

This section includes a summary of the outback tracks we've driven on over the years and what we thought of them.

**Notes:**

- The word “Highway” to describe some these tracks must **not** be interpreted as an indication that they are easily navigable, in most cases that is not true.
- All these tracks should all be considered as 4WD only, although some may be possible in a sturdy high clearance 2WD. Check carefully first.
- Distances mentioned provide rough guidance only and don't include access distance or side trips. Even some of the short tracks are still many 100's kms away from centres of population and may be days from medical and mechanical repair facilities.
- All these tracks hold the prospect of vehicle damage and/or becoming stranded after breakdown. Be fully self-sufficient in terms of food, water and fuel supplies, and vehicle spares, repair and recovery facilities and know-how.
- Carry good navigational aids (eg moving map GPS), long range communications equipment (HF Radio or Sat Phone and EPIRB). **DON'T rely on CB or mobile phones**. If in doubt travel in a group.
- Even with communications facilities, consider the health risks in potentially being several days from real medical assistance (eg personal health issues, accidents, snake bite, heat and dehydration). Ensure *all* party members know what to do in each situation and carry appropriate first aid equipment and documentation.
- There are limited fuel and water supplies on all these tracks (and possibly access tracks to them as well) so plan carrying capacity, consumption and re-supply points carefully.
- Some tracks require permits.

<b>My degree of difficulty code</b> (as we found them when we drove them, but conditions can change)	
<b>E</b>	<b>Easy.</b> - Could be done on a bicycle, there are none of these on this list.
<b>QE</b>	<b>Quite Easy.</b> - Mainly wide gravel or light sandy tracks with some corrugations, no really difficult sections. - Needs a fair bit of planning due to length and/or remoteness. - Requires sturdy vehicle but relatively few off road skills.
<b>MD</b>	<b>Moderately Difficult.</b> - Could be attempted by an average or new 4WD adventurer with care and planning. - Narrow and/or sandy or slippery gravel or rocks with reasonable corrugations. - Requires some research on the anticipated conditions and facilities. - Requires tough 4WD and moderate off road experience.
<b>D</b>	<b>Difficult.</b> - Not a good first outback track to attempt, especially alone, may contain significant challenges or risks. - Narrow with long deep sandy corrugations and/or rocky sections and/or difficult sand dunes. - Some overgrown sections which might damage paintwork. Some washaways might requiring diversions from the track. - Requires very tough 4WD with good experience of outback travel and recovery procedures. Plan for self sufficiency for long periods (days).
<b>VD</b>	<b>Very Difficult.</b> - Risky and long and/or challenging, for experienced off road adventurers only. - Very corrugated narrow sandy and/or steep rocky sections and/or large sand dunes or very overgrown sections posing navigation risks. - Significant washaways likely requiring extensive diversions or track construction/repair. Risk of roll-overs and/or vehicle damage. - Requires very tough 4WD and extensive off road experience, preferable with another vehicle. Requires full self recovery and repair facilities. Self sufficiency planning needed for long periods (weeks).
<b>RD</b>	<b>Ridiculously Difficult</b> - Requires a space shuttle or jump jet to cover the distance, impossible without. - There are none of these on this list either or there wouldn't be a list.

