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An unforgettable adventure in Australia's heartland



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Northern Territory

If you're driving down the Explorer's Way along the Stuart Highway from Alice Springs or Darwin, a small diversion exploring The Outback Loop region is a great way to extend your trip.

The easiest way is to turn left at Marla onto the Oodnadatta Track, which will take you to Oodnadatta, William Creek and Marree. From Marree, you can head up either the Birdsville or Strzelecki tracks.

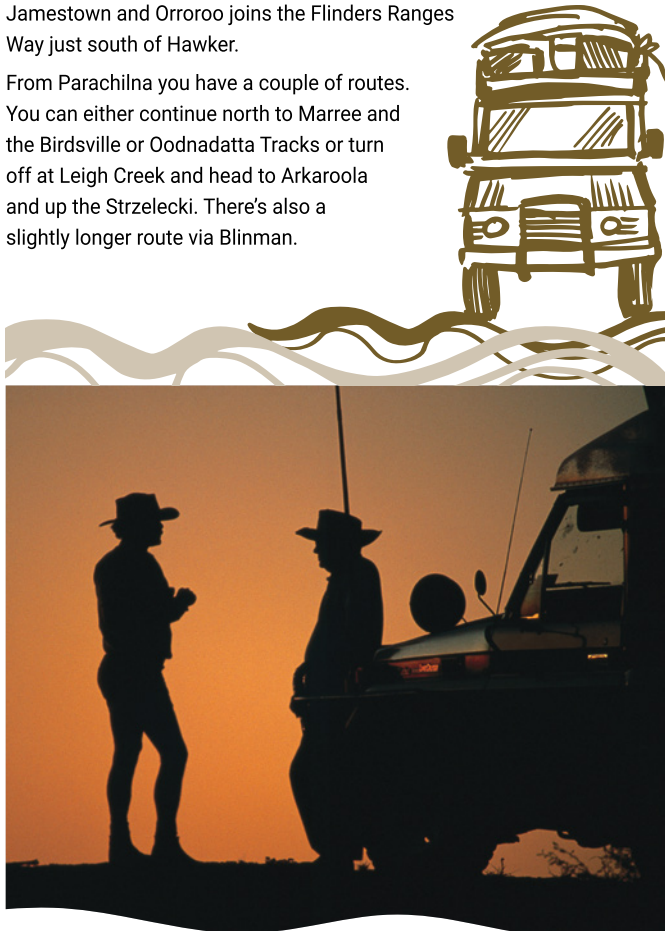
Alternatively, turn off at Kulgera Roadhouse and go bush to Finke and then down to Mt Dare. From Mt Dare, you can either head to Dalhousie Springs and across the Simpson Desert to Birdsville, or head south to Oodnadatta.

South Australia

Approaching The Outback Loop from Adelaide is a beautiful way to see South Australia's Mid North and Southern Flinders Ranges before entering the outback.

Parachilna is the stepping-off point and is reachable from Quorn via the Augusta or Horrocks Highways. Alternatively, RM Williams Way via Jamestown and Ororoo joins the Flinders Ranges Way just south of Hawker.

From Parachilna you have a couple of routes. You can either continue north to Marree and the Birdsville or Oodnadatta Tracks or turn off at Leigh Creek and head to Arkaroola and up the Strzelecki. There's also a slightly longer route via Blinman.



Queensland

The most direct way to The Outback Loop from Brisbane is via the Warrego Highway to Charleville, where the road changes to the Diamantina Development Road. Take this road to Quilpie, and then you have a couple of choices.

You can continue along the Diamantina Development Road to Windorah and into Birdsville, or take the Cooper Development Road to Eromanga and Thargomindah to Innamincka. Note that the road changes surfaces from bitumen to dirt at the SA border.

If you're coming from Northern Queensland, you can arrive at Birdsville via Winton, Boulia, and Bedourie. Alternatively, you can approach from Longreach and Windorah.

New South Wales

Broken Hill is the most obvious major town from which to approach The Outback Loop if you're coming from New South Wales.

