DriveNow

Helping travellers since 2003 find the best deals on campervan and car rental

OUTBACK ROAD TRIP · 10 DAYS FROM ADELAIDE AND BACK

Adelaide to Coober Pedy and back - South Australia

Travel up the Stuart Highway from Adelaide in this 10-day tour to the Outback town and world's opal capital, Coober Pedy. Explore Woomera, Britain's weapons testing centre from a bygone era, cycle Clare's old rail lines and discover the ghosts at Gladstone Gaol.

DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 1,810 km	10 days, 9 drives	Round trip from Adelaide	About 26 h 30 min by campervan

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE
365 km, Coober Pedy to Pimba	Campervan

This trip crosses the Country of the Kaurna, Barngarla, Nukunu, Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara and other First Nations peoples. Traditional Custodians



The opal fields, Coober Pedy, day 5 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (Geoscience Australia, SRTM).

> Special caution and planning should be taken when travelling in remote areas to ensure sufficient provisions, fuel and prescribed medicines are carried. Weather conditions can make sealed roads impassable particularly during the northern Wet season.

BEFORE YOU BOOK

Hiring a campervan for this trip

Your route

All rental vendors in Australia have restrictions on where their vehicles can be taken, so discuss your planned route with the rental company when you pick up. Get the rental company's permission before taking the vehicle somewhere it restricts. If you take it there without permission, you may lose your excess reduction and be fully responsible for any damage. You may also have to pay for towing

Fuel on the Stuart Highway

Woomera to Coober Pedy is about 375 km, with few places to fill up, so plan your refuelling before you set out.

and recovery, and for damage to other people's property. See road restrictions and when you are fully responsible. A 2WD van suits the sealed highways on this loop.

Picking up in Adelaide

Most Adelaide branches hand over vans until about 3pm, and fewer are open at weekends. Apollo, Britz, Maui, Maui Elite, Mighty and Mighty Lite ask you to arrive by 3pm, and their branch closes on Sundays from May to August: pick up on the Saturday or Monday instead (pick-up times and late flights). If your flight lands after early afternoon, it's often easier to stay the night and collect next morning. More on campervan hire in Adelaide: branches, hours and each brand's rules.

Allow plenty of time at the branch for the paperwork, the vehicle inspection and the van demonstration, and bring every driver's licence. See what to expect when you pick up your campervan: choosing a pick-up time, the inspection and demonstration, the documents to bring and online check-in, and the Adelaide branches. Flying in? See airport pick-ups and what to do about late pick-ups.

PICK-UP DAY IN ADELAIDE

DAY 1

Adelaide

PICK-UP

Pick up your campervan in Adelaide today. Allow plenty of time at the depot so the rental company can show you how your campervan works before you leave.

Adelaide, South Australia's capital offers something for everybody, whether that be arts, culture, sport or adventure, you will not be disappointed.

Adelaide is also home to many festivals, including the very popular Fringe Festival, so check out what is on offer when you arrive. As well as the festivals, there are plenty of opportunities to go fishing, visit museums, try local produce or just relax in the city.

Stay Adelaide Caravan Park

DRIVE

140 km from Adelaide | **about 2 h 20 min** by campervan

Via **Horrocks Highway**

DAY 2

Adelaide to Clare

Depart this morning and follow the A1, M20 and A32 to Horrocks Highway. Continue along Horrocks Highway until you reach Clare.

Hire a bicycle and try out one of the Riesling and Rattler trails. These trails were once a part of a train line used for mining and agricultural purposes. Cycling or walking along these trails means you will see spectacular views of vineyards, bushlands, farms and historical buildings. Along the way, there are many signs detailing directions, history, the Ngadjuri people and the landscape. There is also ample opportunity to try out some local cafes and restaurants for breaks.

Stay Discovery Parks – Clare (formerly Discovery Clare Caravan Park)

DRIVE

190 km from Clare | **about 2 h 50 min** by campervan

Via **Horrocks Highway**

DAY 3

Clare to Quorn

Depart this morning and head northwest on Horrocks Highway towards Burton Street. Continue along Horrocks Highway until you reach Quorn.

Quorn has retained the essence of its history, and has appeared in the background of many films including Gallipoli, The Tracker, and most recently, Russell Crowe's The Water Diviner for its authentic look. Take a ride on Quorn's heritage railway line, the Pichi Richi Railway. The train runs along the oldest remaining section of the old Ghan railway, providing spectacular views of the bushlands.

Book ahead:
The Pichi Richi Railway runs on selected dates, mostly in autumn and spring: check its timetable (https://www.pichirichirailway.org.au/train-services/timetable) before you plan around it.

Stay Quorn Caravan Park

DRIVE

225 km from Quorn | **about 3 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 4

Quorn to Woomera and Pimba

Depart this morning and head southwest on Flinders Ranges Way towards Fifth Street. Take a slight right onto National Highway A1 and continue straight onto the Princes Highway/ A87 until you reach Woomera.

Visit the Woomera Heritage Centre to learn of its past including the time when it was used as a missile testing ground after World War 2. The town itself was established by the British to be used to test new weapons systems, and it was later used to launch satellites into space. The town only finally became open to the public in just 1982, and therefore has a rich and complicated history.

Woomera's caravan park has closed, so tonight's stay is at Pimba, 7 km south on the Stuart Highway.