South Australia		Difficulty
Googs Track (2005) <i>Ceduna to Tarcoola</i>	Great fun and not too difficult. Deep sand and plenty of sand dunes. Camping at Googs Lakes and Mount Finke. 200 kms, permit needed. South to North direction recommended, use CB and sand flags on crests to announce your presence.	QE
Oodnadata Track (several times) <i>Maree to Marla or Painted Desert</i>	Fairly easy (except when wet) and full of interesting locations: Mound Springs, Old Ghan Railway Line, Plane Henge Sculpture Park, Lake Eyre, Old Peake Telegraph Station. Other areas accessible are the Painted Desert (west from Oodnadata) and Dalhousie Springs and Mount Dare (to the north east of Oodnadatta). 600 kms, facilities at Oodnadata, Marree and a few camping areas (Coward Springs, Farina), bush camping available at many locations.	QE to MD
Old Eyre Highway (1975 and 2012) <i>Border Village to Nundroo via Nullarbor Roadhouse and Yalata</i>	The original unsealed section of the Eyre Highway still exists, although it was replaced by the sealed coastal highway in 1976, and is still quite navigable after 36 years. The surface is relatively smooth rocky limestone. Access is from the Border Village in SA and it runs inland for 200km via Koonalda Homestead (now a National Park headquarters) before returning to the highway at the Nullarbor Roadhouse. It can then be taken inland again via Ivy Tanks (abandoned ruins) for 200 km passing the Yalata Community (no access) before rejoining the sealed Eyre Highway near Nundroo. There are plenty of things to see along these sections of track, blow holes, sink holes, caves and wild life. Camping is easy and there is almost no traffic. At Nullarbor Road house, side trips are available for whale watching at the Head of the Bight and exploring sinkhole caves 10km north of the roadhouse, where the flatness of the Nullarbor Plain is quite awe inspiring. No permits are required even though the track passes through Yalata Aboriginal land, but the track also passes through the Nullarbor National Park for which fees may be applicable.	QE

Queensland		Difficulty
Sandover Highway (2005) <i>Mount Isa to Alice Springs</i>	Quite easy, deep to moderate sand and gravel on the NT section. No facilities but quite scenic. Tricky to find the start at the QLD end. 800 kms.	QE
Bloomfield Track (2005) <i>Cooktown to Cape Tribulation</i>	Difficult, steep, winding and slippery gravel. Drainage channels along the sides so there's not much room for error. Despite the track being along the coast, there are almost no views of the sea due to the dense vegetation.	MD
Cape York Peninsular Development Road (2010) <i>Cairns to the Tip</i>	Fairly easy (some corrugations) using bypass tracks NOT the OTT (which would require a Very Difficult rating). Long, hot and dusty track (need lights on). Regular road houses with camping facilities. \$88 ferry return fare (trailers extra) at Jardine River crossing, includes unlimited camping (except at commercial resorts but they can be easily avoided). Very windy on east coast, calm on the west. Key places at the tip are Bamaga, Seisia and Somerset. Take a trip to Thursday Island. Good camping at Wroonga Point and Mutee Heads. Plenty of side trips on the way up or back (Weipa, Mapoon, Pennefather River (deep sand!), Capt Billy Landing, Chilli Beach, Portland Roads, Lochhart River, Lakefield National Park and Cooktown). 800 kms plus side trips. Fuel and food readily available at road houses or small towns.	QE

