first general store. Grab a stick and test your musical talents at the world’s only musical fence. Accompanied by a junkyard band, the Musical Fence is free and suitable for all to have a go. Speaking of fences, have you ever seen a fence made with concrete and rocks studded with motorbikes, typewriters and the kitchen sink? Well you can in Winton!

Winton is located on the Great Artesian Basin, one of the largest artesian ground basins in the world. You may notice that the water has a distinctive smell, which is due to the sulphur gas trapped with the water. Don’t be alarmed though, it is the sweetest, cleanest water on earth!

**Overnight Winton**

**DAY 5: WINTON**  

There’s only one place in the world that has a definitive record of dinosaur stampede behaviour, and that’s right here in Winton Shire. Make the most of today and join a full day tour to the Dinosaur Stampede at Lark Quarry and the spectacular Carisbrooke Station.

On a guided tour of the Dinosaur Stampede, discover the inspiration behind the blockbuster movie Jurassic Park. See more than 3000 fossilised footprints and the largest collection of dinosaur tracks in the world! Relive this incredible event, from some 95 million years ago, when a huge meat-eating theropod stalked and charged a herd of smaller dinosaurs gathering to drink at the lake.

While at Carisbrooke Station, you’ll follow the scenic Cory’s Range drive to the Three Sisters rock formation, see Python Gorge and fossick for opal. Return to Winton late afternoon and relax with a traditional Outback pub meal.

**Overnight Winton**

**DAY 6: WINTON TO ILFRACOMBE**  
*(APPROX. 207KM / 2HR)*

Follow the Matilda Highway back via Longreach to Ilfracombe, once a transport hub for Wellshot Station, the largest sheep station in the world at the time. Arrive early and catch the 11.30am performance of ‘The Sheep’s Back’. Sit back and be entertained with stories of the life of a shearer and his wife, followed by smoko with the actors.

Walk the Great Machinery Mile, a graphic timeline of the evolution of the pastoral and transport industries then cool off with a swim in the Artesian Spa. Join a ‘smoko’ tour of the heritage listed Langenbaker House, over 100 years old and still in its original condition.

Tonight, sidle up to the Woolpress Bar at the family friendly Wellshot Hotel for a cool drink and a counter meal.

**Overnight Ilfracombe**

**DAY 7: ILFRACOMBE TO EMERALD**  
*(APPROX. 390KM / 3HR 55 MIN)*

It’s time to wind the windows down and follow the bitumen back to Emerald today.

Call into the friendly country towns along the way for a meal, take a swim, pick up some of the local arts & crafts and make your way to Emerald at your kissee.