



So far we have looked at the things to see along the track, in this article we look at practicalities of travel in this area and provide information to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

## Accommodation

**Lyndhurst** – this is a tiny town with the pub running a small caravan park with some cabins and hotel rooms.

**Montecollina Bore** – this controlled bore allows some water to flow into a depression in the white sandhills. A good camping spot with plenty of space and flat areas. You can even have a dip in the warm water.

**Strezlecki Creek Crossing** – the point where the Strezlecki Creek crosses the Strezlecki Track provides some good camp spots along the banks of the creek. Look out for tracks along the creek line to find some good, flat and shady spots. Remember, never camp in the creek bed itself as flash flooding can occur due to rain some distance away.

**Innamincka** – For most people, coming to Innamincka is about camping along the Cooper and there are many great sites to make this possible. Other than in the Town Common, a Desert Parks Pass is required to camp anywhere in the Innamincka Regional Reserve. Camp areas are well defined and listed in the material provided with the pass. The only camp in these defined areas as this country is very fragile and the Park Rangers do their best to protect this environment by enforcing the “camp in designated areas” rule.

If camping is not your thing, the Trading Post and hotel have some cabins and there is a motel in town. You should book ahead, especially in the cooler months, if you want this type of accommodation.

## Preparation

The oil and gas industry is a 7 day a week, 24 hour a day industry, so the Strezlecki Track, although isolated and with no services, can be a busy place. The vehicle traffic swells considerably in the cooler months with the influx of tourists.



In most areas the track is wide and well maintained but, in many places quite dusty, so be very careful of on-coming traffic, especially large trucks. Never try to overtake a vehicle unless you have considerable forward vision.

Like all outback travel, top class preparation and self-sufficiency are the keys to an enjoyable experience providing positive memories for years to come. Here are some major factors to consider:

- **Food** – carry all food required to at least get you to Innamincka, with a couple of days extra supplies in case of breakdown. Innamincka has basic supplies available at the

Trading Post, but don't expect a great choice or much fresh food. Canned, dried and frozen are the main fare. The pub provides a good, hearty outback feed.

- **Water** – don't rely on any access to water along the way, especially drinking water. Carry all you need, again ensuring extra in case of breakdown. Supplies can be replenished in Innamincka. Even though the Cooper is fresh water, don't drink it unless it has been boiled first or water purification tablets used.
- **Shelter** – if you want cabins or hotel/motel accommodation in Innamincka, book ahead. Facilities are limited and can be booked out in the busy time of the year. The camping opportunities along the way and around Innamincka have been previously mentioned. Flies can be a real problem during the day so an insect-proof shelter, especially when trying to eat, can save many frayed tempers. Fly nets are a must to help maintain your sanity. See Snowys for all the gear to combat the dreaded flies.
- **Fires** – campfires are allowed most of the year, but firewood is rare. Carry your own.
- **Fuel** – There is no fuel between Lyndhurst and Innamincka so ensure you carry enough to cover this distance, with a good margin for error. Once on the dirt, keep a close eye on the fuel gauge so that any puncture of a fuel tank is picked up quickly. Have some hole repair material handy that suits the material of your fuel tank and can be used with fuel leaking.
- **Tyres** – gibbers are tough on tyres. If your tyres are getting towards the end of their life, replace them before leaving. Carry at least two spares, a tyre repair kit and compressor, and know how to use them. Reduce tyre pressures around 20% from normal bitumen pressures when on the dirt. Check out the Cooper Tyres website for their excellent guide to tyre pressures.
- **Communication** – there is no reliable mobile phone coverage along the track and none around Innamincka, so carry a good UHF radio as a minimum.
- **Vehicle** – have your vehicle thoroughly checked before leaving and ensure your mechanic knows where you are heading so that everything is looked at. Be very aware of carrying as little gear as possible to avoid overloading your vehicle. Try to pack light gear on a roof rack to keep the centre of gravity low. Ensure you do not exceed your vehicles legal Gross Vehicle Mass as insurance can be voided if an accident occurs as a result of overloading.
- **Personal** – fly nets are a must – don't leave home without them! Good insect repellent is another must, especially when camping near water where mozzies can be a real problem. Have lightweight clothes that cover arms and legs and always wear a hat in the sun – you can burn very quickly, even in the winter.
- **Caravans and Camper Trailers** – A good sturdy camper trailer will have no problems with this trek and yours will definitely not be the only one out there. Modern off-road caravans are becoming more common with the main track normally in pretty good condition. Some of the campsites along the Cooper can have quite deep ruts and washaways on the access tracks and whilst no problem for most vehicles, trailers or caravans can drag the rear end or get hung up on a drawbar in some of the more severe ruts.
- **Safety** – when camping near the creek be especially aware of slippery edges and sharp

drops into the water. This is particularly the case with children. It is good practice to have children wear a personal floatation device any time they are near the water. Enforce this and even model the behaviour yourselves. **We hear too many stories of children (and some adults) drowning in rivers.**



