

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

Approximately 25 hours driving time or leisurely sightseeing over 5 days

Adventure meets relaxation on the drive from Darwin to Birdsville, from crocodile spotting and cave exploring to the tranquil hot springs and relaxing strolls in some of the country's best national parks. This journey will take you around five days and four nights.

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.

Darwin to Katherine (Approximately 3 ½ hours)

- The first stop is the Adelaide River, where you have the opportunity to see the magnificent crocodiles whilst cruising along the water. If you are lucky you might also spot buffalos, jabirus, sea eagles, kites and snakes so make sure you keep your eyes peeled! These tours are popular so we would recommend pre-booking.
- Fancy a spot to stretch your legs? Stop off at the Butterfly Gorge National Park for a stunning walk whilst wildlife watching and looking out at the incredible scenery. After the walk head for a swim in the gorge surrounded by an array of butterflies.
- To prepare yourself for the drive ahead, experience a natural thermal hot spring treatment at the Douglas Hot Springs, surrounded by woodland. This is the perfect spot to look out for quirky animals including bandicoots, quolls, and flying foxes.
- Head to The Pine Creek Water Gardens, the place for birdwatching with a selection of rare birds to spot including the elusive hooded parrot.
- A short drive takes you to the Umbrawarra Gorge Nature Park where you can marvel at the impressive historical Wagiman people's Aboriginal rock art on the walls of the gorge. The rock pools and small sandy beaches also provide beautiful swimming spots.
- As you arrive in Nitmiluk get ready for activities – these range from gorge cruises, canoeing and even helicopter rides for the adventurous types. Depending how many activities you decide to do you can either camp by a billabong and fish for barramundi for your dinner or carry on with your journey to Katherine.

Katherine to Lake Woods (Approximately 5 hours)

- A short distance and you'll arrive at Katherine where you can visit The Katherine Museum, which has a wonderful display of photos of the history of the region.
- The nearby fascinating Cutta Cutta Caves, a series of sparkling limestone crystal caverns and pillars dating back 500 million years, are something not to be missed along the journey.
- If you fancy a swim Katherine Hot Springs is a great spot, alternatively drive a further hour and a half and head to the Mataranka Thermal Pools, both have stunning views and are perfect settings for a peaceful swim.
- If you decide to carry on with the journey and head straight to Katherine then set up your tent at one of the many campsites situated here, watch the sunset and be amazed by the clear night sky.
- Feeling hungry? Head to Fran's Devonshire Teahouse in Larrimah to meet the owner Fran, who will serve her legendary pies and pastries. This is the place to stop for a filling camel or buffalo pie.
- Alternatively head to Daly Waters Historic Pub in Daly Waters. The pub is described as a pub "right in the middle of whoop-whoop", the menu includes classics such as a "stake samige", "am buggers", "Te and Koffy" and "Bum Nuts of Toast".
- Located on the western edge of the Barkly Tableland is Lake Woods which is a large ephemeral wetland and is a bird watchers paradise. There is also a camping area here for you to set up your tent for the evening and have a restful sleep.

Lake Woods to Mount Isa (Driving time approx. 9hrs)

- The journey from Lake Woods to Camooweal is nearly seven hours so make sure you have our Big Red Bash Spotify playlist ready to go and get ready to sing along the way!
- When you get to Camooweal – head to the Camooweal Caves NationalPark, these are a series of sinkhole caves that have evolved over millions of years. The caves themselves are not accessible to visitors but there are two stunning walking tracks for you to explore and stretch your legs!
- As you arrive in Mount Isa head to the city's Visitor Information Centre –Outback At Isa and take on the Hard Times Mine Tour. You'll be kitted out in disposable mining attire and a headlamp on an unforgettable 3 - 4 hour tour. You will be guided by a former miner as you descend into a purpose-built mine with 1.2km of tunnels and get up close with the mac machinery as your try your hands at the air-leg drill
- From the fascinating insight into the mining industry development to the cultural diversity of Mount Isa, Outback At Isa's 'Isa Experience', depicts the quiriness of daily life in the early days. As a vibrant and entertaining exhibit, those taking on the Hard Times Mine Tour will only get a taste of what this section of the Centre has to offer.

- The fascinating Riversleigh Fossil Centre features recreations of Australia's prehistoric fauna, plus actual fossils found in the world renowned fields at Boodjamulla National Park near Adel's Grove Camping Ground.
- 6 km downstream from the town you'll find Lake Moondarra. Fit for fishing, swimming and kayaking; this man-made Lake is alive with fish including Barramundi, Archer Fish, Spangled Perch and Sleepy Cod (just to name a few!). Believe it or not, you may even spot a few peacocks at 'Peacock Park' located just behind the spillway.
- Catch a sunset at the 360-degree panorama lookout of the city which promises spectacular views of this iconic outback city. Not only will you have a bird's-eye-view of Buchanan Park (home to Australia's largest rodeo), but it is the perfect location to appreciate the astonishing scale of the city's mine.
- Set up your tent at one of the local campsites and get ready for a good night sleep before your last day of driving before arriving at the Big Red Bash grounds.

Mount Isa to Birdsville (Approximately 8 hours)

- As you get to Bedourie, visit the Mud Hut, one of the first buildings constructed in Bedourie in the early 1880s. Stop by on your way home for the Bedourie Camel and Pig Races on the 8th July.
- Add a boot, thong, croc or jogger to the shoe tree; alternatively, ensure it's your next Instagram upload.
- For more history, head to the Carcoory Homestead Ruins, listed by the National Trust, the building was built in the 1870s.
- 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. Don't forget to check out the 'face tree' just 30metres from this iconic landmark.
- 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 Wirrarri Visitors Centre in Birdsville, grab a camel pie from the Birdsville Bakery and stock up on supplies at the Birdsville Roadhouse.