



14 Day Melbourne to Adelaide 'In the Footsteps of Burke and Wills' 4wd Self drive Adventure

The vastness of the Australian outback beckons as you explore the rugged and beautiful Kinchega, Mootwingie and Sturt National Parks of Outback NSW. You pass Cameron's Corner, the junction of the 3 states, through the Strzelecki Desert to Innamincka and spend time reliving the ill-fated Burke and Wills Tragedy and exploring the expansive waterholes. Crossing the gibber-strewn plains, you experience the outback hospitality of Birdsville before journeying to edge of the Simpson Desert. Tackle the infamous Birdsville Track through Sturt's Stony Desert and the Tirari Desert before a visit to Lake Eyre and Flinders Ranges and you round off a fantastic desert adventure.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1 Melbourne to Mildura

Heading north from Melbourne, cross the Great Divide and head to the old Gold mining town of Bendigo for a morning stop. Continue up the Calder Highway to Sealake for lunch and on through Ouyen. Arrive at Mildura mid afternoon and explore this River land town before setting up your

Overnight camp at the Caravan Park in Mildura. (Full facilities- Shower, toilet and washing machine) (486km (6 hours) driving)

Day 2 Mildura to Mootwingie

Travel north up the valley of Australia's longest river, the Darling until you get to Kinchega National Park near Menindee for a morning stop and look around. Continue on to Broken Hill for lunch and a look around this famous outback Mining town. In addition to the many old buildings and museums, there are numerous arty galleries that are very worthwhile.

Travel north up the Silver City Highway for 53 km before turning right to Mootwingie National Park to set up

Overnight camp at Homestead Creek Camping area. (Shower and toilet). (526km (6 hours) driving, 2 hours walking.)

Day 3 Mootwingie to Tibooburra

After a look around and walk in the National park to explore the Aboriginal Art, make your way north-west to the Silver City Highway and up to Packsaddle Roadhouse for a morning stop. Head north to Milparinka and out to Depot Glen, scene of forced camp of Sturt's Party as they made their way towards the Centre of Australia. Continue north to Tibooburra. This evening can be spent in town at a caravan Park or you can set up your

Overnight campsite in Sturt National Park. (Toilet facilities) (290km (4 hours) driving, 2 hours walking.)

Day 4 Tibooburra to Cooper Creek

Continue west into the Sturt National Park and make a stop at Fort Grey to walk to the Explorer Tree. Continue through to the Roadhouse at Cameron Corner, the border of 3 states. Continue over the roller-coaster sand dunes and on to the Strzelecki Track at the Merty Merty Station turn-off. While it is possible to take the old Strzelecki Track, it is poorly signposted. Continue straight ahead up the better track through Moomba Gasfield before making your way to the small town of Innamincka. After a stop at the store for provisions and fuel, visit the Ranger Station to get a Camping Permit, the restored Elizabeth Symond Nursing Home and make your way down to set up your

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Overnight camp on the Cooper Creek. (No facilities) Perhaps walk up this evening and have a few beers at the pub. (251km (5 hours driving, 1 hour walking))

Day 5 Innamincka

The area is steeped in history and the drama of the Burke and Wills exploration saga. Retrace your step to the turn-off to Wills Grave. Visit Wills Grave this morning and also detour to Kings Marker. Heading out east from Innamincka, you travel past the curious rock formation known as the Rams Head. Deviate to the left to Burke's grave, site of the filming of the Burke and Wills Film. Return to the track and on over the border into Queensland. Ford the Cooper and spend some time at the dig tree, site of Burke and Will's party's depot that they tragically abandoned hours before the explorers returned from the North coast. Retrace your tracks to the turn-off to Cullyamurra waterhole and view Howitt's marker. The energetic can take a walk upstream from the top of the waterhole to the expanse of Aboriginal carvings before setting up camp on one of Central Australia's finest waterholes- Cullyamurra.

Overnight bush camping Cullyamurra Waterhole. (No facilities) Extra time could be spent in the area visiting the beautiful Coongie lakes if desired. (123km (3 hours) driving)

Day 6 Innamincka to Cadelga (Bush Camp)

Heading back to Innamincka, cross the Cooper and head north up to Cordillo Downs. This station has some wonderful outback architecture and Australia's largest Woolshed. Continue north to Cadelga, where it is possible to

Bush camp overnight. (No facilities) (262km (5 hours) driving)

Day 7 Cadelga to Birdsville

Continue north to the Birdsville Developmental road and turn left. Make your way into Birdsville for drink at the pub; one of the Outback's most famous.