Perhaps the most adventurous way is to travel north on the Silver City Highway to Tibooburra and then make your way over to Cameron Corner (where the SA, Qld, and NSW borders meet) via the Dunes Scenic Drive. Continue via Rieks Road to join up with the Strzelecki Track, and make a decision to go either north to Innamincka or south to Arkaroola.

Another less challenging route is to keep going north at Tibooburra and link up with Bundeena Road out of Thargomindah. From here it's a short trip until you hit the Innamincka Road, which leads straight into the tiny South Australian outback town.



OUT OF THE LOOP

Once you've had your fill of all things Outback Loop, there are plenty of options to extend your holiday. Depending on where you are, there are lots of small towns just out of the Loop waiting for you to discover, explore, and experience. It's just a matter of deciding which way to head next.



RECOMMENDED PHOTO OPS



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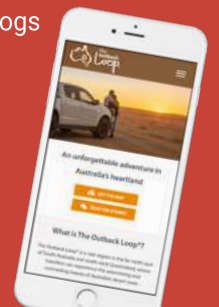
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East to South West Queensland

Windorah — Eromanga — Thargomindah

From Birdsville, it's an easy drive to Windorah, where the Cooper Creek originates. Visit the Whitlala Gate Museum to see outback life in the early pioneering days, grab a drink and meal in the Western Star Hotel, and check out the Windorah International Yabbi Races held just before the Birdsville races.

East of Innamincka, you'll come across Eromanga, the furthest town from the sea in Australia. A prehistoric playground, Eromanga's natural history museum is acclaimed as the home of 'Cooper' the 95- to 98-million-year-old Titanosaur fossil. Another way into and out of the Loop is via the Bulloo Shire. Start in Thargomindah, a bustling town of 230 people. Just out of town, be sure to visit Lake Bindegully National Park for birdwatching and some stunning walks. It's also a great place to stay awhile, unwind, and catch plenty of yellowbelly and big, fat yabbies. Innamincka visitors can take Bundeena Road out of Thargomindah to Julie Kate's Corner and then the (unsealed) Innamincka road into the town.

North to Far West Queensland

Betoota — Bedourie — Boulia

Just north of Birdsville lies the ghost town of Betoota. However, the deserted town bounces back to life twice a year for the Betoota Gymkhana in April and the Races in August.

North of Birdsville, visit a copse of rare waddi trees on your way to Bedourie, home of the Bedourie Camp Oven. Try soaking in the warm waters of an artesian spa and checking out the National Trust-listed Carcory Homestead. You can also get your jolly swagman on by camping under the shade of a coolibah tree in the Diamantina National Park.

Further north, Boulia waits to enthral you with the mysterious Min Min Lights. A 'must-visit' is the Boulia Heritage Museum where you can learn about three distinct periods of history: prehistoric predators of the sea (including fossils of the Ichthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus); Boulia's first people, the Pitta Pitta, and their culture; and Stonehouse Cottage, which provides a window into early pioneering life.



South-East to Northern New South Wales

Cameron Corner — Tibooburra — Malparinka

If you're on the Strzelecki, head to Cameron Corner and stand at the intersection of South Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland. Check out the Dingo Fence, play nine holes of golf in three different states, and follow it up with a meal and a drink at the Cameron Corner Store.

Head south to Tibooburra, home to the Wadigali, Wongkumarra, and Malparinka Aboriginal people. View artefacts and photographs at the Keeping Place Museum. See the upside-down whaleboat replica of the vessel Captain Sturt dragged with him from Adelaide. Drop into the Family Hotel to see some stunning artworks by famous artists, including Russell Drysdale and Clifton Pugh.

Next stop is Milparinka. Check out the Baker's House with its insight into pioneering life, and the old Police Station, which is now an art gallery, souvenir shop and visitor information centre. Have a beer in the town's only commercially operating business, the Albert Hotel.



