BIRDSVILLE AND OODNADATTA LOOP

BIRDSVILLE TO MT DARE

Duration: 5 days / 1599 km

The Outback Loop is a vast region in the far north east of South Australia and south west Queensland, where travellers can experience the astonishing and contrasting beauty of Australia's desert zone. Stretching from Parachilna in the south to Birdsville in the north, and Mt Dare in the west to Innamincka in the east, the area includes a diverse range of environments including sandy and stony deserts, floodplains, mountain ranges and wetlands. Incorporating three iconic outback tracks – Birdsville, Strezelecki, and Ooodnadatta – The Outback Loop invites travellers to explore this unique region.

Start at Birdsville and travel via the Birdsville Track to Maree, then take the Oodnadatta Track to William Creek and continue via Oodnadatta Track to Mount Dare and Dalhousie Springs, then onto the French Line across the Simpson Desert, and back to Birdsville.

Experiences:

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Birdsville to Marree via Birdsville Track

Day: 1

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

Iconic Birdsville lies on the Diamantina River in the heart of Queensland's Cha el Country. Once an important stop on the stock route into South Australia, today Birdsville is an outback hub and a thriving community of around 110 people employed in regional tourism, hospitality and servicing the area's still-dominant cattle industry. Birdsville 'must-dos' include an icy-cold drink in its famous historic pub, a camel pie from its fabulous bakery and a refreshing dip in the town's unique billabong. Be sure to check out the rest of the area's attractions and landmarks including the 45-metre high Big Red sand dunes, and the rare copse of Waddi trees.

Marree to William Creek via Oodnadatta Track

Day: 2

Start: **Marree** End: **Marree**

Marree lies at the junction of the Oodnadatta and Birdsville tracks and is the gateway to Kati - Thanda Lake Eyre basin. Once a thriving outback centre for transport and communications, Marree was a town where the Arabu a Aboriginal people, Europeans and Afghani cameleers lived side-by-side from the time of the town's establishment. Today, remnants of these three cultures live on in the Arabu a Aboriginal Community Centre and the Marree Mosque. Meanwhile, the Tom Kruse Collection in a specially created room of the Marree Hotel, houses a tribute to the legendary outback mailman who worked the mail run between Marree and Birdsville.

William Creek to Oodnadatta

Day: 3

Start: **William Creek** End: **William Creek**

Lying on the dusty Oodnadatta Track, the tiny settlement of William Creek is South Australia's smallest town, ironically located on the world's largest cattle station - A a Creek. With a population of just six (and a dog), the town comprises one of Australia's most remote and quintessential pubs, a caravan park, motel units and the headquarters of Wrightsair. William Creek is the only fuel stop between Marree and Oodnadatta and is the closest town to Lake Eyre North. Wrightsair specialises in Kati Thanda - Lake Eyre and A a Creek Painted Hills outback scenic flights, as well as aircraft charter. Take a flight with Wrightsair out of William Creek or Birdsville to experience the true beauty of Cha el Country. If heavy rains have fallen beforehand, you're sure to see a gorgeous fan of spidery water tendrils crisscrossing desert plains and bringing new life to the region as they flow into waterholes and provide an oasis for wildlife. Other operators also fly the Cha el Country. See the website for a full list. At 144 kilometres long, 77 kilometres wide, and 15.2 metres below sea level, the vastness of Australia's largest inland lake can only truly be appreciated from the air. Witness extraordinary birdlife along with a visual feast of incredible colours, patterns, and textures, not only on the lake itself but in the surrounding wilderness. Many tour operators regularly fly to Kati Thanda - Lake Eyre as part of a tour package, or just over the lake as a stand-alone charter. See the website for a full list.

Oodnadatta to Mt Dare

Day: 4

Start: **oodnadatta** End: **oodnadatta**

Sitting around a third of the way along the Oodnadatta Track is the historic centre of Oodnadatta. Once a major stop on the Ghan railway, the town was bypassed with the introduction of the standard gauge line in 1981. Today, Oodnadatta is an important Aboriginal historical and cultural centre. The outlandish Pink Roadhouse is a fun and iconic part of the outback and famous as a landmark and meeting place for travellers and locals alike. It features a licensed cafu00e9, post office, fuel, mechanical workshop and campgrounds with essential amenities. Worth a look too, is the museum, Aboriginal art gallery, 4x4 amateur driver's loop, Afghan Graveyard and Hookey Waterhole.

Mt Dare to Birdsville via The French Line

Day: 5

Start: **Mt Dare** End: **Mt Dare**

Formerly the station kitchen on the old Mt Dare cattle property, the Mt Dare Hotel was rebuilt anew in 2006 and today stands as the outback's newest hotel and a welcome oasis on the western edge of the Simpson Desert. Part of the Witjira National Park, Mt Dare Hotel lies just 10 kilometres south of the Northern Territory border and is a great stepping off point to Uluru to the west, Alice Springs to the north, and Birdsville to the east. You'll need a four wheel drive to get there and when you do, why not stay a night or two in the campgrounds or cabins, indulge in outback hospitality, and stock up on fuel and supplies. From Mt Dare, it's a Desert Parks Pass and a 70 kilometre trip to the idyllic Dalhousie Springs. Accessible with the right vehicle and the right preparation, the Simpson Desert surprises as a place of extreme contrasts and stark beauty. Seasoned four wheel drivers suggest the best way is from west to east in the direction of the prevailing winds. Kick off at Oodnadatta or Mt Dare and travel via Dalhousie Springs across the desert to Birdsville. Be sure to allow plenty of time - this is a trip not to be rushed.