

STARS, PARKS AND LEGENDS DRIVE

CHARLEVILLE TO LONGREACH

Duration: 8 days / 1345 km

Take the Stars, Parks and Legends self drive tour and discover the wonder of the night skies at Charleville's Cosmos Centre. Visit the Boulder Opal town of Quilpie with its opal fossicking and displays, Powerhouse Museum and River Walk. Marvel at Windorah's Solar Farm and climb the stunning red sand hills for unforgettable sunset moments.

Explore the magnificent Welford National Park with its red river gum and coolabah lined waters and follow one of the scenic tourist drives. Take a break in Jundah on the banks of the Thomson River – an ideal spot for some scenic fishing and river drives. Explore the Barcoo Shire Museum offering a window into the early pioneering times.

En route to Stonehenge, watch for the sign posted Native Well, once a valuable source of water for Indigenous people and call into the friendly Stonehenge Visitor Information Centre. Uncover Longreach's tours and attractions – maybe join a guided tour of the Qantas 747 and 707 jets or ride an authentic Cobb & Co. coach through the scrub.

Experiences:



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Charleville

Day: 1

Start: **Charleville** End: **Charleville**

Your journey begins in Charleville, which is the largest town in South West Queensland and is located on the banks of the Warrego River. Charleville is famous for its renowned Cosmos Centre and Observatory where you can 'Journey to Infinity' as you explore the night sky through the powerful Meade telescopes, hold meteorites in your hands and hear why Pluto was taken out of the Planet Club. Meet the delightful and interesting Bilby, one of Australia's most endangered species, at the Save the Bilby Experience. The Charleville School of Distance Education and the Charleville Royal Flying Doctor Base are also worthwhile attractions. Charleville offers a range of motel and camping accommodation. Direct flights from Brisbane are scheduled with QantasLink. Flights from Brisbane via Toowoomba are provided by Regional Express Airlines. A twice weekly rail service from Brisbane to Charleville is available on The Westlander. Hire car facilities are also available.

Charleville to Quilpie

Day: 2

Start: **Charleville** End: **Quilpie**

Drive west from Charleville along the Diamantina Developmental Road to Quilpie, home to 'The Jewel of the Outback', the exquisite boulder opal. Try your luck at the free opal fossicking area and visit St Finbarr's Church and admire the stunning Opal Altar, Lectern and Font. Visit the Quilpie Powerhouse Museum and learn how Quilpie became the first town to have a Powerhouse in 1952. See the literal 'End of the Railway Line' and the Mini Museum at the Airport, which is dedicated to the old Wool Scour and the unexpected landing of Amy Johnson. Take a stroll along the Bulloo River walk on the shady banks of the river. Interpretative signs are positioned along the way to inform you about the variety of trees and plants. The waterways of Quilpie Shire are ideal for bird watching and fishing

Quilpie to Eromanga

Day: 3

Start: **Quilpie** End: **Eromanga**

Take the short 106 kilometre drive along sealed roads from Quilpie to Eromanga, Australia's furthest town from the sea. Eromanga, is home of the internationally recognised Eromanga Natural History Museum. Here you can meet Australia's largest dinosaurs including 'Cooper' and 'George', who are in the top 10 largest dinosaurs in the world. The one hour guided tour is a hands-on tour through the museum workshop, dinosaur and megafauna laboratories and collection room. The museum is three kilometres outside of Eromanga off the sealed Mt. Margaret Road. It is easy to spend a day or more in and around Eromanga, visit the Living History Centre next to one of Australia's iconic outback pubs, the Eromanga Royal Hotel est. 1885, Knoto-a-saurus and Opalopolis Park and enjoy a picnic near sand dunes or on the famous Kyabra waterhole.

Eromanga to Windorah

Day: 4

Start: **Eromanga** End: **Windorah**

Take the fully sealed Kyabra Road to begin your journey towards Windorah, the heart of the Channel Country. Windorah, which is Aboriginal for 'Big Fish', is 35 kilometres south of where the Thomson and Barcoo Rivers join to form the multi-channelled Cooper Creek. Follow the 12 kilometre Nature Drive through a diverse range of landscapes between Windorah and Cooper Creek. The waterholes offer great fishing and the smaller channels are ideal for catching yabbies - the inspiration for the Windorah International Yabby Race held annually in August. The magnificent red sand hills found ten kilometres west of Windorah are definitely worth visiting as the colours change continually throughout the day, especially at sunset. Visit the original slab hut in Windorah, which was relocated from its original site on the Whitula Creek banks and tells an interesting historical story of the town and its people. Windorah Solar Farm is the first solar farm trial by Ergon Energy with five mirrored dishes that generate enough power from the sun to supply most of Windorah's energy requirements. 80 kilometres west of Windorah lies the JC Pub Ruins, once part of the township site of Canterbury. Windorah offers cabins, hotel, caravan and campsites.

