

Journeys into the Outback

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Best Places to Eat

- » Wagon Wheel Hotel (p410)
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- » Livingstone's (p412)
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Best Places to Stay

- » Blacksmith's Cottage (p418)
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- » Nardoo Station (p414)
- » Wagon Wheel Hotel (p410)

Why Go?

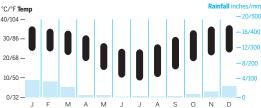
Australia's mystical outback is less a place than a state of mind, and its mythical, spiritual power retains an inexplicable hold on this most urbanised of peoples. Geographically, it lies anywhere west of the Great Dividing Range. Yet to experience it can be elusive.

Driving west from Townsville, you come upon the outback's open spaces within a few hundred kilometres, but if you go expecting cattlemen on horseback or *Crocodile Dundee* types entertaining the crowds in every outback pub, you may be disappointed. Instead, you'll find tiny towns linked by long, roo-strewn roads that slice through vast pastoral plains dotted with surprises: fascinating fossils, eccentric local festivals, blissfully deserted national parks and even striking public art.

The outback can't be experienced on a day trip, but the all-embracing skies, fiery sunsets, star-studded nights and the laconic characters you meet along the way are more than enough reward for all those kilometres.

When to Go

Mt Isa



April-OctoberMild weather and extended opening

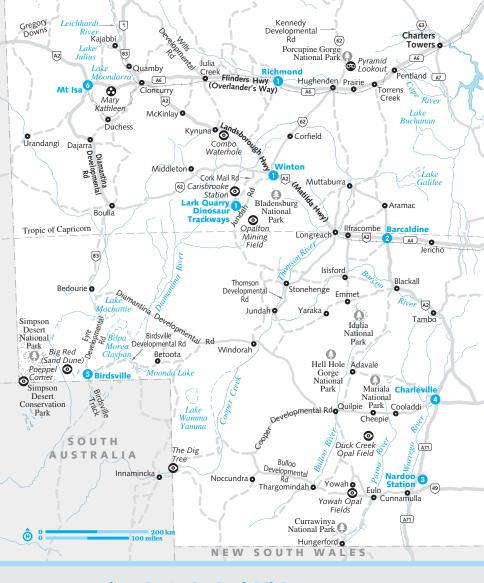
extended opening hours through the winter.

June-September Racing festivals and rodeos take

and rodeos tak place throughout outback Queensland.

November-

March Temperatures soar, rivers swell and roads can flood – take care



Journeys into the Outback Highlights

- Pollowing the dinosaurfossil trail (see boxed text, p413), including the prehistoric stampede at Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways and the fossil museums at Richmond and Winton
- 2 Making a short pub crawl of the iconic timber pubs of Barcaldine, stopping to admire
- the magnificent **Tree of Knowledge** (p417) memorial
- 3 Staring at the multitude of stars above **Nardoo Station** (see boxed text, p414) while soaking in a warm artesian spa with a cold beer in hand
- 4 Listening to a yarn and propping up the bar at
- Charleville's grand **Hotel Corones** (p418)
- 5 Joining in the festivities and revelry at the absurdly popular **Birdsville Races** (p419)
- 6 Descending into the Hard Times Mine (p410) and drilling a rock face at Mt Isa