Western Australia		
<p>Canning Stock Route (CSR) (2007 and 2012) <i>Halls Creek to Willuna</i></p>	<p>We've done 2/3rds of the CSR in 2 stages on 3 trips, comprising the top section from Bililuna to Well 33 near Kunawaritji (700 kms, 7 days), and the centre section (twice) from Well 33 to Georgia Bore near Well 22 (300 kms, 3 days).</p> <p>The CSR is very long (2000km) and lonely but a great desert experience and well worth all the the necessary effort and planning. It traverses hundreds of sand dunes (maybe &gt;1000), some of which are quite large and difficult, and beyond the scope of smaller 4WD's. Trailers also present severe limitations on sand dunes.</p> <p>A good travelling average would be 100km/day so a full trip would require about 3 weeks (plus time getting to and from the start/end points). So from most population centres, a full CSR trip would require 5-6 weeks minimum.</p> <p>Be aware that once you start on this track, there is almost no chance of vehicle recovery except under your own own steam, so total self sufficiency is a prerequisite and travelling in a group of at least 2 vehicles is highly recommended.</p> <p>There is very little access to food and fuel on the CSR so plan accordingly. Limited fuel and food is available at Kunawaritji Store (Well 33) and Billiluna only. Stock up at Halls Creek or Willuna before travel. Plan on very high fuel consumption over very long distances (up to twice normal road consumption).</p> <p>Fuel drops may be available at Well 24 by arrangement with the Capricorn Roadhouse at Newman.</p> <p>Good quality water is usually available at several wells but do <b>not</b> place any reliance on the availability or quality of well water (or even being able to find the wells) and carry plenty in reserve, especially in hot conditions (September onwards).</p> <p>No permit is required unless you deviate off the track but the Gary Junction access track will require permits.</p> <p>In an emergency, the track can be exited at Well 22 west to Newman (800km) on the Talawana Track, or at Well 33 east to Alice Springs (1200km) on the Gary Junction Road or west to Marble Bar, but those are still very remote places. Small indigenous communities in the area might provide emergency assistance.</p> <p>To reiterate, the CSR must <b>not</b> be taken lightly, extensive planning and full self sufficiency are essential pre-requisites.</p>	<p>VD</p>
<p>Steep Point) (2013) <i>Hamlyn Pool to Steep Point</i></p>	<p>This track starts as a fairly smooth gravel road (120km) on the Useless Loop road from Hamlyn Pool on Shark Bay via Tamala Station.</p> <p>Note the gravel used is salt residue from the salt works and will become quite corrosive when wet. Wash down the underside of your vehicle if returning after rain.</p> <p>The road deteriorates as you approach Steep Point National Park where it becomes a difficult, narrow sandy track (40km) across several challenging sand dunes and along a beach to the Ranger Station and camping area.</p> <p>The actual Steep Point location and sign board is a difficult 7km drive further on from the camp ground.</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>Gary Highway (2007) <i>Kunawaritji to Everard Junction on the Gunbarrel Highway</i></p>	<p>Very corrugated, remote and lonely but quite easy. Small washaways at the southern end.</p> <p>No facilities, 400 kms from Kunawaritji to Everard Junction on the Gunbarrel Highway, plus another 400 kms to Warburton via the Gunbarrel and Heather Highways.</p> <p>Veevers Crater and McPhersons Pillar are worth investigation.</p> <p>See my Wiki entry at <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Highway">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Highway</a>.</p>	<p>QE</p>
<p>Eagle Highway (2012) <i>Great Central Road to the Talawana Track</i></p>	<p>Very variable, narrow and very overgrown in places, the track is almost indiscernible and poses a navigation hazard. There maybe large washaway's needing diversions.</p> <p>No facilities, although the workmen at the sandalwood plant are very accommodating with water.</p> <p>800 kms from Great Central Road to Kunawaritji (Well 33) via the Talawana Track and CSR.</p>	<p>D</p>
<p>Hunt Oil Road (2013) <i>Great Central Road to Geraldton Bore</i></p>	<p>Moderately difficult and seldom used. Beware of a soft section near Alexander Spring.</p> <p>250km from the Great Central Road to Geraldton Bore on the Gunbarrel Highway.</p> <p>No facilities but good camping at the caves. Good water at Geraldton Bore.</p>	<p>MD</p>

Talawana Track (2012) <i>Windy Corner on the Gary Highway to the CSR</i>	Very corrugated but quite easy. No facilities except good water at Midway Well. 200 kms from Eagle Highway Junction to the CSR near Well 24.	QE
Kidson Track (2012) <i>Kunawaritji (Well 33 on the CSR) to SW Coastal Highway at 80 Mile beach</i>	This track used to be a very challenging 4wd track from Kunawaritji (Well 33 on the CSR) to 80 Mile beach. During 2012, much of the western end of the track was graded to allow access for mining vehicles and has become a wide smooth gravel road. The eastern 200km still has demanding sand dunes and overgrown section. 650kms, no facilities.	D to QE
Parmango Road (2011) <i>Balladonia to Condingup (Cape Arid)</i>	This is a useful shortcut (in distance, not time) between Balladonia and Cape Arid (Condingup township, store/fuel). 200 km, wide track but rough in the Balladonia section, better at the southern end. Would be difficult in the wet. Sign at northern end restricts vehicles to 4WD and 3Tonnes. No signs at the southern end and unnecessary anyway. Be aware that the Mt Ragged alternative route to Cape Arid (turns off half way along) may be narrow and impassable after rain and Esperance can be a very wet area.	QE
Gunbarrel Highway (2007 and 2013) <i>Warburton to Willuna via Everard Junction, Geraldton Bore and Carnegie Station</i>	Len Beadell's iconic (but not first) outback track. Not too difficult these days but still long and lonely and corrugated. The Heather Highway section from Warburton to Everard Junction is very corrugated. Almost as bad is the section from Geraldton Bore to the Willuna Shire boundary where the shire's periodic grading makes the track easier going. Many pools after rain, bypass tracks are common. 800km, facilities only at Carnegie Station (fuel, camping). Good water at Geraldton Bore.	MD
Holland Track (2013)	We've only done the western 20km. Stopped by very frequent deep muddy pools. Bypass tracks are also soft, don't try this track after rain. Narrow, overgrown and probably a very challenging sandy track requiring possible vehicle recovery from soft surfaces.	VD