Overnight camp at the Caravan Park, near the Diamantina River. **(Full facilities)** (155km (2 & 1/2 hours) driving)

Day 8 Birdsville

Explore the cemetery and the Burke and Wills Camp to soak in some of the pioneering ambience. Take a trip out this afternoon to the edge of the Simpson Desert to 'Big Red', one of the Simpson's largest sand dunes before returning to your

Camp at the Caravan Park. (Full facilities) (75km (2 hours) driving)

Day 9 Birdsville to Mungerannie

Head south down the Birdsville track towards Pandie Pandie Station. Note the memorial on the way to the Page family, who died in 1963 when their car broke down and they tried to walk to safety. Continue down this famous droving route until you reach your

Overnight camping at Mungerannie Roadhouse. (Shower and toilet facilities) (315km (5 hours) driving)

Day 10 Mungerannie to Muloorina

Continuing south, you cross the Cooper Creek, usually dry here as it only rarely makes its way on to Lake Eyre. Pass Etadunna and Dulkaninna Stations before passing through the dog fence. Continue past Lake Harry, with its date palms as a reminder of the Afghan droving days, and explore Marree before setting out north to Muloorina Station. Continue through to Lake Eyre on Madigan Gulf and explore on foot Australia's largest lake, often a dry salt lake. Return to Muloorina Station for your

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Overnight camp near an expansive waterhole. (Toilet and shower facilities) (300km (5 hours) driving, 2 hours walking)

Day 11 Muloorina to Brachina Gorge

Return to Marree and continue down the Oodnadatta track through the ruins of Farina, once thought to be viable for growing wheat! The town of Lyndhurst is the junction of the Strzelecki Track, another important early droving route. Continue south past the Leigh Creek coalfields to the mining town of Leigh Creek. A few kilometres further south; a detour to Beltana is worthwhile to explore the restored historic buildings. Turn left at Parachilna and travel through Parachilna Gorge to Blinman. Turn right here and head through Gum Creek Homestead. Turn right to Brachina Gorge and find a delightful stop to Bush camp. Another option is to the north at Aroona Valley.

Overnight bush camping Brachina Gorge (No facilities) (425km (6 & 1/2 hours) driving)

Day 12 Brachina Gorge to Wilpena Pound

Travel south through Bunyeroo Gorge through the Flinders Ranges National Park. You emerge on the main road and turn right to Wilpena Pound for your overnight camp and walks through the pound. St Mary's peak is energetic but rewarding. Another day could happily be spent in the area if desired.

Overnight camping, Wilpena Pound. (Full facilities). (42km (1 & 1/2 hours) driving, 4 hours walking)

Day 13 Wilpena Pound to Burra

There are a number of 4wd Scenic Treks available in the area if you want to further explore the Ranges. Head south to Hawker and on through the small towns of Craddock and Carrieton to Orroroo. Continue through to Peterborough, where lunch may be had. As you are crossing the railway line, observe the 6 tracks denoting three different gauges used by 3 different states in their railway lines.

Head south along the Barrier Highway to Burra and spend the rest of the afternoon exploring this early copper mining town with its fascinating old buildings.

Overnight camping, Burra. (Full facilities) (251km (3 & 1/2 hours) driving)

Day 14 Burra to Adelaide

Travel south to Hanson and deviate to the right to Clare, a fertile agricultural area also renowned for its wine. There are numerous wineries that can be visited, but be careful of drink driving. There are other wine areas that can also be visited in the region. Continue south to Gawler and on to Adelaide at the end of a wonderful trip in the footsteps of the explorers Burke and Wills. An extension of 2-3 days can also be taken down to Kangaroo Island. (220km (3 hours) driving)

Recommended References

The above itineraries are not intended as the sole guide to the details of your route. Four Wheel Drive Hire Service recommends the following referenced be consulted or purchased prior to departure.

Map

Hema Maps – The Flinders Ranges, Great Desert Tracks of Australia SE

Guide Book

The Flinders Ranges- An Adventurers Guide by Ron and Viv Moon
Discover Australia by 4WD by Ron and Viv Moon.

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Background Reading

The Explorers by Tim Flannery

The Dig Tree by Sarah P Murgatroyd

The Flinders Ranges and Beyond by Ronald Coudrey and Richard Land

Websites

Moon Guidebooks- www.guidebooks.com.au

Hema Maps for an idea of the range of maps and information on suppliers -

www.hemamaps.com.au

NRMA Outback Tracks information

www.mynrma.com.au/travel/go/outback_tracks/index.shtml

NSW National Parks- www.npws.nsw.gov/parks/index.html

SA Desert Parks- www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks