

OUTBACK & SAPPHIRE GEMFIELDS LOOP

Explore the road less travelled and enjoy a detour full of surprises. The stretch of highway between Rockhampton and Mackay is known as being a little less than exciting and a trend is starting to emerge among travellers to partake in an exciting detour to get a taste of the outback via the Sapphire Gemfields (just west of Rockhampton) before heading north to Mackay.

Distance:
795km detour

Suitable for:
All vehicles

Duration:
1-4 Nights

HIGHLIGHTS

- Fossick for Sapphires
- Aboriginal History
- Outback Towns
- National Parks
- Bushwalking
- Fishing
- Swimming Holes



[Rockhampton > Blackdown Tableland National Park \(201 km\)](#)

From Rockhampton, follow the Capricorn Highway west towards Emerald. This drive boasts stunning scenery and easy access to Blackdown Tableland National Park.

Located just outside of Blackwater, Blackdown Tableland is a popular overnight destination for campervans and tents. The National Park has stunning bushwalks, swimming holes, and aboriginal artwork. The road in to the national park is not recommended for Caravans.



[Blackdown Tableland National Park > Lake Maraboon \(175km\)](#)

Lake Maraboon, a holiday destination in itself, offers a selection of accommodation. This huge expanse of water and surrounding bushland is home to birds such as, rainbow lorikeets, pelicans and black swans. It is a vast water world, said to be three times the size of Sydney Harbour. It stocks around eight different kinds of fish, but is most famous for its Red Claw Crayfish.



Lake Maraboon > Sapphire Gemfields (196 km)

The Sapphire Gemfields located just west of Emerald are literally a hidden treasure and is a true Outback experience within a short drive of the East coast. With a variety of accommodation options and some award winning jewellery galleries, that would rival those of Sydney and the Gold Coast, this area is the richest and largest sapphire fields in the Southern Hemisphere. Here you can enjoy tours of small underground sapphire mines and even try your hand in one of the local fossicking parks. For a more 'hands-on' experience join a full day tag-a-long tour. Everyone who visits the Gemfields is sure to leave with a souvenir sapphire!



Sapphire Gemfields > Capella (79 km)

Capella is an ideal town to stop for a break and has many points of interest...However do not underestimate this little town as it is full of surprises and has much to offer. Stay for a few days and enjoy some of the numerous scenic drive trails throughout the Peak Downs District. The icon of the area is the distinct Peak Range, a succession of gigantic dome-topped mountains north of Capella - it is a photographers delight and dominates the surrounding downs.



Capella > Mackay (320 km)

Once you arrive in Mackay you can continue your journey north along the Pacific Coast Way.

More Time?

Venture 3.5 hours south of the Sapphire Gemfields to unforgettable Carnarvon Gorge – its grandeur which will leave you breathless. Carnarvon is famous for its deep sandstone gorge, spectacular cliffs, moss gardens and a variety of fauna and flora. The ancient Aboriginal rock paintings, including the most extensive examples of stencilling in Queensland, are at least 19,000 years old. Ensure you leave yourself ample time to enjoy this special part of Australia. Deluxe cabins and camping facilities are available.

For more great itineraries visit www.visitcapricorn.com.au