

# GEMS OF THE OUTBACK LOOP

## EMERALD TO EMERALD

Duration: 14 days / 2896 km

Come explore Outback Queensland on this 14 day gems of the outback journey. Find yourself fossicking for your fortune in Rubyvale, meet Hughie the giant Muttaborrasaurus, swim in a pool fed by the Great Artesian Basin, watch the entertaining Outback Stockman's Show, glide on the Thomson River at sunset, take a guided tour of the historic Blackall Woolscour, visit the largest cattle saleyards in the Southern Hemisphere and finish off your trip by exploring Carnarvon Gorge!

### Experiences:



Please note that the information contained in this document is current as of the date of creation. Subsequent changes in circumstances may render the information contained in this document no longer accurate. It is the reader's responsibility to verify the accuracy of the information before relying on it. This document should not be considered a substitute for professional advice.

## Emerald to Alpha

Day: 1

Start: **Emerald** End: **Alpha**

Day 1: Arriving in the Central Highlands hub of Emerald, measure your height against the world's biggest Van Gogh sunflower painting at 25 metres high located in Morton Park. For a contrast of plant life, stop by the 250 million year old fossilized tree outside Emerald's Town Hall, then stroll through Emerald's Botanic Gardens. Drive the short distance to the quaint town of Rubyvale where you can fossick for your fortune! The digging work is already done, so you can buy a bucket of wash and start searching straight away. There's also a walk-in mine tour where you'll learn all about the process of underground sapphire mining. Your overnight destination along the Capricorn Highway is the town of Alpha - claimed by locals as the beginning of the west. The Alpha area has a rich collection of fossilised wood, also called petrified wood. Did you know that the petrified wood of the Alpha area are claimed to be much older than the dinosaur bones found near Winton?

---

# Alpha to Barcaldine

Day: 2

Start: **Alpha** End: **Barcaldine**

Day 2: Wind down the windows and feel the freedom of the open road as you head west to Jericho, on the banks of the Jordan River, south of Lake Galilee. Because of its biblical sounding name, the town became connected with the story of Joshua and how he won the Battle of Jericho. You can learn the artists' interpretation of the story at the Crystal Trumpeters installation in the main street. 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 when the original tree canopy is recreated by clever lighting. Spend time at the Australian Workers Heritage Centre 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. Tonight, why not head down to the Radio Picture Theatre with its old style canvas seats to see the latest blockbuster movie?

---

# Barcaldine to Muttaborra via Lake Dunn

Day: 3

Start: **Barcaldine** End: **Muttaborra**

Day 3: Today calls for an early start - you're off to Bushranger country! Travel to Aramac and learn the story of how the sale of one white bull led to the capture of Bushranger Harry Redford, also known as Captain Starlight. Visit Captain Starlight's Folly, Harry Redford Community Centre and the Tramway Museum for a flashback to yesteryear. Pick up the makings of a country picnic, then follow the Sculpture Trail to Lake Du - a freshwater lake 68 kilometres northeast of Aramac. Along the way, you'll pass over 20 uniquely crafted sculptures of all shapes and sizes, created using scrap metal and barbed wire. Keep your eyes peeled for local wildlife including echidnas, brolgas and emus too. At Lake Du, spend the afternoon enjoying the shoreline, catching Golden Perch or Black Bream, swimming or bird watching. Allow plenty of daylight for the one-hour drive to Muttaborra for your overnight stay.

---

# Muttaborra to Hughenden

Day: 4

Start: **Muttaborra** End: **Hughenden**

Day 4: It's all about dinosaurs today as you hit the Dinosaur Trail to Hughenden. The trail starts here though, so after a big day on the road yesterday, take the time to explore last night's home away from home - the tiny outback community of Muttaborra and its very own namesake dinosaur replica - the Muttaborrasaurus. There's also a significant collection of public art to be found around town and a snapshot of life in the early 1900s at A.A. Cassimatis Store and Cottage. With no towns in between, be sure to refuel your car and stock up on water and snacks, before setting off for Hughenden. When you arrive, visit the Flinders Discovery Centre, home to 'Hughie', a seven metre high Muttaborrasaurus. This life-size skeletal replica was cast from the original bones of a 110 million year old dinosaur found in the Shire. Hughenden was once situated on the edge of a prehistoric Inland Sea, so you are officially in Dinosaur Country! For a birds-eye view of this ancient landscape, nearby Mount Walker is a popular spot, particularly at sunset. Make sure you take your camera.

---

# Hughenden to Winton

Day: 5

Start: **Hughenden** End: **Winton**

Day 5: Follow the Kennedy Highway to Winton, dubbed the 'Dinosaur Way.' Call and meet the residents of Stamford along the way. Once an overnight stop for the Cobb and Co Coaches, this tiny town with a population of three people, boasts a community sports club and a country racetrack. Next stop is Corfield, founded along the railway line between Winton and Hughenden, which ceased operation in the late 1990s. Today, there's only a pub, a camping ground and a post office, but it's a town with a lot of character, particularly when the popular Corfield Races are held (yes it's a pun on the better known Caulfield Races). Travel the short distance on to historic Winton, the birthplace of both Waltzing Matilda and QANTAS, and millions of years before either were thought of, dinosaurs! Winton has now claimed the title of Australia's 'Dinosaur Capital' with the discovery of several large dinosaurs dating back 98 million years.

---

# Winton

Day: 6

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

Day 6: 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.

