OVERLANDER'S WAY

TOWNSVILLE CITY TO CAMOOWEAL

Duration: 7 days / 0 km

From the tropical coast and World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef in North Queensland, the Overlander's Way drive route leads you west along sealed roads into the heart of Outback Queensland and on to the Northern Territory. Travel through historic outback towns, striking rocky ranges, red sand landscapes and wide open skies, with easy access to dinosaur attractions, heritage precincts and some of Australia's most quirky outback events.

Follow the route of Australia's legendary drovers, who once moved vast cattle herds from the Northern Territory across Queensland's inland stock routes to coastal markets. Today, the Overlander's Way invites road trippers, caravanners and grey nomads to explore authentic outback experiences, iconic landscapes and the unspoilt beauty of remote Queensland, all without leaving the bitumen.

Experiences:

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Townsville to Charters Towers

Day: 1

Start: **Townsville City** End: **Charters Towers City**

Although this stretch is short in distance, it's rich in things to see and do, so take at least a day to explore the vibrant coastal hub of Townsville. Take a trip out to the Great Barrier Reef where you can dive or snorkel with colourful fish, giant turtles and a forest of bright coral. Visit Reef HQ Aquarium where you can experience the world's largest coral reef aquarium and visit the Turtle Hospital. Learn about the HMS Pandora, which sank on the Great Barrier Reef, at the Museum of Tropical Queensland, see local wildlife at Billabong Sanctuary or try fresh regional produce at the North Shore Farmers Market. The Strand runs along the beach and offers many dining, cafu00e9 and bar options. Magnetic Island, just a short boat ride away, is home to a colony of koalas and comes alive with young, energetic locals and visitors from around the world for a monthly full moon party. As you head west towards Charters Towers, call in at Ravenswood to see magnificent restored buildings and mining remnants such as mullock heaps, old shafts and chimneys stacks. Then continue on to Charters Towers, a beautifully preserved part of North Queensland history.

Charters Towers to Hughenden

Day: 2

Start: **Charters Towers City** End: **Hughenden**

This gold mining town was once the largest city in Queensland after Brisbane. During the gold rush, the town boasted 65 hotels and 29 crushing mills. The prosperity of this era can be seen in the beautifully preserved city centre, known as 'One Square Mile'.rnrnThe stories and legends of the gold rush have been brought to life on the Ghosts of Gold Heritage Trail: The discovery of Gold at the foot of Towers Hill; the Grandeur of the historic One Square Mile; Greed at the Stock Exchange Arcade; and the Ghosts of the Venus Battery.rnrnQueensland's last bushranger was laid to rest at the Charters Towers Cemetery, where you'll find the graves of other notable people including Jupiter Mossman, the Aboriginal boy who helped discover gold at Charters Towers. rnrnFrom the glory days of the late 1800s gold rush, head to Hughenden to step back even further in time to the era of dinosaurs.rnrnAlong the way, stop at Burra Range or Mount Walker lookouts for an uninterrupted view of the densely wooded buffel country. In Pentland, visit the Norwood Police Cells for a glimpse into the tiny town's past and take a break at the welcoming Pentland Hotel.

Hughenden to Richmond

Day: 3

Start: **Hughenden** End: **Richmond**

Hughenden is the heart of dinosaur country; in prehistoric times, it sat on the shoreline of a great inland sea. Nearly 3000 dinosaur and marine fossils have been found in the surrounding countryside. To get a true idea of the beasts that roamed these lands, check out the life-size replica Muttaburrasaurus. This rare find, the first entire dinosaur skeleton found in Australia, catapulted the area into international fame. 'Hughie', as the skeleton was nicknamed, is on display at the Flinders Discovery Centre.rnrnPorcupine Gorge, known locally as 'Australia's little Grand Canyon' is 63 kilometres north of town and Blackbraes National Park, with its unique basalt features is around another 90 kilometres north. rnrnVenture 'underwater' into the prehistoric inland sea to Richmond, the fossil capital of Australia.