West Into the Northern Territory

Explorer's Way — Coober Pedy to Alice Springs

Turn off at William Creek and head to Coober Pedy, an opal mining town renowned for its underground community. Stay at a range of above and underground accommodation, or go noodling for opals, or take a guided opal tour. Visit some of the quirky underground dwellings, attractions, souvenir shops, galleries, restaurants, and cafés.

Head up Explorer's Way to Marla, the last major stop before you hit the NT. Marla's Travellers' Rest is a sprawling roadhouse, hotel/motel, restaurant, servo and supermarket, all in one place. An ideal overnight stay on your way to the Alice and beyond.

Other whistle stops on your way include the SA/NT border crossing... definitely worth a selfie; Kulgera Roadhouse, which bills itself as the first and last pub in the Territory; and Eldundaa — the turning-off point for Uluru — with its big Desert Oaks Roadhouse that has a lot of accommodation and camping options.

South to the Flinders Ranges

Wilpena Pound

Parachilna in the Flinders Ranges is the stepping-off point for The Outback Loop. However, if you're looking for an adventure before you start travelling one of the Loops, why not consider a station stay? There are 27 properties throughout the Flinders Ranges where you can experience life on a working sheep station.

Bed down for a night or two (or more) in accommodation that ranges in styles from bush camping and glamping to shearer's quarters and elegant homesteads. Most stations are family-owned and offer all sorts of experiences to keep you busy, including exploring superb 4WD tracks, stretching your legs hiking to places other travellers won't get to see, or going on a guided tour with the host. Some even offer scenic flights.

Don't forget the rest of the Flinders, including the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, which remains a place of enormous significance to the local Adnyamathanha people. Be sure to visit Wilpena Pound for spectacular views and the other notable towns and drawcards such as Blinman, Hawker, Brachina Gorge, Rawnsley Bluff and more.



Know Before You Go

Accommodation Options

Outback accommodation options include hotels, motels, cabin parks, caravan parks, campgrounds, homestays, station stays and roadhouses. It is recommended where possible to pre-plan your holiday and book in advance to ensure you get the accommodation that's right for you.

Clothing

Take care when travelling in remote areas during summer, as temperatures in outback Australia can reach over 40°C (104°F). Always wear a hat, shirt, sunglasses, SPF30+ sunscreen and insect repellent. Swim clothes and a towel are also a good idea. And remember to carry plenty of water with you.

Desert Parks Pass

The Desert Parks Pass is your passport to South Australia's breathtaking outback parks and covers camping (where permitted). Purchase a Desert Parks Pass, and you'll get a handbook with information on all eight parks, safety instructions for outback driving, vehicle supply checklists, wildlife information and detailed maps. The pass is valid for 12 months and is issued on a per-vehicle basis.

Climate

The Outback Loop falls within the desert zone, so summer days can be scorching, while nights are often quite cold. In fact, the Simpson Desert Parks are closed from 1 December to 15 March. The best time to visit Australia's outback is between May and September when the temperatures are much cooler and the flies won't carry you off.

Fire Danger

During fire danger season (1 November to 30 April), there are strict conditions for lighting any fire, including campfires. On Total Fire Ban Days, all fires are banned. Before lighting any fires, avoid severe penalties by checking with the Country Fire Service at www.cfs.sa.gov.au, or the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361. In an emergency, call 000.

