SOUTHERN OUTBACK DRIVE

BRISBANE CITY TO BRISBANE CITY

Duration: 10 days / 2037 km

For a fascinating insight into life on the land, a visit to the largest cattle selling centre in Australia is a must and answer the call of the universe with a tour of the Cosmos Big Sky Observatory. In Charleville, find out why you should join the Easter ‘bilbies not bunnies’ campaign on a visit to the Bilby Experience and discover the exquisite boulder opal in Quilpie. Follow the footsteps of giants in Eromanga and discover the first town in Australia to produce hydro-electric power for street lighting. From sheep stations to national parks, Eulo offers all the options before spending some time indulging in the artisian mud springs. End off this amazing drive with a relaxing sunset cruise on the Balonne River and a cheers to a fabulous road trip at the longest continually licensed pub in Queensland.

Experiences:

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Brisbane to Roma

Day: 1

Start: **Brisbane City** End: **Roma**

Point the car west and travel along the Warrego Highway to Queensland's Garden City, Toowoomba. Stop for morning tea at Picnic Point, best known for its expansive views across the Great Dividing Range. If time permits, call into the Cobb & Co Museum, before following the tracks of these original people movers to Chinchilla, the Melon Capital of Queensland. Relax on the banks of Charley's Creek with a picnic lunch. Next stop is Roma, home of the 'Big Rig' and the gateway to cattle country. At the Big Rig you can choose from a selection of guided and self-guided tours including the popular Night Show Sunset Experience. Join an experienced 'Roma Rigger' guide at the base of the towering rig to hear stories of intrigue, drama and sabotage. Learn how the events that occurred in Roma threatened to destroy the Australian oil and gas industry - before it even began. Overnight Roma.

Roma to Charleville

Day: 2

Start: **Roma** End: **Charleville**

For a fascinating insight into life on the land, a visit to the largest cattle selling centre in Australia is a must. On most Tuesdays and Thursdays (may vary due to seasonal conditions) you can join a retired farmer or grazier for a guided tour of the Roma Saleyards. Imagine the firsthand stories they will share! While there, visit the new multi-media Interpretive Centre (open daily). Grab some refreshments from the on-site canteen (open on sale days) before you travel further west to Mitchell. See the original courthouse where local bush rangers, the Ke iff Brothers were committed to stand trial then head to Arrest Creek, where they were captured. Cool off with a refreshing swim in the natural artesian water at Mitchell Great Artesian Spa, your last stop before Charleville. The universe is calling you tonight on the Cosmos Centre Big Sky Observatory Tour. The entire roof of the Observatory rolls off to reveal stars, planets and the Milky Way shimmering with incredible clarity against dark night skies. Stay 2 nights in Charleville

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Charleville

Day: 3

Start: **Charleville** End: **Charleville**

Do you want to know a secret? During WWII the Charleville Airfield was a Top Secret Base for the USAAF. Locals were sworn to secrecy about the 3500 American airmen and ground crews who took over this western Queensland airfield in 1942. Find out much more and take a peek at the newly uncovered secret sites on a 1.5 hour guided tag-a-long tour. Head into town to the historic Hotel Corones for the Stories and Scones tour. The hotel was completed in 1929 during Charleville's wool boom. With its jazz hall, embossed plaster ceilings and en suite bathrooms it's not hard to imagine why it was the hotel of choice for graziers, wool-buyers and the odd celebrity! Find out why you should join the Easter 'bilbies not bu ies' campaign on a visit to the Bilby Experience. The work carried out by volunteers to save the Bilby from extinction is nothing short of inspirational. Be prepared to be impressed on a guided tour of the facility with an experienced Bilby Keeper.

Charleville to Quilpie

Day: 4

Start: **Charleville** End: **Quilpie**

Today you'll visit one of the smallest towns in Australia to retain its own postcode. Cooladdi, taking its name from an Aboriginal term for 'black duck', was once home to 270 residents. Now only four remain. Call into the only business in town, the Fox Trap, a pub, post office, restaurant and motel rolled into one. On arrival in Quilpie, make your first stop the Visitor Information Centre, Museum and Gallery. Quilpie is home to the exquisite boulder opal. While in town you can try your luck in the free opal fossicking area and see the stunning Opal Altar at St Finbarr's Church. Quench your thirst and enjoy a great pub meal at the Quilpie Heritage I . Late this afternoon, drive approximately 7.4km from Quilpie to take in a spectacular sunset from Baldy Top, a magnificent boulder formation, millions of years old. The relatively easy ten-minute climb to the top will reward you with breathtaking panoramic vistas, the perfect sunset photo stop. Overnight Quilpie.

