

BIRDSVILLE BIG RED BASH : **TRAVEL GUIDE** **BRISBANE TO BIRDSVILLE**

This guide will provide two routes you can take from Brisbane to Birdsville for the Big Red Bash, including recommendations on what you can see and do on your journey. Both of these road trips cover a great distance and are therefore split up over a number of days to ensure you make the most of what Queensland's outback regions have to offer.

Make sure to check that your car is in good condition and that you are well stocked with extra fuel and water. 4WD's are generally recommended for outback driving. Head to www.bigredbash.com.au for more outback driving tips.

ROUTE 1

From outdoor galleries to artesian mud baths and out to the most remote areas of South Australia, this journey shows you what Australia is all about! Route one will take you approximately 27 hours driving time or leisurely sightseeing over 4 days down the southern border of Queensland and the northeast corner of South Australia.

Brisbane to Goondiwindi (Approximately 4 hours)

- First stop is Queensland's Garden City, Toowoomba, for a scenic picnic lunch at Toowoomba's heritage-listed Picnic Point Lookout and Parkland which comprises of 160-acres of land perched high on the crest of the Great Dividing Range, with panoramic views over Main Range and Lockyer Valley.
- The First Coat festival has transformed Toowoomba into one of Australia's largest outdoor galleries with over 70 large-scale murals scattered throughout the heart of the city.
- Home to the award winning 'Carnival of Flowers' Festival, you'll also want to ensure that you stroll through the city's Queens Park close by to the Cobb & Co Museum.
- From there head South West towards Goondiwindi, home to Queensland's thriving cotton industry. Entertain yourself with a tour of the town and cotton farm or visit the legendary horse statue, Gunsynd, the champion Australian Thoroughbred racehorse. Afterwards, make sure to swing by the recently refurbished iconic Victoria Hotel before setting yourself up for the night at the Goondiwindi Holiday Park.

Goondiwindi to Cunnamulla (Approximately 5 ½ hours)

- Fill up the fuel tank and get started on the long drive out west to Cunnamulla.
- Fancy a cold one? Stop by Australia's oldest watering hole, The Nindigully Pub, which is located on the banks of the Moonie River and dates back to 1864. Once named Australia's 'Best Country Pub', you can unwind at happy hour on the verandah, while you enjoy live acoustic music and chat to both locals and travellers alike. If you are feeling hungry then try out the 'Road Train', a giant burger that will keep you satisfied until Birdsville!
- For something a bit different in St George make sure to visit The Unique Egg where you can check out Steve Margaritis' unique gallery collection of over 150 carved, illuminated emu eggs.
- Spy a koala as you drive through Bollon as there is a large population of the marsupials around the Wallan Creek area.
- There is plenty to do once you reach Cunnamulla, the largest outback town in the Paroo Shire – kayak down the Warrego River, go sandboarding on the Cunnamulla sand dunes and hike the Cunnamulla Heritage Trail to discover the town's unique character and history.
- Set your camp up for the night at the Warrego Riverside Tourist Park that offers a wide variety of camping options located right next to the Warrego River.

Cunnamulla to Thargomindah (Approximately 2 hours)

- Before you leave town, grab an obligatory 'selfie' with the Cunnamulla Fella statue heading down the Adventure Way towards Eulo, a small town just 67km's from Cunnamulla located next to the Paroo River.
- Treat yourself to a relaxing, outdoor Artesian Mud Bath accompanied with a plate of nibbles and some local wine.
- Check out the extensive number of opals, artefacts, books and souvenirs on sale at the Eulo Bell Arts & Opal Centre.
- If you fancy some extra time in Eulo, head to the Eulo Queen Hotel and Caravan Park for a beer and a good night's sleep.

Thargomindah to Innamincka (Approximately 9 ½ hours)

- Thargomindah was the one of the first towns in Australia to run its street lights using hydro-electricity by using water pressure from the Great Artesian Basin from 1898 to 1951.
- Head to Coffee on Dowling café located next door to the Visitor information Centre for a bite to eat before the long drive towards Innamincka.