Outback Travel Tips

- This map is a guide only. Make sure you carry appropriate maps.
- Please preserve the incredibly fragile environment when travelling The Outback Loop. Arid landscapes support a wide range of truly unique and amazing plants and animals.
- Up-to-date road conditions can be checked via the Far Northern and Western Areas Road Condition hotline — 1300 361 033 or by visiting www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads. Alternatively, call the Desert Parks information line on (08) 8646 5328.
- Use only recognised Public Access Tracks and designated camping areas. Seek prior approval from landholders to use private tracks.
- Camp only in designated areas or where you have obtained permission by the land manager.
- Camp more than 500 metres away from stock watering points to avoid disturbing grazing stock.
- Do not collect wood in outback areas — it is in limited supply and used by wildlife for shelter.
- Use designated dump points for RV and caravan waste, and take your rubbish to the nearest town facilities for disposal.
- Plan your toilet stops by checking the distance to the toilet amenities. If toilets are unavailable, dig a deep hole, burn any toilet paper and fill in the hole.
- Please do not use soap or detergents in or near waterholes, stock watering points or artesian springs.
- Avoid a repair bill, or getting stranded, by not driving after dusk and before dawn. Sheep and cattle also graze on unfenced pastoral properties, so drive with caution.
- Ensure you're carrying adequate supplies of fuel, food and water.
- Notify a responsible person of your itinerary, intended route, stopovers, arrival times and dates.
- Mobile phones don't work in the SA outback. Carry a satellite phone, EPIRB and a UHF radio. Use channels 11-30, and in an emergency, channels 1-8 or 31-38.
- Drive four-wheel-drive vehicles at reduced speeds on unsealed roads.
- Take frequent rest breaks and change drivers regularly.
- Obey all road closure signs.
- If you break down, DO NOT LEAVE YOUR VEHICLE.

Mechanical Tips

- Get your vehicle serviced before you go. Be sure to pack spare spark plugs, fuses, hoses, fan belt, wheel brace, jack, torch, jumper leads, and tow rope.
- Check radiator and hoses; flush radiator.
- Check fuel and temperature gauges are working.
- Check fan belt for tension and cracking.
- Check tyres, including spare(s), for wear, tread and inflation.

Emergency Breakdown Services

Automobile Association of Australia (AAA) National Emergency Breakdown Service call 131111

More Information

Outback travel advice from the RAA, visit www.raa.net and from RACQ, visit www.racq.com.au
Download the latest 4WD Tracks & Repeater Towers brochure at www.southaustralia.com
Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Way Map www.aiatsis.gov.au/exlore

The Outback Loop

The Outback Loop is a vast region in the far northeast of South Australia, stretching into South West Queensland, where travellers can experience the astonishing and contrasting beauty of Australia's desert zone.

Ranging from Parachilina in the south to Birdsville in the north, and Mt Dare in the west to Innamincka in the east, The Outback Loop incorporates three iconic outback tracks – Birdsville, Strzelecki, and Oodnadatta – and the Simpson desert to the top of South Australia. The area, which covers a diverse range of environments including sandy and stony deserts, floodplains, mountain ranges, and wetlands, invites travellers to explore this unique region.

The three iconic outback tracks on the Loop feature some of SA's quirkiest towns, characters, and little-visited attractions, and provide some terrific off-road camping spots. All are well maintained and are monitored continuously to let drivers know if there are any problems, such as weather events, flooding, etc.

Take the time to immerse yourself in this unique region, and write your own unforgettable adventure in Australia's heartland.

So, what is the Outback Loop?

The Outback Loop can be sorted into three main loops.

The Full Loop – From Parachilina to Arkaroola, Innamincka, Birdsville, Simpson Desert, Dalhousie Springs, Mt Dare, Oodnadatta, William Creek, Marree, to Parachilina.

- The Birdsville/Innamincka Loop – From Parachilina to Arkaroola, Innamincka, Birdsville, Mungernannie, Marree, to Parachilina.
- The Oodnadatta/Birdsville Loop – From Marree, to Mungernannie, Birdsville, Simpson Desert, Dalhousie Springs, Mt Dare, Oodnadatta, William Creek, to Marree.

Naturally, you can start and finish wherever you like and, of course, you don't have to do an entire loop – just what appeals to you. You can even create mini loops if you like.

Talk to a local for the best and most interesting routes.

How much time should you allow?

The word 'hectic' doesn't exist in the outback. If you're keen on driving much of The Outback Loop, take it easy and allow plenty of time. It's not something that can be done in a couple of days; you need to plan on spending a couple of weeks to appreciate this stunning area.

How to use this map

This map is designed as a guide only and to give you an insight into this unique region. We recommend purchasing detailed maps of your planned route and ensuring you have the most up-to-date road and weather information.



Air Access

The Outback Loop isn't just for 4WD drivers. You can still see and experience The Outback Loop by taking an air tour.

