

# ANCIENT OUTBACK MOUNT ISA LOOP

## MOUNT ISA CITY TO MOUNT ISA CITY

**Duration: 3 days / 1204 km**

Follow in the footsteps of dinosaurs across an ancient inland seabed and experience the rugged beauty of some of the most dramatically changing landscapes in Australia when you embark on this fascinating drive through Queensland's north west outback.

Fully sealed roads lead you from the largest inland city and mining heart of Australia, Mount Isa, on a round circuit through unique towns such as Julia Creek, Cloncurry, Richmond, Hughenden and Winton. You'll hear the bush legends of yesteryear and meet the colourful characters that live and work here today. They'll greet you with a warm g'day and send you on the trail of dinosaurs where you can fossick for your very own valuable fossils.

While this drive can be conquered in a two-wheel-drive vehicle, some of the detours and side trips may be better suited to a four-wheel-drive. Whatever vehicle you're travelling in, be sure to check the road conditions before you head off on this adventure of a lifetime.

**Experiences: Family Friendly**



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.

## Mount Isa to Richmond

Day: 1

**Start: Mount Isa City End: Richmond**

After arriving in Mount Isa, spend the afternoon exploring Australia's outback mining capital. The best place to start is The Outback at Isa visitor centre, where you can tour a replica mine built and operated by actual miners and head to the underground hospital for a dose of WW2 history. Step further back in time by walking through a miocene forest brimming with peculiar looking creatures and hear Dreamtime stories whilst gazing at magnificent Aboriginal rock carvings and paintings at the Kalkadoon Tribal Centre. As you travel east, the rugged Selwyn Ranges emerge from the horizon. Sprinkled with spinifex, they take on a different appearance every hour of the day as the sun arcs through the sky bathing them in changing light. View some of the oldest art on earth at Sunrock and then head on to Cloncurry. Built on the copper and beef industries Cloncurry is home to the huge open mine pit of the Ernest Henry Mine, named after the bloke who first discovered copper in the area. Learn about the history of the outback's greatest savior, the Reverend John Flynn, who launched the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the late 1920s.

# Richmond to Winton, Via Hughenden

Day: 2

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

Upon reaching Richmond, a visit to Kronosaurus Korner should be high on your list. Journey back 100 million years, when this whole area was below the water-line of a great inland sea. Study the remains of Australia's best-preserved dinosaur skeleton, Minmi, which takes pride of place alongside the Richmond Pliosaur, which is Australia's best vertebrate fossil and one of the world's finest Pliosaur skeletons. If fossil fever takes hold, grab a map and head to one of the free fossicking sites close to town. Almost every stone overturned contains some form of fossilised material and impressive bones are still commonly found. Then have your finds identified by the resident fossil curator. Next, it's off to Hughenden, which lies on the banks of Queensland's longest river. To greet you is a mammoth life-size dinosaur replica, locally referred to as 'Hughie'. The next stop, Winton, is best known as the place where Banjo Paterson penned and first performed Australia's adopted anthem, 'Waltzing Matilda'. Hear the ghost of the swagman by the billabong and lots more at the fabulous Waltzing Matilda Centre. Spend the day exploring quirky Winton with its outback country pubs, the open-air Royal Theatre, Arno's Wall and the Music fence.

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# Winton to Mount Isa

Day: 3

Start: **Winton** End: **Mount Isa City**

On the road to Mount Isa, pull over and have morning tea beneath huge red river gums and coolibah trees on Combo Waterhole, 145 kilometres out of Winton. This deep, semi-permanent billabong is believed to be the site that inspired the writing of Waltzing Matilda by Banjo Paterson in 1895. Afterwards walk across the stone-pitched overshot weir, built by Chinese labourers, more than a century ago. Kynuna is just a couple of clicks down the road. You can't drive past the famed Blue Heeler Hotel and not have a peep inside. Some locals are keen to tell you that this is the bar where Banjo swigged beer and performed his verse. Buy a drink and earn the right to put your name up on the wall. Next stop is the small outback town of McKinlay and, yes, another famous outback pub. While it's not actually in the fictional Northern Territory town of Walkabout Creek, McKinlay's Walkabout Creek Hotel is Mick Dundee's waterhole in the Crocodile Dundee films. The town is home to Australia's smallest public library and the BHP Cadington Mine is just down the road. From here it's an easy run back through Cloncurry and into Mount Isa.

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