- Make sure to stop by the historic sandstone Noccundra Hotel, the only remaining building in the town of Noccundra. If you want to stay longer, you can set up a campsite by the waterhole for only a gold coin donation to the RFDS and wet your whistle before carrying on into the back of beyond.
- The Burke and Wills Dig Tree is located at Cooper Creek on the way to Innamincka. This is where supplies were buried for Burke and Wills with the instruction to 'dig' on their renowned Australian expedition. Don't forget to check out the 'face tree' as well which is just 30metres from this iconic landmark.
- Stop by the Innamincka Hotel for a meal before setting up camp for the night in or around the small town. If camping in the Innamincka Regional Reserve be sure to buy a Desert Parks Pass that will cover entry and camping costs through the Simpson Desert and Witjira National Park.

Innamincka to Birdsville (Approximately 6 hours)

- The Corellas will wake you up early so that you can get started on the long trip up the Cordillo Downs track towards Birdsville.
- Cordillo Downs is a pastoral lease, currently operating as a cattle station. The property is owned by Anthony Brook, the son of David Brook who owns Adria Downs on which the Big Red Bash is held.
- Stop by the Cordillo Downs historic woolshed, Australia's largest, where a record 85,000 sheep were sheared in the 1880s. The heritage listed building is built out of stone as timber was hard to find on the flat gibber plains, a unique trait when compared with similar sheds of the time.
- The Cadelga Ruins is the old homestead of the Cadelga Station, which was taken over by Cordillo Downs back in 1903. The building would have been quite impressive for the time, despite the isolation and hardships faced from living so remotely.
- When you reach Birdsville grab a cold one from the famous Birdsville Hotel. This iconic outback pub is full of character and local memorabilia, including the hats of past Birdsville residents lining the beams of the front bar.
- Before heading to the Big Red Bash campsite make sure to stop by the Wirrarri Visitors Centre in Birdsville, grab a camel pie from the Birdsville Bakery and stock up on supplies at the Birdsville Roadhouse.

ROUTE #2

From BIG to miniature, via wineries and spas – the surprisingly relaxing road trip to the Big Red Bash. Route two will take you approximately 19 hours driving time or leisurely sightseeing over four days and three nights, along the Warrego Way, directly west across Queensland towards Birdsville.

Brisbane to Dalby (Approximately 3 hours)

- First stop is Queensland's Garden City, Toowoomba, for a scenic picnic lunch at Toowoomba's heritage-listed Picnic Point Lookout and Parkland which comprises of 160-acres of land perched high on the crest of the Great Dividing Range, with panoramic views over Main Range and Lockyer Valley.
- The First Coat festival has transformed Toowoomba into one of Australia's largest outdoor galleries with over 70 large-scale murals scattered throughout the heart of the city.
- Home to the award winning 'Carnival of Flowers' Festival, you'll also want to ensure that you stroll through the city's Queens Park close by to the Cobb & Co Museum.
- From there head west along the Warrego Highway towards Dalby. Along the way, stop by the Jondaryan Woolshed & Station, the oldest woolshed in Queensland now a living working museum of pioneering rural life including shearing, blacksmithing and damper-making demonstrations and horse drawn carriage rides.
- Lake Broadwater Conservation Park near the town of Dalby, protects the only natural lake on the Darling Downs and is home to an array of waterbirds and wildlife. The campsites here are a great place to stay if you need to stop over for the night.
- If you plan on driving on towards Roma, make sure to stop by Thomas Jack Park to stretch your legs among the beautifully landscaped gardens and tranquil sounds of the waterfall.