To see the Loop from the air is truly a bucket-list experience. A birds-eye view over Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, the Diamantina, and Channel Country after the rains is an experience like no other. Expect to see a gorgeous fan of spidery water tendrils crisscrossing desert plains with hints of green at the edges.

The water brings new life to the region as it flows into small and large waterholes that revitalise the areas and provide an oasis for wildlife. Look out too for fields of wildflowers in amongst the stony and desert scrub. There are airstrips at towns dotted around The Outback Loop, including, Arkaroola, Birdsville, Innamincka, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mount Dare, Oodnadatta, and William Creek. Parachilina can be accessed via Leigh Creek to the north or Blinman to the east. Transfers are available for both locations.

Many tour operators regularly fly to these outback towns as part of tour packages. And, of course, most have a pilot on board who is also a skilled guide and will talk you through the many facets of the landscape below. There are also tour operators on the ground at each of these towns, who will pick you up and take you to your accommodation, then show you around the places of interest and take you to nearby experiences and activities.

The airstrip at Birdsville is literally across the road from the hotel and is the only one commercially serviced by Rex Airlines, with four flights a week from Queensland. See www.rex.com.au.

All the air tour operators below are available for charter or have packages to The Outback Loop:

- Kirkhope (ex Moorabbin, Victoria)
- Rex (ex Charleville, Birdsville, Thargomindah)
- WrightsAir (ex William Creek)
- Chinta Air (ex Adelaide, Flinders Ranges)
- Arid Air (ex Port Augusta)
- SeaAir Pacific (ex Coolangatta)
- Air Central West (ex Longreach)
- Fargher Air (ex Parachilina)
- AirCruising (ex various Australian locations)
- Banksia Adventures Pty Ltd (ex Adelaide)
- Bush Pilots (ex Hawker)
- Outback Aussie Tours (ex Longreach)
- Outback Spirit Tours (ex Sydney)
- SouthWest Air Service (ex Charleville)
- Travel West (ex Charleville, Brisbane)



Bucket-List Highlights

Beer in the Birdsville Pub

A bucket-list item for many Australians, an ice-cold beer in the front bar of the country's most iconic hotel is a 'must-do' if you're travelling to Birdsville. The heart and soul of the town since 1884, the front bar of the Birdsville pub is one of those places where there are no social boundaries. Once you're having a well-deserved drink in the pub, everyone starts to loosen up, and that's when stories are told, experiences related and legends created.

Sunset Cruise on the Cooper Creek (Innamincka)

The best way to indulge in the beauty of the Cooper Creek at Innamincka is to take a sunset cruise onboard the pub's covered boat, 'Kingfisher'. With a drink in hand, witness handsome gums and acacias silhouetted against a burnt orange backdrop, as majestic pelicans on their last flight of the day glide inches above the creek's mirrored surface.

Early Animal Life Unearthed at Nilpena Station

(approx 40 km from Parachilina)

Five hundred and fifty-five million years ago, the desert backdrop of the Flinders Ranges was submerged below shallow tropical seas, inhabited by the earliest evidence of complex life on earth.

For a limited season, pre-book an 'exclusive access' guided tour to one of the most significant Ediacaran fossil sites in the world. Visit www.prairiehotel.com.au/fossils for details.

Arkaroola Ridgetop Tour

The Ridgetop Tour showcases the majesty of the Northern Flinders Ranges and is a 'must-do' experience at Arkaroola. You'll travel in a specially constructed open-top 4WD vehicle on a 4.5-hour guided tour of some of the most spectacularly rugged country on Earth. Drink in 360-degree views with morning or afternoon tea at Sillers Lookout – a lofty pinnacle at the end of the track.