#### SA-WA

Anne Beadell Highway (2008) <i>Coober Pedy to Laverton</i>	Very long (1500 kms), fairly straight but extremely corrugated. This track will test you and your vehicle's endurance so travel in a small group. Good desert scenery plus a section of sand hills. No reliable water on SA side, fuel and supplies at Ilkurlka Roadhouse plus 3 rain water tanks on WA side. Items of interest: Atomic bomb sites, Emu Field and Dingo Claypan, Aircraft wreck. Several permits needed in SA, WA and from the Department of Defence (crosses the Woomera Prohibited Area).	D
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#### WA-NT

Sandy Blight Junction Road (2008) <i>Great Central Road to Sandy Blight Junction on the Gary Junction Road</i>	Winding and tortuous but interesting (400 kms and longer than expected). Deep corrugated sand alternating with rocky gravel. Interesting scenery on the southern section. Permit needed.	MD
Tanami Track (1994 and 2002) <i>Alice Springs to Halls Creek</i>	Long gravel track (1100 kms) but not too difficult. Reasonable facilities along the way. Rabbit Flat Roadhouse is no longer operating and this can catch people out if you need fuel half way along but Yuendumu and Tilmouth Well road houses are open. No facilities at the Granites Goldmine. Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater is well worth a visit, free camp site, no water.	QE
Great Central Road (2008, 2012 and 2013) <i>Yulara to Laverton via Docker River, Warakurna (Giles) and Warburton</i>	Easy going but not very inspiring. The road now bypasses all the native wells along the way, which is disappointing. Giles Met Office is well worth a visit and kms of desert oaks are rewarding. 1000 kms from Laverton to Yulara, +/- a couple. Facilities at Docker River, Warakurna and Warburton. Stock up at Yulara or Laverton. 2 permits required, for the NT section from Yulara to the WA Border and another from the WA Border to Laverton.	QE

Gary Junction Road (2007 and 2008) <i>Alice Springs to Newman</i>	Long straight and easy track which passes some historic outback locations: Sandy Blight Junction, Talawana, Gary Highway Junction, CSR, Rudall River National Park. Good camping at Jupiter Well. Facilities at Papunya, Kintore, Kiwikurra and Kunawaritji (Well 33 on the CSR). 1500 kms Alice to Newman. Alternate route through Rudall River NP to Marble Bar. Permits needed.	QE
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<b>Tasmania</b>		
Road to Nowhere (2005) <i>Stanley to Strachan</i>	This is an interesting winding track down the western side of Tassie. Depending on the season it can be cold, wet and cloudy or misty but there is plenty of vegetation, water features, coastal access and green hills. The surface is gravel which can be slippery, but the steep hilly sections are bitumen. There is a ferry at Corinna across the Pieman River. Beware of leeches on the damp vegetation. 300 kms, no facilities between Corinna and Strachan.	QE

