

# Queensland Spirit: Heart of the Outback

## Highlights

### Local Connection

Roma Explorers Inn comes with plenty of country swagger. And standout cuisine hero-ing local produce. Dig in!

### Insider Knowledge

You'll feel positively sprightly going behind the scenes at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum, discovering the region's prehistoric giants.

### Cultural Immersion

Working stations in this part of the world are as big as they are remote. In short, the ideal places to learn about life in the Queensland outback. Oh the stories farmers will tell.

### Sustainable Footprints

Sleep soundly under the canvas of your glamping tent at Mitchell Grass Retreat, knowing you're treading lightly on the land at this eco-resort.

### Wildlife & Nature

The Queensland outback is mesmerising, its vast, empty stretches of road creating a hypnotic backdrop to your adventure through the state.

As this holiday departs at 8.00am from Grand Chancellor Hotel, accommodation will need to be pre-booked for the previous night.

#### 1 Brisbane – Roma

It doesn't take long for the towers of Brisbane to give way to bucolic countryside, fading from rainforest to the vivid hues of the outback. Small in population but big in personality, Chinchilla is the first chance to stretch your legs. The 'Big Watermelon' hints to the fact this is the melon capital of Australia. Grab a slice, or a heartier bite to eat, at the historic Club Hotel (fun fact: it's the only hotel in town that hasn't burnt down) before you journey on to ravishing Roma. The horizons here extend for days, only matched in expanse by the smiles of locals – expect plenty of country hospitality. Toast the end of the day over a glass of wine and regional fare at your Welcome Reception. **Hotel: Roma Explorers Inn. DW**

#### 2 Roma – Quilpie

The further west you travel in Queensland, the slower the outback lifestyle. As evidenced in Charleville, which is a slice of natural paradise for the endangered bilbies and wetland birds. The locals will happily reveal the best places to spot wildlife, ideally over a cold beer and a pub meal at heritage listed Hotel Coronas. The stories that get told here... The countryside onward to Quilpie is mesmerising – long stretches of road and vast expanses of nothing can be humbling. And welcoming, as you'll discover when Mark and Sandra throw open the doors of Ray Station. The family has owned this estate since 1874 and designed the rooms you'll bed down in – set in restored shearers' quarters. But before then, there's a campfire dinner and tunes on the tin piano to be enjoyed. **Hotel: Ray Station, 2 nights. B DW**

#### 3 Ray Station, Quilpie

There's something about being in the country that whets your appetite. Wake, and look forward to a delicious breakfast prepared by your hosts. You won't go hungry here – they're also thinking about what to cook you for lunch and dinner. It's this kind of generosity that flows naturally into eye-opening, and entertaining, stories about the property, including previous caretakers, and how they tended the land. You can even discover more about their fascinating history: at the family cemetery. Head out on a tour, fossick for boulder opal, and revel in the vastness of Quilpie. **B L DW**

#### 4 Quilpie – Longreach

If you're looking for the centre of Queensland, Longreach is pretty much it. After waving goodbye to station life, you're bound for this patch of outback perfection, all red dirt and spinifex and blazing sunsets. There are detours aplenty in this country town, like visiting the Qantas Founders Museum, which pays homage to the fact this is the spiritual heart of Australia's national airline. If the idea of glimpsing 100+ years of aviation history gets your pulse racing, then the vast swathes of nature that surround your glamping tent for the night will slow it down. Switch off, relax and enjoy your eco-friendly cocoon, replete with creature comforts including air-conditioning, ensuites and dreamy beds. There's also a kitchenette, so you can enjoy a BBQ on your private deck. Or venture out for more country flavour at an optional experience outback dinner and show. **Hotel: Mitchell Grass Retreat, 2 nights. B**

#### 5 Longreach – Winton – Longreach

For a petite town, there's an impressive number of things to do in Winton. The biggest attraction of all are the dinosaurs that once roamed here, leaving behind the country's largest collection of dinosaur fossils. Follow in their (large) footsteps at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs, part museum, part working laboratory, where you'll go behind the scenes. Winton's other claim to fame is the fact Banjo Patterson wrote 'Waltzing Matilda' here in 1903. He's not the only creative drawn to town. Graeme Leak created a fence that can be played as an instrument (aka the Musical Fence), and Arno Grotjahn erected a quirky art wall studded with every household object imaginable. The unexpected stories continue at Camden Park Station, a 7,300-hectare sheep and cattle station where fifth-generation farmer 'Outback Dan' will tell you about life on the land... including the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. They didn't have a three-course dinner awaiting them in historic shearing shed; you do. **B DW**

#### 6 Longreach – Spirit of the Outback – Brisbane

Australia has its fair share of epic outback train tours that let you witness the wild beauty of a region while travelling the historic routes taken by past generations. Among them is Spirit of the Outback, your chariot back to Brisbane on the last leg of your adventure. Exclusive access to the train's Shearers Rest Lounge means you can enjoy a glass of bubbles while



Longreach

From **\$5055**

per person twin share land only

### 5 Included Experiences

See available prices and departure dates at [aatkings.com](http://aatkings.com). Or contact your local travel agent.

A limited number of single rooms are available. Ask your travel agent at time of booking.

### Dining

6 Full breakfasts B                      4 Dinners with wine DW  
2 Lunches L                                 1 Dinner D

### Flight Information

Day Prior - Flights to arrive anytime into Brisbane Airport  
Day 7 - Flights to depart after 3.00pm from Brisbane Airport  
**Flights are not included in the holiday price**

remote towns and vast stretches of bush zip by outside, the click-clack or the rails a meditative soundtrack. Dinnertime in Tuckerbox Restaurant celebrates Queensland's culinary bounty. And then your plush cabin awaits. Sweet dreams. **Private Cabin: Spirit of the Outback. B L D**

#### 7 Farewell from Brisbane

Wake up to vistas of the Queensland outback and savour the scene over coffee and your final breakfast in the train's dining carriage. As the Brisbane River and the city's gleaming towers come into view, you know your adventure is about to end. But what joy it has sparked for future outback tours. **B**

### Outback Dinner Add-On



#### Smithy's Outback Dinner & Show

That free evening on day 4? How better spent than enjoying a camp-oven dinner beside the river in Longreach. Enjoy drinks at sundown before sitting down to a two-course meal. As tasty as the food is, this experience is all about the entertainment, with Smithy's crew entertaining with songs and stories that speak to the soul of the Queensland outback. If the billy tea and damper don't win you over, then the bedazzlement of stars overhead surely will.