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- Community campground and powered sites

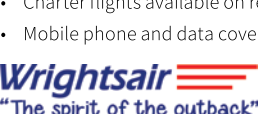
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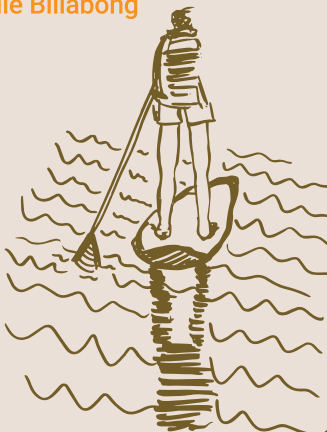


Swim in Dalhousie Springs

Take a dip in a natural hot spring where the spring water bubbles up from deep underground. The water temperature varies from 38-43° C around the pool, so if you're getting too hot in one place, you can swim to another. In Arrernte, the name for Dalhousie Springs is Irlwanyerre. The springs are sacred to the Lower Southern Arrernte, and Wangkanguru Aboriginal people and home to unique species of fish, such as the Dalhousie Hardyhead and other rare aquatic life found nowhere else in the world. Don't forget, you'll need to purchase an SA Desert Parks Pass to camp at or visit Dalhousie Springs.

Swim or Paddle-Board in Birdsville Billabong

The Birdsville billabong is a surprising oasis in the middle of this outback desert town. Located on the edge of the town, the billabong is a drawcard for locals and tourists alike for swimming, paddle-boarding, kayaking, fishing and walking. Make your way around to Pelican Point, a small peninsula across the water and a particularly beautiful place where you can observe the local birdlife, small marsupials and beautiful outback sunsets.



Stargazing at Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre and Arkaroola

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is not only home to Australia's largest salt lake but is also one of the darkest locations in Australia. The large, flat salt lake ensures unobstructed views, and when the lake is full, the water reflects the stars from above, creating an absolutely spectacular sight. Another spot well worth visiting is the observatory at Arkaroola. Discover galaxies, solar systems, suns, planets, nebulas, and billions of stars light-years away, from the inside of three impressive privately owned observatories.

Mutonia Sculpture Park, Alberrie Creek

Bizarre boltings, wacky weldings, and peculiar spare parts combine to create a world of quirky sculptures at the Mutonia Sculpture Park on the Oodnadatta Track. A metal oasis on a lonely stretch of desert road, these strange industrial sculptures are the brainchild of designer and ex-mechanic Robin Cooke and have delighted travellers since 1997. Located 60 km west of Marree, look out for 'Plane Henge', 'Big Dog', and a range of smaller robot structures, amongst others.

Aussie Movies in Innamincka

If you love iconic Aussie movies, what better way to see them than in a totally outback setting, under a blanket of millions of stars. Starlight Cinema is a feature of the Innamincka Hotel, and what better way to finish off a great meal in the Outback Bar than relaxing in a deck chair, watching the likes of *Dog Lost*, *Last Cab to Darwin*, *Crocodile Dundee*, *Charlie & Boots*, or *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* on the big outdoor screen? Don't forget too, there's also a fabulous 9-hole mini-golf course to keep the kids entertained before the movie starts.

World's Longest Fence

The Dog (or Dingo) Fence is the longest fence in the world at over 5600 km. Originally erected in the 1880s, it is a 1.8 m pest-exclusion fence built to keep dingoes out of the relatively fertile south-east part of the continent and protect the sheep flocks of southern Queensland. The pub is the social hub of Innamincka and features a motel, 18-hole mini-golf, the Starlight Cinema, and its acclaimed air-conditioned 'Outamincka' bar. Not far away, Australia's largest billabong, the stunning Cullamurra Waterhole, is alive with wildlife and birdlife. The area has a strong connection to the tragic story of 19th-century explorers Burke and Wills, whose graves, and the famous Dig Tree, await discovery nearby.



'Must-Visit' Outback Towns

Birdsville

Birdsville lies on the Diamantina River in the heart of Queensland's Channel Country. Once an essential stop on the stock route into South Australia, Birdsville today is an outback hub and a thriving community of around 110 people employed in regional tourism and hospitality, and servicing the area's still-dominant cattle industry. Birdsville's 'must-dos' include an icy-cold beer in the famous Birdsville pub, a refreshing dip in the town's unique billabong, and drinking in a sunset at Big Red.