<b>NT-SA</b>		
Old Andado Track (2005 and 2012) <i>Alice Springs to Oodnadatta via Old Andado</i>	Nice remote red sand dune country, some deep sandy sections. Old Andado Station is worth a visit for a cup of tea and camping. Access to Dalhousie Hot Springs (Witjira/Simpson Desert National Park) which is good for camping and swimming, even in winter (100 m long lake with water at 38° all year round). 800 kms, no facilities except at Mt Dare Roadhouse.	MD

<b>WA-QLD</b>		
The Outback Way <i>Winton, Qld to Laverton WA, via Alice Springs</i>	A notional highway which links up existing tracks and roads (on paper anyway) into a 3000km continuous "highway" from Winton in Queensland to Laverton in WA. The tracks are the Plenty Highway, the Stuart Highway and Great Central Road via Yulara. It might include the Mareenie loop road in the future. Only the Stuart Highway and Yulara sections are sealed Note this highway is promoted on brochures as a "short cut" alternative 3rd highway from Queensland to WA, but is not signposted as such on the ground and exists at the moment only in the minds of tourism planners. Its length and convoluted nature requires considerable advanced planning, refer here.	QE
Plenty Highway (2002)	Fairly easy track but the QLD end is not well marked or maintained. 6-700 kms depending where you end up in QLD.	QE
Sandover Highway (2005)	Roughly parallels the Plenty bit further south. More interesting since it is less used and is more sandy, as the name implies. Same difficulty in locating the start in Queensland as the Plenty.	QE

<b>Northern Territory</b>		
Old Karanje Track (1994 and 2012) <i>El Questro on the Gibb River Road to Wyndham</i>	From El Questro on the Gibb River Road to Wyndham the back way around the Cockburn Ranges. No Facilities and very variable terrain which changes after each wet season. Can be rocky and slow. Allow a full day and be croc aware around Wyndham.	D
Mareenie Loop Road (2005 and 2008) <i>Kings Canyon to Hermansberg</i>	Very scenic road from Kings Canyon to Hermansberg, but very corrugated in parts. 200 kms. Permit needed.	MD
Parry Lagoon Road (2012) <i>Wyndham highway at Parry Lagoon to Kununurra</i>	Linking the Wyndham highway to Kununurra, this former highway is now a pleasant gravel track.	QE

Davenport Ranges Track (2012)	Links the Stuart Highway to the Davenport Ranges National Park	QE
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WA-NT		
Gibb River Road (1994, 2007 and 2012) <i>Derby to Kununurra</i>	Very rough, long and corrugated in places but this is more than made up for by the many scenic gorges, water falls and rivers along the way. 650 kms excluding Mitchell Falls, which is another 600 kms round trip from the Gibb River Road junction, see below.	D
Mitchell Falls Road (2007) <i>Gibb River Road to Mitchel Falls</i>	Very corrugated track but leads to the beautiful Mitchell falls so it's worth the suffering. Good camping at Drysdale Station, King Edward River and at the falls. Extra trek to Surveyors pool is worthwhile on a newly made but re-aligned track, which now starts further north than marked on maps. Access to Port Warender (no facilities) is also possible but the track is VERY steep and tortuous towards the end. 600 kms return from Gibb River Road junction including Surveyors Pool.	D

QLD-SA		
Birdsville Track (2008) <i>Birdsville to Maree</i>	Easy but wide, rocky desert track. Nice mirages when it's hot and sunny. Can be very dusty (300 kms)	QE

QLD-NT		
Savannah Way (1998, 2008 and 2010) <i>Normanton to Katherine via Burketown and Borolooloa</i>	The main gravel highway (National Highway 1, although you wouldn't know it) from Normanton to Katherine via Burketown and Borolooloa. Long, hot, dusty but interesting, plenty of creek crossings (mostly rocky). Plenty to see and places to stay. Karumba, Leichart Falls, Limmen National Park, Roper River. Be croc aware along this road. Diversions to Lawn Hill National Park and Kingfisher Camp are worthwhile. 800kms, some facilities at Hells Gate Roadhouse and Borolooloa.	MD