Stay Pimba community campground, opposite Spud's Roadhouse: unpowered sites, no bookings

DRIVE

365 km from Pimba | **about 5 h** by campervan | Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 5

Pimba to Coober Pedy

Depart this morning and continue along the Stuart Highway towards Coober Pedy.

Coober Pedy is a big mining town, so no visit is complete without exploring the history of mining. The Old Timers Mine offers an insight into how the opal miners would have to dig for opals all by hand, and the treacherous conditions they had to live through to find these precious stones. You can also experience what it would have been like to live underground, in one of the miners' family homes that have been preserved.

Another mine open for inspection is the Umoona Opal Mine and Museum. Described as looking like the surface of the moon, explore the underground shafts and mullock heaps which have been created from 80 years of mining.

Stay Stuart Range Outback Resort

DRIVE

365 km from Coober Pedy | **about 5 h** by campervan | Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 6

Coober Pedy to Pimba

Depart this morning and return towards Woomera via the Stuart Highway towards Port Augusta, staying at Pimba.

Visit Lake Hart, a large saltwater lake, which sits beside the Stuart Highway north-west of Woomera. Walking along the ground, you will feel the salt crystals crunching against your shoes, and if you place your hand in the water, it will soon disappear beneath the salt. The lake glitters in the sun, so it is a perfect place to take some picturesque photos.

Stay Pimba community campground, opposite Spud's Roadhouse: unpowered sites, no bookings

DRIVE

175 km from Pimba | **about 2 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 7

Pimba to Port Augusta

Depart this morning and continue along the Stuart Highway towards Port Augusta.

Visit the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden and discover the plants and animals that are able to survive Australia's toughest conditions. Explore the vivid red sand dunes, woodlands and vast saltbush plains, and even enjoy mountain views from the top of the red cliff tops. After all of this, you can sit back and enjoy the information centre and have afternoon tea.

Stay Discovery Parks – Port Augusta (formerly Port Augusta BIG4 Holiday Park)

DRIVE

120 km from Port Augusta | **about 1 h 40 min** by campervan | Via **Augusta Highway**

DAY 8

Port Augusta to Gladstone

Depart this morning and take the National Highway A1, until you reach Wilkins Highway. Turn left and follow until you reach Horrocks Highway. Turn right and continue until you reach Gladstone.

Check out the Gladstone Gaol and learn about the criminals who lived there from the late 1800s. Take a ghost tour at night with one of the resident psychics, and hear of the tales of the ghosts that live there. People report stories of being woken up in the night, seeing shadowy figures or having a feeling that someone is watching, so you never know who you'll see.

Book ahead:
Gladstone Gaol reopened in October 2026 with ghost tours on Saturday nights. Book ahead with Lantern Ghost Tours (https://www.lanternghosttours.com/).

Stay Gladstone Caravan Park

DRIVE

120 km from Gladstone | **about 2 h** by campervan | Via **Horrocks Highway**

DAY 9

Gladstone to Riverton

Depart this morning and follow the Horrocks Highway/ B82 until you reach Riverton.

Riverton is at the heart of the Gilbert Valley, which means that there are so many rolling hills and beautiful scenery to discover. The Riverton trails are the perfect way to see many sites of the town in one go. The trails begin in Riverton, and you have the opportunity to either walk or cycle around them. Along the way, you can visit local wineries, the art gallery, the railway station and heritage cemeteries.

Stay Riverton Caravan Park

DRIVE

100 km from Riverton | **about 1 h 40 min** by campervan | Via **Horrocks Highway**

DAY 10

Riverton to Adelaide

RETURN

Depart this morning and follow the A32/ National Highway M20 and National Highway A1 to the Princes Highway in Medindie. Continue along the Princes Highway until you reach Adelaide.

Returning in Adelaide

The return inspection takes a little while, and rental companies charge for late returns, so plan to arrive in good time for the return time on your booking. Drop-off times are often earlier than people expect, so check yours. Fill up near your branch before you return the van, with the fuel type your rental company specifies (returning the van). If you have an early flight, returning the van the day before can take the pressure off.

Plan your last day around your branch's drop-off time. See returning your campervan: choosing a drop-off time, late returns and early returns, and the Adelaide branches.

Enjoy the trip to the opal capital and back.

Traditional Custodians

Adelaide: Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains (City of Adelaide (https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/about-adelaide/our-city/reconciliation/))

Port Augusta: Barngarla and Nukunu peoples (Yarta Purtli, Port Augusta City Council (https://yartapurtli.sa.gov.au/))

Coober Pedy: Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people (District Council of Coober Pedy (https://www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au/latest-news-events/latest-news/open-letter-to-the-coober-pedy-community))

Country boundaries are approximate, and some are shared or contested. These names follow local councils and park managers. The AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia (https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) shows the wider picture.

Pay your respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which you are travelling, and to their Elders past, present and emerging. The Australian environment is fragile, so tread lightly: take only photos and leave only footprints.

DriveNow Disclaimer

DriveNow receives no money or commission for any holiday park, campground, hotel, restaurant, cafe, pub, tour or attraction named on this page. We include them because they suit a campervan trip, and we check them from time to time.

DriveNow's suggested itineraries help you plan your own trip. Distances and times are from mapped routes and are a guide only; campervan driving times are car times plus about 20%. Road conditions, closures, opening hours and prices change, so check them before you travel. Any reliance on this itinerary is at your own discretion.

Printed from https://www.drivenow.com.au/itineraries/australia/sa-adelaide-to-coober-pedy-self-drive on 13 November 2026. Check the page for the latest version before you travel.