Richmond to Julia Creek

Day: 4

Start: **Richmond** End: **Julia Creek**

In Richmond, explore the amazing collection of marine reptile fossils at the award-wi ing Kronosaurus Korner. The museum is home to Australia's best-preserved dinosaur skeleton, Minmi, and the Richmond Pliosaur, one of the world's best skeleton fossils. See the fossil preparation area, then grab a map and fossick at one of the free designated sites and have the fossil centre curator identify your find. Step back into the present and wander Hughenden's bougainvillea-lined streets and lush gardens where naturally round limestone moon rocks are scattered throughout. Explore the Bush Tucker Gardens on the banks of Lake Fred Tritton where you will find local native plants labelled with their traditional purposes. The lake has sandy beaches, a boat ramp, free barbecues and a playground, making it an ideal place to relax, swim and fish for barramundi or red claw. Richmond's business district of yesteryear can be discovered on the Heritage Walk, which includes a replica of an original 1860s homestead. Head further west to Julia Creek for spectacular outback sunsets and a chance to gaze at a thick blanket of stars that covers an outback night.

Julia Creek to Cloncurry

Day: 5

Start: **Julia Creek** End: **Cloncurry**

Meet the endangered marsupials known as du arts living in special enclosures at the Julia Creek Visitor Information and Interpretive Centre, called 'At The Creek'. This multi-award wi ing centre is constructed from a variety of recycled materials sourced from local railway fettler's cottages and other materials and focuses on the themes of water, Country and people. Learn about how the Great Artesian Basin sustains life in the Outback or have a picnic on the moon rock chairs and tables. Follow the nature trail or hire free bicycles and follow the historical trail. Visit the Opera House, McIntyre Museum and if you are a guest of the Julia Creek Caravan Park, enjoy a free soak in the new Artesian Bath Houses. In April each year, the town population swells to 4,000 for the a ual Dirt 'n' Dust Festival. The festival includes horse racing, professional bull riding and novelty events such as bog snorkelling. For more to see and do in town make sure you call into 'At The Creek' Visitor Centre for a map and full details.

Cloncurry to Mount Isa

Day: 6

Start: **Cloncurry** End: **Mount Isa City**

Continue along the Overlander's Way to Cloncurry, the birthplace of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is as integral to outback survival today as it was when it serviced these remote outposts of Australia's vast inland when the Reverend John Fly launched the flying medical service in the 1920s. Learn how he harnessed the emerging technology of the pedal radio to pioneer outback radio communication when visiting the John Fly Place Museum and Art Gallery. On the theme of aviation, visit the original Qantas hangar where the first passenger flew from Longreach to Cloncurry in 1922.rnrnCloncurry was named by explorer Robert O'Hara Burke and you can see his drink bottle at the Burke and Wills display in the Cloncurry Unearthed Museum at the Mary Kathleen Memorial Park, where you can learn about the former Mary Kathleen uranium mine.rnrnOther attractions include the Cloncurry Cemetery with graves dating back to the 1880s, the Court House, which was built in 1898, and Chinaman Creek Dam where you can swim, picnic and take in an outback sunset. From Cloncurry, the Overlander's Way winds through the spectacular Selwyn Ranges to Mount Isa.

Mount Isa to Camooweal

Day: 7

Start: **Mount Isa City** End: **Camooweal**

Mount Isa is outback Queensland's only city and offers a melting pot mix of culture, industry, history and nature. The town's major industries are mining and beef production, and visitors can experience both at the Outback at Isa visitor centre, home to the Hard Times Mine. Descend 22 metres underground to feel the earth move with the firing of the drill face and try real mining equipment. Outback at Isa also houses an outback park and the Riversleigh Fossil Centre. Lake Moondarra, a few kilometres out of town, offers excellent barbecue facilities, swimming, fishing, water sports and a lookout. Before leaving Isa, call in to the School of the Air for a glimpse into classes conducted via satellite internet with students from remote communities and cattle stations. See the WW2 Underground Hospital or take a city bus tour. The final stop is Camooweal, a suburb of Mount Isa 188km away. There you can visit the Drovers' Camp to learn about this historic droving town or the Camooweal Caves National Park, which is honeycombed with sink holes dating back 500 million years.