

Queensland's Top 10 Rail Journey

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Travelling by train in Queensland is more than just a way to get from A to B, it's an opportunity for passengers to immerse themselves in some of State's most beautiful landscapes. From five star overnight journeys to Cairns and Outback towns like Longreach and Mount Isa, to short haul stops for the budget conscious between Queensland's coastal destinations, there's a train journey available to suit the needs of every traveller. Here are the top 10 ways to see Queensland by train.

Discover Queensland's coast on The Sunlander

Named one of the "World's Top 25 Trains" by The Society of International Railway Travelers in 2007, **The Sunlander** is a great rail option for travellers seeking a high level of passenger comfort and fantastic onboard social atmosphere. The train travels twice a week between Brisbane and Cairns in both directions and is a great way to soak up Queensland's stunning east coast landscapes. From pineapple plantations on the Sunshine Coast to hectares of rich grazing heartland near Rockhampton, the shimmering Pacific Ocean at Cardwell, burning sugarcane fields around Innisfail, and the lush splendour of Cairns and the tropics, there's no shortage of postcard moments as The Sunlander weaves its way along the coastline. Two different styles of travel (Queenslander Class and Standard accommodation in single, twin and triple-berths) mean The Sunlander can cater for the astute traveller and the budget conscious. Queensland Class is a premium, all-inclusive style of travel featuring comfortable, twin-berth accommodation; fine dining in an exclusive restaurant car; and a host of special touches including bathrobes and slippers. www.traveltrain.com.au

From the reef to the rainforest

Jump aboard one of the world's most scenic short train journeys, **Kuranda Scenic Railway**, to travel from the Great Barrier Reef gateway city of Cairns to the mountain village of Kuranda. With two departures daily from Cairns, the two hour trip winds its way into the mountains across valleys and gorges, through lush tropical rainforests and past cascading waterfalls. Upon reaching Kuranda, passengers can explore a rich assortment of interesting attractions and shops. If you're interested in history, why not upgrade to the 'Gold Class', which includes a personal hostess who provides commentary on historic events and places en route to Kuranda. Travel in distinctive heritage carriages adorned with brass insignias and equipped with a plush Victorian-inspired interior, while sipping on sparkling wine or a cold beer and savouring delicious canapés. Most passengers complement their rail journey with a return trip on Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, or package with other local tours including Hot Air ballooning, Aboriginal cultural attractions and Great Barrier Reef cruises. www.kurandascenicrailway.com.au

Experience the Spirit of the Outback

Exploring Queensland's ever changing landscapes, the **Spirit of the Outback** moves from the coast into the heart of the outback with its rugged scenery, wide-open plains and historic Outback towns via a route passengers would not be able to experience any other way. This fascinating 24 hour journey spans 1,325kms between Brisbane and Longreach and offers a unique and realistic insight into the history and culture of early Australia. A themed stockman's restaurant car serves Australian specialities onboard the train, which is renowned for its social and friendly atmosphere. Extended touring options include visiting historic Outback towns such as Longreach, home to the Australian Stockmen's Hall of Fame; Winton, birthplace to Australia's "unofficial" national anthem Waltzing Matilda; and Lark Quarry to see the world's only known dinosaur stampede. It's the perfect Australian outback rail adventure. www.traveltrain.com.au

Exploring gulf country

Fondly referred to as the old 'tin hare', the **Gulflander** is one of the world's last great characters of rail travel. Taking passengers on a journey from remote Normanton to far flung Croydon, the historic small train travels through the tough and inhospitable Gulf Country. The Gulflander only carries a small number of passengers, so there's always a friendly casual atmosphere on board. Travellers can experience first hand the diverse landscapes and ancient geological formations of the region where cattle roam on large stations and gold was once the main source of income for many locals. A half-day journey, The Gulflander often stops for an impromptu morning tea supplied by the locals and for photo opportunities at Norman River Bridge. www.traveltrain.com.au

A rattling journey to the Outback

Discover the pace and grace of rail travel in a by-gone era with a journey aboard the **Savannahlander**. This classic 1960s Rail Motor travels at a sedate 50kph on a scenic journey between Cairns and Forsayth. The journey incorporates the scenic coastal track along the Kuranda Railway, through World Heritage-listed rainforests, the savannah and Outback Australia. "The Silver Bullet" as the train is affectionately known, was state-of-the-art when it was brought into service. The trip can take between two and four days, depending on which side trips passengers elect to do along the way. Discover the hidden gems of the world's longest recorded lava flow at Undara Lava Tubes or step back in time and imagine the lure of untold wealth in the 1800s at Tyrconnell Gold Mine. www.traveltrain.com.au and www.undara.com.au

Go west and explore the wilderness!

