

BRISBANE TO BIRDSVILLE 4WD ADVENTURE DRIVE

BRISBANE CITY TO BIRDSVILLE

Duration: 5 days / 1853 km

You've got the four-wheel-drive and you've got the spirit of adventure; let that lead you on the outback trip of a lifetime through southern Queensland to some of Australia's most remote and iconic outback townships.

Getting away early is easy when you're eager to explore new destinations, so there's no doubt that Brisbane will be in your rearview mirror before you can say "let's go on a road trip". However, a cautious traveller is a safe traveller, so it pays to check RACQ's updated road conditions before you leave for very remote areas like Birdsville and Innamincka. Also, ensure you pack enough food and water to last you a few days in case you get stranded outback; and an extra spare tyre won't hurt, either. Tell a few loved ones where you're going and when to expect you to arrive (don't forget to call them and let them know you got there safe and sound) so they can raise the alarm if necessary – just in case!

Experiences: Major Drive Routes



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Brisbane to Goondiwindi

Day: 1

Start: **Brisbane City** End: **Goondiwindi**

Call in at Aratula, at the foot of Cunningham's Gap on the Cunningham Highway, and stretch the legs with a walk through Main Range National Park. Spot the stone cairn, a memorial to early explorers, and breathe in the fresh scent of eucalypts.

Continuing on to Warwick is a gardener's dream in springtime as the town blooms with an impressive amount of roses, one of which, called the Arafuto or 'City of Warwick' rose, was developed especially for the town. No matter the season, Warwick's quaint shops and bustling cafes make it a great spot to grab a bite of lunch before setting off for Goondiwindi.

Goondiwindi is the junction of six highways and therefore 'on the road to everywhere'. It sits just on the Queensland side of the state border with New South Wales and was first explored by Allan Cunningham in 1827. Beef, wool, cotton and wheat are the diverse resources keeping the economy thriving and a number of industry tours are on offer for visitors to glimpse the complexity of these seemingly simple industries. For the fitness and nature inclined, there's a lovely river walk along the banks of the Macintyre River.

Goondiwindi to Cunnamulla

Day: 2

Start: **Goondiwindi** End: **Cunnamulla**

Throughout the five-hour drive through the western regions towards Cunnamulla, the landscape and towns will slowly begin to feel more 'outback'. In Nindigully, the historic hotel, built in 1863, is home to one of the country's oldest and largest pig racing events, a sure sign that you're nearing the outback. If the lure of the outback itself isn't enough, the Culgoa Floodplain National Park sits west of St George and is a haven for four-wheel-drive enthusiasts with many challenging tracks and thick, cozy mulga campsites on offer. For the less four-wheel-drive adventurous, the drive from St George to Cunnamulla brings excitement in koala-spotting along the Wallam Creek. With two million sheep on stations in the Cunnamulla region, it's not surprising that this town boasts Queensland's largest wool loading station. The Cunnamulla Heritage Trail explains the town's fascinating past, while the Stephanie Mills Gallery displays local photographic artwork that provides a unique perspective on the region's scenery.

Cunnamulla to Thargomindah

Day: 3

Start: **Cunnamulla** End: **Thargomindah**

If you're looking for some rest and relaxation, dip into the mineral-rich artesian mud baths in Eulo. A detour to Yowah is worth its weight in opals. This friendly town is the home of many a fossicking site where visitors and long-time opal miners alike can strike it lucky. Upon reaching 'Thargo', head to the Bulloo River Hotel for a cold drink and a well-deserved pub meal. The town was the third in the world to harness the power of artesian water to provide the town's electricity in the late 1800s. Amble along the Bulloo River Walk, discover the treasures of Leahy Historic House and shop for Bulloo Built souvenirs crafted from weathered timbers reclaimed from surrounding stations before heading for the remote and historic I amincka, just over the South Australian Border. Detour to the Dig Tree at the site of the infamous Burke and Wills' final camp to learn about the heroic explorers' catastrophic demise. Finally, stop to view the Aboriginal rock carvings at Cullyamurra Waterhole on the Cooper Creek.

Thargomindah to Innamincka

Day: 4

Start: **Thargomindah** End: **Innamincka**

Get up early and explore the township of Thargomindah this morning. Learn how the power of the artesian water was harnessed to provide the town's electricity in the late 1800s. Amble along the Bulloo River Walk, discover the treasures of Leahy Historic House and shop for Bulloo Built souvenirs crafted from weathered timbers reclaimed from surrounding stations. Leave early enough though for the drive to I amincka - just across the South Australian border. The road starts as sealed bitumen for approximately the first 200 kilometres; then from here on in the rest of this journey is on unsealed roads/tracks only suitable for 4WD. Ensure you are prepared for driving in the Outback and semi-desert regions. Take plenty of provisions with you, including fresh water. Just before arriving at the Queensland-South Australian border, you will reach the famous historic Burke and Wills 'Dig Tree' site on the banks of Cooper Creek, where the Burke and Wills expedition ended in tragedy and the site of their original graves. Just outside of I amincka, stop to view the Aboriginal rock carvings at Cullyamurra Waterhole on the Cooper Creek. Continue on to I amincka for the night.

Innamincka to Birdsville

Day: 5

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

Before leaving Innamincka, learn about the remote outpost's tumultuous history in the re-built Australian Inland Mission Hostel. Fish for yellowbelly or spot turtles in the Cooper Creek waterholes near the town and talk to the locals about which route is the best one to take to reach Birdsville. They're all dirt roads and mainly suitable for four-wheel-drive vehicles only. Walker's Crossing is the most direct but isolated off-road track, and both the Cordillo Downs road and Arrabury Road are more major dirt roads and have various sites to see along the way. The Cordillo Downs shearing shed is the biggest in the world, while the Arrabury road will take you through the ghost town of Betoota. If the roads are rough, take it easy and camp along the way where you find a suitable site. Birdsville has numerous attractions on offer, including the historic Birdsville Hotel. Big Red is a 40 metre high sand dune on the edge of the Simpson Desert and is a wonderful place to watch the sunset over the vast desert horizons only 38 kilometres west of the town.