## Some Tips and Bush Etiquette

- **Approaching vehicles** – to avoid windscreen damage, slow down when another vehicle is approaching – you don't want a smashed windscreen out here. You could be waiting many days to have a replacement freighted up and you cannot assume that the expertise to fit it will be available.
- **Keep headlights on** – enormous clouds of dust will follow a vehicle in many areas. Make yourself as visible as possible with headlights on to avoid a head-on crash.
- **Road trains** – long road trains are not uncommon on the track, producing incredible dust clouds and sometimes trailers can weave about quite a bit. Slow right down and pull over as close as possible to the left. Don't speed up and move back onto the road until you can see if there is any more on-coming traffic. If travelling in a convoy, ensure the leader warns the group and makes clear their intentions to pull over.
- **Station tracks** – do not travel down station tracks, even to find a camping spot. This is like driving into someone's driveway in the city.
- **Camping spots** – some of the best spots are alongside creeks where there are often some beautiful shady trees. Tracks can often be found leading to some flat, cleared areas. Never camp in a creek bed as heavy rains many kilometres away can result in a sudden rush of water down what is normally a dry creek bed. Beware of camping under over-hanging limbs of large gum trees. These are prone to break without notice and people have been killed by the falling limb. Never camp near stock watering points as this scares stock away, leaving them without water.
- **Cook after dark** – the flies will go to bed after dark, making life a lot easier. Have some good lights that can provide enough light over the campsite without having to be right next to you. You will attract insects to the light rather than you. A good headlight is great when cooking and you need some intense light over your mouth-watering delight.
- **Driving through water** – After significant rain, you will come across large pools of water spreading across the road. The temptation is to drive over to the edge as it appears the water is shallower. Don't. The pool exists because the road surface under the water is hard, but the edges are generally soft and often consist of deep mud. Use a low gear and drive steadily right through the middle of the pool.
- **Animal hazards** – much of this track is un-fenced so keep a constant eye out for wandering stock. Kangaroos and emus can also be a hazard so keep speed down and avoid having to make sudden direction changes on dirt road. Quite often large wedge-tail eagles can be seen feasting on a dead carcass on the road. Slow right down and sound your horn. These birds, especially with a belly full of fresh meat, are slow to fly off and

potentially can fly right into your vehicle causing significant damage and trauma to your passengers. One way to occupy your passengers is to rotate sitting in the front passenger seat with this person having the important role of official animal spotter.

- **Times to avoid** (maybe) - the Innamincka races are usually held in late August and are a lead into the much more popular Birdsville races. The crowds are not as big as Birdsville so if you love outback races or just want a different experience, this could be a good time to go. However, camping spots will be at a premium. The Cooper area is often on the itinerary for the many charity "bashes" that criss-cross the country. Again, these can swell numbers in town and put pressure on facilities. To avoid these, do some "Googling" or, better still, contact the Innamincka Regional Reserve headquarters.
- **If in trouble** - never leave your vehicle if broken down. Many have perished trying to walk to help, generally becoming disoriented and dying of dehydration. Your vehicle contains all of your supplies, provides shelter and is far easier to see by a search party. Although isolated, there is a lot of traffic in the area and someone will come past eventually. Use whatever communication system you have to try and get help. Surrounding stations often monitor the emergency UHF channel and usually use a dedicated channel to communicate with their workers. Cycle through channels giving a mayday message and wait for a reply before trying the next channel.

## Where To From Here

Despite its isolation, there are a number of alternatives to either head home or continue on to other places.

- **North**
  - The Cordillo Downs Road will take you to the Queensland border, either via Cordillo Downs and on to Birdsville or via Arrabury if heading east to Windorah. Both tracks meet the Birdsville Developmental Road.
- **South**
  - Head back down the Strzelecki Track but perhaps take the old track to Merty Merty if this was not done on the way there.
  - Go south to Merty Merty and then head east to Cameron Corner. From there head south to Tibooburra and Broken Hill. This route will be detailed in another article on the Corner Country.
- **East**
  - The track east crosses the border into Queensland and enters Nappa Merrie Station. You are now on The Adventure Way going through Noccundra, Thargomindah and eventually on to Cunnamulla. This road is gradually being sealed from the east with the bitumen now close to the Queensland border.
- **West**



- The only option here is to take the Walkers Crossing Track (if open) to meet the Birdsville Track 122km south of Birdsville. This track is only suitable for 4WD vehicles, is extremely isolated and requires sound navigation skills as oil and gas exploration tracks criss-cross the area, often leading to an isolated dead end.

## Distances and Services

**Fuel: U = unleaded D = diesel L = LPG**

**Accommodation: CP = caravan park H = hotel/motel C = cabin**

	Distance from Pt Augusta	Fuel	Accommodation	Public Toilets
Quorn	41	U,D,L	CP,H,C	Y
Hawker	107	U,D,L	CP,H,C	Y
Leigh Creek	260	U,D,L	CP,H,C	Y
Copley	264	U,D	CP,H,C	Y
Lyndhurst	297	U,D,L	CP,H,C	Y
Innamincka	771	U,D	H,C	Y

N.B. there is no LPG fuel available beyond Lyndhurst.

[Download the Strzelecki Track Distances and Services PDF](#)

## Maps

[Hema Maps Great Desert Tracks](#)

[Royal Automobile Association of S.A. - Flinders Ranges and Outback](#)

***This winds up our Strzelecki track series, enjoy your trip and as always, if you have any questions about camping gear and equipment, give us a call as Snowys on 1300 914 007.***