Innamincka

Innamincka is a tiny outpost on the Strzelecki Track, adjacent to the magnificent Cooper Creek within the Innamincka Regional Reserve. The pub is the social hub of Innamincka and features a motel, 18-hole mini-golf, the Starlight Cinema, and its acclaimed air-conditioned 'Outamincka' bar. Not far away, Australia's largest billabong, the stunning Cullamurra Waterhole, is alive with wildlife and birdlife. The area has a strong connection to the tragic story of 19th-century explorers Burke and Wills, whose graves, and the famous Dig Tree, await discovery nearby.

Leigh Creek

The outback township of Leigh Creek is situated west of the picturesque Northern Flinders Ranges. Leigh Creek is ideally located to explore the region's natural beauty, rich Aboriginal culture and heritage, and remarkable geological sites. If you're a nature lover, you'll love the Aroona Dam Sanctuary, which offers spectacular views and a beautiful 5.5 km interpretive walk, traversing wetlands below the dam, mountainous terrain, rocky outcrops, and red-gum-lined creeks. Leigh Creek accommodation options include the Leigh Creek Outback Resort and a caravan park.



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Outback Events

Birdsville Bronco Branding, Campdraft and Rodeo - May

Birdsville Experience the fast-moving action and traditional bush skills as teams tough it out to be the quickest to brand cattle using the traditional method of bush branding. The weekend also features a campdraft competition and a much-anticipated sunset rodeo. Live music and dancing add to the atmosphere while crowds cheer on their favourite bushmen and women.



Camel Cup - July

Marree

For a race meet with a difference, the Camel Cup is hard to go past. The 13-race program features a Calcutta on the Cup, fashions in the field, live entertainment, plus food and bar facilities. Add to that donkey races, dog races, a hole-in-one competition, tug-of-war (with a camel) and plenty to keep the kids out of your hair, and you've got a great family day out.



Big Red Bash - July

Birdsville

One of the biggest and best Aussie rock concerts happens every year at Big Red, on the outskirts of Birdsville under the open skies of the Simpson Desert. Bring the family (even the dog), pitch a tent and take in the atmosphere of this three-night concert featuring the cream of Australian Rock, and plenty of daytime activities, events, and entertainment.



Betoota Races - August

Betoota

Kicking off the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival, the Betoota Races breathes life back into this outback Queensland ghost town as holidaymakers, racegoers, and outback locals celebrate the region's signature event. Friday night will have you boot scooting at the outback bush-dance, followed by a full Saturday of racing fun with a six-race program, fashions in the field, a mystery auction and lucky gate prizes.



Birdsville Races - September

Birdsville

One of the best times to visit Birdsville is during its annual race carnival when the town comes alive, and the population swells to over 7000 people. Visitors converge from all over Australia for two days of quality outback racing and three great nights of live entertainment in an event that takes on the mantle of the Melbourne Cup of the Outback.



The Great Outback Pub Crawl

Definitely a pub crawl with a difference. This one might take you a couple of weeks, but the historic and iconic pubs, the characters, the drive, and the scenery between drinks will be worth it. Start anywhere you like on The Outback Loop, but pubs worthy of a visit include:

Prairie Hotel – Try the Feral Food Platter and a pint of Fargher Lager
Mungernannie Roadhouse – The quirkiest pub in the outback
Innamincka Hotel – The 'Outamincka' bar is fab, as is a Cooper Creek cruise

Birdsville Hotel – A beer in Australia's most famous pub? Tick!
Mt Dare Hotel – You'll need a 4WD to get there and a Desert Pass to go further

Pink Roadhouse, Oodnadatta – Drink in the Pink

William Creek Hotel – A quintessential pub in the middle of nowhere
Marree Hotel – Oodnadatta or Birdsville track? Have a beer and decide

Information within this brochure is correct at time of printing.
For current information and further details visit theoutbackloop.com.au

More Information

For further details and even more events, visit:
www.theoutbackloop.com.au/events