Immerse yourself in Queensland's pioneering spirit on a scenic rail trip from Brisbane to Charleville on The **Westlander**. Departing Brisbane, the journey travels across the Great Dividing Range through the rich farmlands of the Darling Downs before arriving in Charleville, the largest town in south-west Queensland. The overnight journey features a choice of sleeper or seat tickets, with a club car catering for all meals and snacks onboard. Once in Charleville, an exciting array of Outback experiences await including the dedicated stargazing observatory - the Cosmos Centre, the Royal Flying Doctor's Service Base, station stays, and the opal fields of the south-west. Take a side-trip to include Carnarvon Gorge National Park offering some of the best walking tracks in Australia. There is an abundance of flora and fauna, vibrantly coloured side gorges and Aboriginal rock art to see during this Outback Aussie experience. www.traveltrain.com.au

Into the heart of Australia

Catch a ride on **The Inlander** for a historic train journey from the tropical city of Townsville to Queensland's mining centre of Mount Isa in the State's north-west. This 977km trip in air-conditioned comfort travels through Charters Towers, a town brimming with history and heritage reminiscent of its gold rush days, and across the Great Dividing Range through the mining towns of Hughenden and Julia Creek, which is famous for its annual Dirt 'n' Dust Festival. The journey then delivers passengers into the heart of Australia in Mount Isa where they can further discover this rugged inland area. Some highlights include the Riversleigh Fossils Interpretive Centre, tours of underground mines and hospitals and off-road 4WD adventures. www.traveltrain.com.au

Tilt in time

Discover Queensland's tropical coastline cities in comfort aboard the country's most innovative train, the **Tilt Train**. Travelling between Brisbane and Cairns on a daily basis, the Tilt Train is Australia's fastest train with its unique tilting technology that literally "tilts" the train into the curves to power smoothly through corners. This modern form of rail travel features in-seat entertainment and is the perfect option for shorter, daylight journeys. Why not take the four hour trip from Brisbane to Maryborough and then ferry across to the World Heritage-Listed Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island. Or if you'd prefer a taste of Queensland's Outback, hop off in Miriam Vale and visit Glassford Creek – an authentic family owned and run farmstay. www.tilttrain.com.au www.frasercoastholidays.info and www.glassfordcreekfarmstay.com.au

Rail around the city

If you're holidaying in Brisbane, one of the easiest and most convenient ways to get around the city is aboard one of TransLink Queensland Rail city trains - linking the Brisbane International and Domestic Airports to Brisbane City and suburbs, and south to the Gold Coast. The trains are a fast, convenient and a cost-effective travel option. Train tickets can also be used on TransLink bus services in the south-east Queensland region, the high speed CityCats and cross-river CityFerries on the Brisbane River. www.citytrain.com.au www.translink.com.au

Access Queensland's coast with an East Coast Discovery rail pass

The **East Coast Discovery Pass** is a must-have for the backpacker or budget-minded traveller looking to explore the very best of Queensland's coastline. The flexible rail pass is available to international travellers providing unlimited stops for one directional travel (north or south) in an economy seat on Queensland's east coast rail services over a six-month period. Using the pass, travellers can access all major tourist destinations between Brisbane and Cairns, including the Sunshine Coast, Fraser Island, Central Queensland, the Whitsundays, Townsville and Cairns. For a real "Aussie experience", passengers can also stop at some of Queensland's smaller and less touristy regional towns along the coastal rail route. The pass also offers half price return travel to an inland destination on either The Westlander, Spirit of the Outback or The Inlander services. www.traveltrain.com.au