---

# Winton to Longreach

Day: 7

Start: **Winton** End: **Longreach**

Day 7: Drive 24 kilometres south east of Winton to The Australian Age of Dinosaurs, perched high up on a dramatic mesa. See the world's largest collection of Australian dinosaur fossils on a guided tour of the laboratory and collection room. Enjoy lunch in the Cretaceous Cafe and make your own pressed dinosaur pey. Make sure that you arrive in Longreach 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. There's also a number of attraction passes which offer great value for families planning to experience the top Longreach attractions. Call into the Longreach Visitor Information Centre when you get into town for more information and bookings.

---

# Longreach

Day: 8

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

Day 8: 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. 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 an outback barbeque dinner.

---

# Longreach to Blackall

Day: 9

Start: **Longreach** End: **Blackall**

Day 9: Follow the Matilda Highway 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. Now here's a name that will have the kids puzzled - Isisfordia duncani. Take a wander through Isisford's Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre to learn more about the world's most primitive crocodile that lived almost 100 million years ago. Named after the former Deputy Mayor of Isisford, the first fossils were found in the mid-1990s in a dried up creek bed on the outskirts of the town. Travel on to Blackall, your destination for the evening.

---

# Blackall to Augathella

Day: 10

Start: **Blackall** End: **Augathella**

Day 10: Wake up in the home of The Black Stump and enjoy the slow pace of an outback morning. Or if you are feeling energetic, start your day with a swim in the Artesian Spa or perhaps a few laps of Blackall's Olympic size pool. Many a sheep has been raised on the properties around Blackall - Jackie Howe, Australia's most famous shearer shore a record of 321 sheep in seven hours 40 minutes in 1892 at nearby Alice Downs Station. Spend time at the Blackall Woolscour - the only fully intact steam powered wool-washing plant in Australia and visit the Lost Art Workshop. Heading south along the Matilda Way you will arrive in Tambo, Australia's Outback Teddy Capital, and home to the Tambo Teddies. The bears are made onsite in the workshop by local artisans. All are individually named and numbered, with each bear given an official name representing a local property. Call in and watch a bear being made, and perhaps meet your new lifelong companion. Tambo offers some tasty lunch options, so allow time to either dine in or purchase a picnic to enjoy before you continue your drive to Augathella.

---

## Augathella to Roma

Day: 11

Start: **Augathella** End: **Roma**

Day 11: Wake up in the Home of the Meat Ant, a large ant that can carry 100 times its own weight. Don't be afraid though, the large Meat Ant Sculpture won't bite, but it makes a great photo!n Augathella was once a popular stopover for passing bullock drovers resting their teams. While the bullock teams are long gone, the friendly townsfolk are not. Have a chat with a local and enjoy breakfast in town this morning before setting off on the road to Roma. If time permits along the way, take a slight detour just 13 kilometres south of Morven on the Morven-Bollon Road where you'll find something quite unexpected in this semi-arid area, an attractive dry rainforest tree dating back to the Ice Ages in Tregole National Park. Who would think to find a rainforest in the Outback?n Stop for lunch in Mitchell, then roll on to Roma where you'll find the Southern Hemisphere's largest saleyards. If you happen to time your visit with sale day (Tuesday or Thursday), a stop by the yards is not to be missed. Head to the Big Rig Show after dark for a light and sound show complete with pyrotechnics display.

---

## Roma to Carnarvon Gorge

Day: 12

Start: **Roma** End: **Carnarvon Park**

Day 12: This morning, continue following the story of the notorious bushranger Harry Redford (which began in Aramac) with a visit to the original Court House opened in 1873 where his trial took place. Next stop is Injune Visitor Information Centre, to learn about the longest fence in the world, the Dingo Barrier Fence. Injune is surrounded by some of Queensland's best National Parks including our next stop, Carnarvon Gorge. Enjoy a complimentary tea or coffee at the centre before fuelling up for your final drive for the day. Carved into the elevated sandstone of Central Queensland, Carnarvon Gorge is a natural monument to the power of water, wind and time. This popular park attracts around 35,000 visitors a year with its abundance of flora and fauna. Boasting some of the world's best Aboriginal stencil rock art, dramatic canyons, spectacular bush walks and culturally significant sites, there is much to see and do.

---

## Carnarvon Gorge

Day: 13

Start: **Carvarvon Gorge** End: **Carvarvon Gorge**

Day 13: Pack your day bag with water and snack supplies, apply the sunscreen, slap on a hat and strap up your boots, ready for a day exploring the wonders of this National Park. The kids will feel like they've stepped into a storybook when they arrive at Moss Garden with its cool waterfall and green walls. A nearby waterfall makes a splendid backdrop for a lunch or smoko stop. You'll see a huge deciduous fig growing astride a large rock, and are sure to lose count of the variety of ferns and mosses in this lovely natural garden setting. Other popular trails include the 5.6km walk to the Aboriginal Rock Art Gallery and the 3km walk to Baloon Cave. If you want to see the world's largest fern, follow the walk to Ward's Canyon. The best place for swimming is the Rock Pool (about 600 metres return from parking areas). Rest in the shade of fig and casuarina trees and watch for platypus and turtles. There is a picnic area with toilets and a gas barbecue.

---

# Carvarvon Gorge to Emerald

Day: 14

Start: **Carvarvon Gorge** End: **Emerald**

Day 14: Depart Carnarvon Gorge at your leisure today for the drive back to Emerald and the final leg of your two-week adventure. Make a stop in the country town of Rolleston, once the home of Queensland's last legendary bushrangers, the notorious Keiff Brothers. See if you can spot Virgin Rock, a few kilometres from Springsure, named due to its likeness to the image of the Virgin Mary and Child. Keep an eye out for the Staircase Range Cutting, built by Chinese immigrants, which pay tribute to the many early wagon teams that stopped overnight in Springsure. Last stop Emerald. Will this road trip go down as one of your family's most epic adventures? That would be a big YES!

---