



That's it, you're doing it! You're going to do a lap of Australia. Maybe you will sell the house, maybe just rent it out. Maybe you're in a rental and the lease is up. Either way, you've decided to do a lap of Australia and now it's time to plan.



You've got big goals and now it's time to set out how to achieve them.

There are a number of different things to take into account when planning a lap of Australia. It could seem a little overwhelming at first, but things start to make sense when you begin to look at them in order.



Yep, that's our itinerary for our big lap of Australia - on a cake! We're planners, but working with a cake was new! For our going away party a friend made up a cake with our itinerary graphic on it.

Duration of a lap of Australia

How long do you have available to do the lap? Is it months, a year, or maybe more? Australia is a massive country, you can literally spend years driving around it and not see everything! Decide how long you have available first, and then use that as a guide for breaking up the lap.

After sitting around to chat about it as a family, we decided on 12 months for our lap of Australia as that worked for us. It meant being back for the following school year.



Some travel indefinitely, some take 6 months or less. Decide on this first, with all involved.

Budgeting for a lap of Australia

What is the amount you can afford to travel around Australia? Some do it for less than \$1000 per week, we see more around \$1500 per week for us, others end up spending a lot more. The number of meals you eat out, how many attractions or experiences you do, how far you travel and the type of accommodation you stay at will all be impacted by your budget.



We still treat ourselves occasionally, but balancing the budget is important and we try to save for experiences above all else.

Breaking down the budget for a lap around Australia

As a general rule... 30% will go to food, 30% will go to fuel, 20% to accommodation and the entertainment or experience budget might be 10%. The remaining 10% will spread out across things like mobile phone bills, insurances, maintenance or just purchasing or replacing things as you travel (you will definitely be upgrading your fishing gear and camping gear as you go!).

No one can tell you exactly how much you need, but you won't need a full vault load of cash to do it! It comes down to your tastes, style and frequency/distance of travel.



Plan your trip around your budget.



Transport & housing for a lap of Australia

Separate to your budget for the lap, is what you will actually be travelling and staying in. Consider it a capital expense before you set off travelling, or perhaps you already own something to get the job done. We have seen it all on the road, people in tents, whizbangs, station wagons, campers, caravans, buses and motorhomes. You can travel around Australia on a lap in all of them. We chose a full-size caravan for simplicity of setup and space for a school-aged family of 5.



It's a big van, needing a big car to tow it. But, you don't have to go this way, there are plenty of options. We liked the combination as it allows us to go anywhere.

Your setup needs to cater for varying weather

Australia is a vast country, with varying weather. You can be hammered with winds, sitting in the sand (white/yellow/red or any colour in between), scorched by the sun or pelted by rain. Make sure you have a space that can cater for you on the worst days, or have a plan to withstand hot nights, cold nights or washed out days.

Ultimately, everything works, just go in with what works for you, your partner and or your family. If it's just tents, so be it! It is so worth the effort.



We have done a fair amount of tent camping this trip, too.

Timing of a lap of Australia

There are a few things to take into account in your planning. The weather is a big one, with the Tropic of Capricorn playing a major role. Avoid the wet season up north, as well as cyclone season while you're at it. Down south, winter can get bitterly cold. Depending on your departure location, you will want to factor in hitting the best possible weather in each location.

In saying that, beware of the crowds! It's not a lot of fun as a lapping traveller to turn up with everyone else at a location, experience or accommodation spot. Try to be smart around school holidays, weekends and public holidays where crowds might be present. We tend to hide out elsewhere.



No one wants to be stuck in the outback in a 50-degree summer! We timed our run to Uluru in the cool period, allowing us to be more active during the day.

Identifying your must-do or see items

There are going to be a few things you know of, have heard of or perhaps have seen online. Identify them early, write them down and have them ready to allocate into your itinerary. Itineraries are great, we are big planners, but they are not for everyone. But, at least know the must-do's for the trip, so you can budget to be in the right place for the right time.





We try to find places a little more remote, away from the crowds during peak times. It might mean you have to get off the beaten track a bit, but often, it's worth it!

How fast and often do you like to move?

The time for the big lap will dictate this. With 1 year for our lap, we needed to move every 2 to 3 days on average. With more time, we would have loved 4 to 5-day moves. Sometimes we are fine with an overnighter or 2 nighters. Each place feels or needs a different time. Think about your setup, pack up and time for the lap, and work out how often you should be moving around.



Make sure you allow time to stay places to explore, you don't just want to drive the country without seeing anything.

What will you use to plan where you will go?

There are a lot of [apps](#), [books](#), [maps](#) and resources out there. We have a pretty basic approach. We use [Wikicamps](#) for research and planning our trip, and visit information centres whenever we go into a new town or region. From there we can construct what we will do and when. Earlier, we talked about allocating times to states or regions, but this is getting more specific. Do this when in the area and work out what you are doing when, so you can fit it all in.



We use Wikicamps to research locations and plan and record our trip progress. It helps us find some special places, too.

These are all the basics of planning a big lap of Australia, no matter what your time frame is. Get these things in place, and then piece in everything else from there, which you'll find to be a much easier way.

How do you go about your trip planning? Did we miss a step or do you have a different approach? Let us know in the comments below!