Dalby to Roma (Approximately 3 hours)

- The Roma Saleyards is the biggest cattle selling facility in the southern hemisphere. Visit the saleyards for a free tour or stop by on a Tuesday or Thursday to catch an auction.
- It wouldn't be an Aussie road trip without a 'big thing', head to Banks Bolts and Fasteners at 177-183 Raglan Street, Roma, to check out the Big Bolt and Nut.
- Stop by the Big Rig for a fascinating look into the history of Australia's oil and gas industry. At the town's Visitor Information Centre, you'll also find plenty of great souvenirs and brochures for the trip ahead.
- The Big Bottle tree located in Edwardes Street is also worth a snap, measuring 9.51 metres, with a crown of 20 metres and dates back to the 19th century.
- With a blend of modern and heritage architecture, the recently renovated Royal on 99 is your best bet for a good coffee, craft beer or lunch.

Roma to Charleville (Approximately 3 hours)

- Relax and unwind along the way with a stop over at Mitchell's Great Artesian Spa, where you can ease tensions and revitalise both the body and the mind.

- Step back in time at the Morven Historical Museum and Miniature Building Display located in the small town of Morven. Here you can see a miniature replica of the pioneer township and a hut made entirely out of kerosene tins!
- While in Charleville, don't miss sinking a pint with the resident ghost at the grand old Hotel Coronas, one of the biggest outback pubs in Australia.
- There is nothing like the star studded outback night sky, end the night with a night sky tour at the Cosmos Centre and Observatory.
- If you are going to stop anywhere in Charleville, make it the Rocks Motel! Their menu offers a wide range of Australian native inspired dishes that capture the essence and adventurous nature of Outback Queensland.
- If you have the time, the 'Bilby Experience' is worth a visit, as you encounter endangered delightful marsupials at its new premise at the town's Railway Station.

Charleville to Quilpie (Approximately 2 hours)

- On your way, you will drive through Cooladdi, one of Queensland's tiniest towns. With a population of four this is one of Australia's smallest towns to retain its own postcode. Stop in to say G'day at The Fox Trap which acts as a roadhouse, post office, pub and motel to anyone passing through town. They have hot pies up for grabs and homemade Worcester sauce to go with them!
- When you reach Quilpie, take a stroll along the Bulloo River Walk, the most tranquil way to appreciate the native flora and fauna of the area. End the walk by trying to catch some yabbies in the Bulloo River.
- If it's a nice day, head to the beautiful Lake Houdraman for a picnic or take a dip at the newly renovated Quilpie Memorial Swimming Pool.

Quilpie to Windorah (Approximately 3 hours)

- Keep driving down Warrego Way and you will reach Windorah, smack bang in the heart of the Channel Country.
- While now non-operational, admire the town's solar farm field or climb the large red sand dunes located on the edge of town.
- If you're a history buff, the one-room courthouse on Albert Street is your best bet. Otherwise, visit the locals at the Visitor Information Centre to grab free wifi and computer access.
- If you head back this way after the Bash, make sure to stick around for the Bronco Branding, Gymkhana & Stockman's Challenge on the 8th July.
- If you decide to stop here for the night before the long drive to Birdsville, make sure to swing by the Western Star Hotel. Not only does it have the title as the 'Best Outback Pub' in Queensland, but is the host town of the famous 'International Yabby Races' held at the end of August each year.

Windorah to Birdsville (Approximately 5 hours)

- On your way to Birdsville you will pass through the ghost town of Betoota, a town with a population of zero. Don't forget to spot the town's big yellow double decker bus.
- You'll also pass the astonishing Dreamtime Serpent – an Aboriginal artwork created from gravel and gibbers found throughout the Diamantina shire.
- When you reach Birdsville grab a cold one from the famous Birdsville Hotel. This iconic outback pub is full of character and local memorabilia, including the hats of past Birdsville residents lining the beams of the front bar.
- Stop by the Burke and Wills tree on the banks of the Diamantina River that was marked as part of the famous expedition in the 1800's.
- Keep an eye out for one of Australia's rarest plants, the Waddi Trees, found on the fringe of the Simpson Desert.
- Before heading to the Big Red Bash Campsite make sure to stop by the Wurrarri Visitors Centre in Birdsville, grab a camel pie from the Birdsville Bakery and stock up on supplies at the Birdsville Roadhouse.