

# **BIRDSVILLE BIG RED BASH** : **TRAVEL GUIDE** **MELBOURNE TO BIRDSVILLE**

**Approximately 30 hours driving time or leisurely sightseeing over 5 days**

From the big city to the 'back o' Bourke', the journey from Melbourne to Birdsville will take you on a journey across the country, allowing you to walk in the footsteps of the Ned Kelly gang and experience some of Australia's BIG things along the way. The journey will take 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](http://www.bigredbash.com.au) for more outback driving tips.

## **Melbourne to Griffith (Approximately 5 hours)**

- First stop is Sugarloaf, nestled in the Christmas Hills, it is a tranquil setting for a morning coffee.
- In Koonoomoo make sure to visit the Big Strawberry and taste strawberries straight from the patch to your plate. Try the light meals and strawberry desserts in the family café, browse the large range of jams, condiments and souvenirs and get a picture of The BIG strawberry.
- Another picture you must get for your collection is The Big Murray Cod in Tocumwal.
- Head to the Murray River, the third-longest navigable river in the world after the Amazon and Nile, for a scenic drive or walk or go canoeing, boating, or water-skiing. There are 103 golden, sandy beaches here as well so make sure to stop off at one for a swim.
- The Murray River has some of Australia's best known wine regions, so wine lovers can't miss out on visiting some of the local vineyards!
- In Tocumwal enjoy a trip down memory lane at Chrystie's Museum, with a collection of classic cars, trucks, caravans and tractors - there's something for everyone!
- Head on the Ned Kelly Raid Trail when you arrive in Jerilderie. The walk leads you to the sites that Ned Kelly and his gang visited during the 1879 raid on Jerilderie.
- Situated at Luke Park is the magnificent Steel Wings Windmill which was built in 1909-1910. Take a leisurely stroll from here on the Horgan Walk, this is a 10 minute walk along the banks of the Billabong Creekyou will pass many historical sites which are all marked with the history of the area.
- If you fancy doing some water sports then head to Lake Jerilderie.

- Stop off at Sticky-Fingers candy shop for all your favourite old fashioned sweets!
- If you didn't get a chance to visit Melbourne Zoo, be sure to visit the Altina Wildlife Park at Darlington Point, you won't be disappointed with the amount of animals you will see here.
- When you reach Griffith don't leave without an impromptu wine tour of all the winery cellar doors that call the Griffith area home including De Bortoli Wines, Warburn Estate and McWilliam's Wines.

### **Griffith to Eulo (Approximately 9 hours)**

- Head for a stroll at the beautiful Willandra National Park or head further along your journey to Gundabooka National Park.
- When visiting Bourke head to The Back O'Bourke Exhibition Centre which brings to life the story of the Outback. If you visit on Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Saturday at 11am don't miss out on Luke Thomas Back O'Bourke Outback Show featuring camels, clydesdales and trick horses.
- You can also sit back and relax on a Paddle Vessel as you cruise down the Darling river to learn about the regions rich river boat history
- If you have decided to stay overnight in Bourke on a Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday then you must dine out under the stars and attend Poetry on a Plate – listen to Australian poetry, local stories and music around a campfire whilst sharing a delicious meal.
- Call in for a thirst quencher at the hundred-plus year old Barrington Pub
- 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.
- 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.