Quilpie to Eromanga

Day: 5

Start: **Quilpie** End: **Eromanga**

See skeletal remains from one of the largest animals to have walked the earth at the Eromanga Natural History Museum. Picture a large plant-eating sauropod dinosaur, 30 metres long and 6.5 metres high and you're getting the idea. On the guided Australian Dinosaur Giants tour you can touch a 95 million year old dinosaur bone, watch fossil preparation in action and see the incredible Eulo megafauna fossils. While in town, visit the Living History Centre and one of Australia's iconic outback pubs, the Eromanga Royal Hotel est. 1885. Once a Cobb and Co staging post the hotel was built from locally-made mud bricks, some were kiln fired and others were air dried. As you tuck into your perfectly cooked steak and cool ale in the hotel dining room spare a thought for the travellers of old. The pub would have been a welcome sight indeed for weary Cobb and Co passengers after a hot and bumpy trip to the furthest town from the sea. Overnight Eromanga.

Eromanga to Thargomindah

Day: 6

Start: **Eromanga** End: **Thargomindah**

Drive around two hours along the Cooper Developmental Road as it skirts the edge of South West Outback, then take the turnoff for the historic Noccundra Hotel. Look closely at the sandstone walls of this 1882 construction. The sandstone was quarried in New South Wales and transported by Camel Train to its present location. You have to ponder the logistics of this! Grab a bite to eat, hire a canoe or do a spot of fishing along the river. From the hotel it's then about 1.5 hours to Thargomindah on the banks of the Bulloo River. It was the first town in Australia, and third in the world, to produce hydro-electric power for street lighting. A 'smart cookie' came up with the idea to use the water pressure from the Artesian Basin. Collect a swipe card (for a small fee) from the Visitor Information Centre so you can access the Hydro Power Plant, Old Hospital, Old Jail and Leahy House. Once inside the attractions, use the card to activate some interesting videos and lifelike holograms - you'll really feel as though you are part of the story. Overnight Thargomindah.

Thargomindah to Eulo

Day: 7

Start: **Thargomindah** End: **Eulo**

Start your day with an easy stroll along The Bulloo River Walk begi ing at the old Cobb & Co Crossing and ending at Pelican Point Picnic Area. It's the perfect spot for a quiet barbecue breakfast and the perfect time to glimpse local bird life. Depending on your available time and type of vehicle, you have a choice of two routes between 'Thargo' and Eulo. Option 1: Kilcowera Station is about 90 kilometres south of Thargomindah on the well maintained, mainly gravel, Thargomindah - Hungerford road. It's accessible by conventional vehicle but a four-wheel drive is recommended. Visitors can stay a few days on this 49,000 hectare working cattle station to soak up the station experience. Continue the drive loop to Hungerford and Currawinya National Park before rejoining the Adventure Way in Eulo. Option 2: Head east along the Adventure Way and take the short drive to Lake Bindegolly National Park, a wildlife refuge featuring salt and freshwater wetlands. The park is home to more than 195 species of birds, 80 other kinds of animals and 300 species of plants. Travel through sheep and cattle grazing land to Eulo. Eulo is well known for its local honey and bees wax products. Treat yourself to a gourmet soak at the Artesian Mud Baths. Bathe in milky grey artesian mud drawn fresh from ancient springs. Indulge with wine and nibbles as you stretch out in the antique baths in a beautiful bush setting. Overnight Eulo.

Eulo to Cunnamulla

Day: 8

Start: **Eulo** End: **Cunnamulla**

Before you leave Eulo this morning, visit the Artesian Mud Springs. Built up over centuries these Mud Springs were the original release valves for the Great Artesian Basin. Take a selfie with Ke y the life-size Diprotodon (giant Megafauna) found in the Eulo Area. Arrive in Cunnamulla and enter the Artesian Time Tu el at the Cunnamulla Fella Centre to learn about the world's largest underground river journey. Just outside of town is the majestic Warrego River, a birdwatchers paradise. Follow the 2.5km River Walk at sunset to capture the last colours of the day from the viewing deck. Alternatively, you may like to hire a kayak or take a guided kayak tour of this natural wonderland. Overnight Cunnamulla.

Cunnamulla to St George

Day: 9

Start: **Cunnamulla** End: **St George**

The family owned and operated sheep station Charlotte Plains can be accessed on the drive between Cunnamulla and St George. It's worth calling in to see the 1890s station bore pond but many travellers choose to stay a few days to enjoy the station activities. Continuing east make a stop in Bollon for a walk through the Heritage Centre. Arrive in St George and visit Riversands Wines for a wine tasting and vineyard tour. If you're in town on a Thursday, you can book a tour of a fully operational cotton farm as well. For something a little different, call into the Unique Egg to see the humble emu egg carved into a stunning illuminated piece of art. It's a world first. Late afternoon is the ideal time for a relaxing two-hour sunset cruise on the Balo e River. Sandytown River Cruises is an accredited Ecotourism Australia Nature Tour, so you can expect to learn much about the river, local bird life and native plants. Overnight St. George.

St George to Brisbane

Day: 10

Start: **St George** End: **Brisbane City**

Travel south east along the Carnarvon Highway to Nindigully and the famous Nindigully Pub, the longest continually licensed pub in Queensland. Pack your appetite as the challenge of the 'road train' awaits - a whopper 5kg burger, big enough to feed you and 10 of your closest mates. Continue east along the Barwon Highway to Goondiwindi then take the Gore Highway to Toowoomba. From there you'll re-join the Warrego Highway back to Brisbane.