

# CENTRAL WEST OUTBACK ADVENTURE DRIVE

## WINDORAH TO WINDORAH

Duration: 4 days / 1438 km

Nothing beats an outback road trip through the wide-open spaces, sweeping sand dunes and quirky towns of central west Queensland's 'big sky country'. Starting in Windorah, the first leg takes you to Longreach the home of Qantas and the Stockman's Hall of Fame, before taking on the rest of the drive to see what life in one of Australia's most remote regions is like.

### Experiences:



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## Windorah to Winton

Day: 1

Start: **Windorah** End: **Longreach**

Following north along the route of the Thomson River, continue on to Longreach. Stop off in the country towns of Jundah and tiny Stonehenge, home to just 30 people. Less than four kilometres from Stonehenge you will find a series of magnificent Rock Holes shaded by ghostly white gum trees, the perfect place to cool off. You will discover some glorious landscapes and scenic lookouts on this trip. Onto Longreach, home of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Powerhouse Museum and Qantas Founders Outback Museum and a wealth of entertainment and warm, country hospitality. Enjoy a cruise on the Thomson River or take a walk along the Longreach Botanical Walk at sunset. Travel to Winton, home to the Australian Age of Dinosaurs and Dinosaur Stampede. Head to the North Gregory Hotel where Australia's unofficial national anthem, Waltzing Matilda, was first played. Winton is home to the Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival and the quirky biennial Outback Festival which hosts Australia's Du y Derby.

## Winton to Boulia

Day: 2

Start: **Winton** End: **Boulia**

After exploring Winton's unique attractions, like the eccentric 'music fence', boulder opal displays and dinosaur fossil displays, head westward towards Boulia. Call in to Middleton, the pub on the side of the road with the world's most remote 'Hilton Hotel', and keep an eye out for the mesas, what the locals call 'jump ups', that are a reminder of the ancient inland sea that once covered this whole area. The Cawnpore lookout offers a spectacular view and information boards about these prehistoric landmarks. Boulia is the heart of 'Min Min' country, and a visit to the sensational Min Min Encounter will give you the heebie jeebies as you find out just how eerie these mysterious lights are, and you may hope you never see one for yourself! The historic Stone House, the oldest house in town, now houses a collection of aboriginal artifacts, local memorabilia and a dinosaur fossil display. Historic ruins in the area include the Min Min Hotel, on the way into town, and the police barracks, 19 kilometres north of town. The adventurous four-wheel-drive traveller can head to the Diamantina National Park, 150 kilometres south-east of Boulia, where the mighty Diamantina River flows through the Diamantina Gates.

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## Boulia to Birdsville

Day: 3

Start: **Boulia** End: **Birdsville**

Heading south, don't miss the turn-off to the Vaughan Johnson Lookout on the border of the Boulia and Diamantina Shires. Its 'loo with a view' offers sensational views over the chaotic country, some of Australia's best cattle fattening land. Explore Bedourie and soak in the tranquility of this desert oasis at the natural artesian spa and aquatic centre. Visit the historic Royal Hotel before heading south to Birdsville via the Bilby Way and keep an eye out for these little endangered marsupials, particularly in the early hours of the morning. Walk through the Carcoory Homestead Ruins and just before reaching Birdsville, look out for the patch of Waddi trees, an extremely rare species growing in only three places worldwide. In Birdsville, sip a coldie at the iconic Birdsville Hotel, and enjoy one of the quintessentially outback pies, such as 'curried camel' or 'kangaroo claret', at the Birdsville Bakery. The 35 kilometre drive westward to the 40 metre high 'Big Red' sand-dune is worth it. Watch the sun set over the Simpson Desert or venture to Poeppel corner; the junction of Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia, 175 kilometres west of Birdsville but only for very well equipped four-wheel-drive travellers.

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# Birdsville to Windorah

Day: 4

Start: **Birdsville** End: **Windorah**

The 380 kilometre drive to Windorah passes Betoota, Australia's smallest town. With a population of zero, this once-thriving Cobb & Co. exchange and inter-colony toll point declined after federation to leave a sole pub, which was abandoned in 1997. These days, Betoota comes alive twice a year for its annual horse and motorbike gymkhana and race meet, and the ghostly old pub still stands proud on the lonely gibber flat. Just down the road, a magnificent rainbow serpent is blazed upon a ridge and looks spectacular from both the road and the air. A little further and Deon's Lookout rises above the chaotic country flats and is a superb lunch stop for those heading on to Windorah. In Windorah, the celebrated Western Star Hotel is a great place to meet some of the locals, while the Cooper Creek, a legendary chaotic country waterway, is a refreshing swim or fishing stop after a 16 kilometres nature drive to the east of town. Discover the picturesque red sand hills to the west of town and watch the magical sunset reflected in the thousands of mirrors mounted on the giant solar panels nearby.

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