Windorah to Welford National Park

Day: 5

Start: **Windorah** End: **Welford National Park**

From Windorah, head south-east towards Quilpie for 50 kilometres, then turn left onto the Jundah-Quilpie Road and head north-east towards Welford National Park. Drive along black soil roads on the Barcoo River flood plains before arriving at the Barcoo River crossing. Drive over the Barcoo River Crossing to the Retreat Station intersection before entering Welford National Park. Little Boomerang Waterhole is the starting point for several scenic drives (four wheel drive access only), the 12.3 kilometre River Drive and the 22 kilometre Desert Drive. Welford is a land of contrasts-wide coolabah lined waters and grey alluvial channels of the Barcoo River slice a brown and green swathe through Mitchell grass plains and arid mulga woodlands. Golden-green spinifex and white-barked ghost gums grow atop a vivid backdrop of red sand dunes. Remnants of Aboriginal heritage and use, including water wells and stone arrangements, are found throughout the park. You can see a rare (rammed earth) homestead built on this former grazing property in 1882. Welford National Park is open all year; however wet weather may cause temporary closures, especially during the wet season from December to March (permits are required).

Welford National Park to Jundah

Day: 6

Start: **Welford National Park** End: **Jundah**

Departing Welford National Park, drive a short distance to Jundah on the banks of the Thomson River - an ideal spot for some scenic fishing and river drives. Jundah is the closest town to Welford National Park and is an ideal base if you would prefer day visits. Explore the Barcoo Shire Museum offering a window into the early pioneering times of the district, including the mysterious 'Barcoo Dog'. Take the Settler's Nature Drive along the Thomson River featuring sign-posted descriptions of native plants. Unique 'Welcome Signs' to the town replicate the historic shop front still to be seen in the main street of Jundah. Each of the signs is linked together by a walking trail and contains different information giving an insight into the early years of the township. Located 90 kilometres east of Jundah is the site of Magee's Shanty, believed to be the site of the shanty immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem 'A Bush Christening'. Meet local characters and enjoy outback hospitality at the Jundah Hotel, open for lunch and dinner and offering air-conditioned accommodation. Caravan Park and free bush campsites are available in Jundah. Stay connected with free WIFI at the Jundah Information Centre and Library.

Jundah to Stonehenge

Day: 7

Start: **Jundah** End: **Stonehenge**

Drive 32 kilometres north of Jundah on the Stonehenge road to The Native Well, a valuable source of water for Indigenous people in days gone by - marvel at how these wells were manually created. Situated halfway between Jundah and Stonehenge is Swanvale Lookout on the Johnstone Range. Stunning views are to be had from two vantage points, particularly the westerly lookout at sunset - a fantastic spot to boil the billy. Take the eight kilometre John Egan Pioneer Drive (suitable for four wheel drive vehicles only) and discover magnificent landscapes sculptured by nature over millions of years into the most amazing rock formations. Join the locals at the Stonehenge Hotel. Call into the Stonehenge Visitor Information Centre for great coffee, friendly service, access to Telstra Mobile 3G and free wi-fi. Take a stroll to see the Government Tank on the old stock route where drovers watered the travelling stock. Caravan Park and free bush campsites available in Stonehenge.

Stonehenge to Longreach

Day: 8

Start: **Stonehenge** End: **Longreach**

As you leave Stonehenge on the top loop road, turn left on the Longreach-Jundah Road, where you'll pass XXXX Hill, a scenic vantage point with breathtaking 360 degree views of the Thomson River flood plains and surrounding Johnstone Ranges. About two kilometres from the Stonehenge turnoff en route to Longreach, you can sign the visitor's book - Stonehenge style. This involves writing your town name with stones - a quirky tradition started years ago by the then mailman. Take some time to read through the many town names that can be seen embossed in stone. Continue your drive to the heartland of Outback Queensland - Longreach. Soak up the history and heritage with visits to the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum and Powerhouse Museum. Enjoy a cruise on the Thomson River complete with sunset nibbles, dinner and entertainment. Tour through one of the largest classrooms in the world at the School of Distance Education or experience the thrill of a Cobb and Co. ride. Longreach offers a range of motel and camping accommodation. Daily flights from Brisbane are scheduled with Qantas and twice weekly rail services on the Spirit of the Outback. Hire car facilities also available.
