



A tour through Border Ranges National Park isn't an off-road challenge by any means, but should be part of any tour of the mountainous region between Queensland and NSW.

Tweed Range Scenic Drive is navigable by two-wheel drive vehicles in good weather, but a soft-roader, such as a Nissan X-Trail, provides traction back-up if the weather turns nasty – at the 1000-metre altitude of much of this national park a weather change is always on the cards.

The easiest way to enter Border Ranges NP is via Lions Road and Sheep Station Creek, but our route takes in all the steep climbs and visits the most significant viewing sites. We used Kyogle as a base for our two-day visit.

The trip begins with a bitumen run out of Kyogle, but the road soon turns to gravel and begins climbing steeply. Virtually the entire dirt-road drive is through dense rainforest, but the canopy is clear enough for the most part to allow GPS to function.

At Bar Mountain there are long and short walks through elevated rainforest that is home to the rare Antarctic Beech – a survivor of the Gondwana land mass that eventually broke up into today's South America, Australia, India and Antarctica. Some of the





MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Border Ranges National Park offers spectacular views of Mount Warning volcanic site, as well as drives and rainforest walks, **ALLAN WHITING** writes





This drive includes easy sections, steep climbs and dense rainforest

trees visitors gaze at began growing when the Roman Empire was at its peak.

From Bar Mountain through to Forest Tops Camping Area the road is dotted with mountain top viewing spots; The Blackbutts and The Pinnacle are stand-outs.

These lookouts give a clear view of the Mount Warning volcanic area and sit at the edge of the ancient caldera – the largest in the southern hemisphere. Mount Warning is all that's left of the weathered core of the original volcano and is said to be half its original height.

The one-way loop drive from Forest Tops through Brindle Creek shows another aspect of this extraordinary area, as the road drops into Brindle Creek valley and crosses the creek at a beautifully sited bridge.

The ideal camping spot in the park is at Forest Tops, where there is ample grass area, composting toilets and three fire places. The only drawback with this spot is that you have to lug your camping gear from the 4X4 to the site, because you can't park near your tent, thanks to a typical NSW Parks and Wildlife vehicle-exclusion fence.



Our route takes in an enjoyable mix of steep climbs and spectacular lookouts



From Forest Tops the track descends steeply into Sheep Station Creek valley, where there's another, busier, campsite. An alternative to driving down the hill is to bush-walk the 9.2-km Booyong Track that runs from Forest Tops to Brush Box Falls, near Sheep Station Creek campsite, and then transfer back to Forest Tops by vehicle (there's always someone happy to give the walk a miss and be the ferry person).

There are loop walks at Sheep Station Creek that are must-dos – both taking in Brush Box Falls and its attendant swimming holes.



For more treks and four-wheel drive information check out the Nissan website: nissan.com.au/patrol


GREAT AUSSIE TREK NOTES

0.0 (0.0)	TR. Murwillumbah turn-off. Zero trip	40.45 (0.05)	Park at Blackbutts lookout. Return to main track
1.7 (1.7)	TR. SP Kyogle Road to Murwillumbah	40.6 (0.05)	TR on main track
13.5 (11.8)	SO. SP Cowangla, Murwillumbah	47.0 (6.4)	Park on main track and walk to The Pinnacle
18.1 (4.6)	SO at T-intersection.	50.1 (3.1)	TL. SP Kyogle 43 km
24.5 (6.4)	SO at T-intersection. SP Murwillumbah	54.0 (3.9)	VL at Y-intersection. SP Kyogle 39 km
24.8 (0.3)	TL at T-intersection. SP Border Ranges National Park, Tweed Range Scenic Drive. Gravel road	54.2 (0.2)	Forest Tops campsite. Return to Y-intersection
27.0 (2.2)	SO at T-intersection.	54.4 (0.2)	VL on one-way track
27.5 (0.5)	TR at T-intersection. SP Creegan's Road	55.2 (1.2)	Brindle Creek
29.4 (1.9)	Shallow ford. Steep climb	58.5 (3.3)	Wilderness viewing area
33.3 (3.9)	Border Ranges National park boundary	61.3 (2.8)	SO at T-intersection. SP Kyogle 43 km
37.3 (4.0)	TL st T-intersection. SP Bar Mountain picnic area	65.5 (4.2)	VL at Y-intersection. SP Kyogle 39 km
37.4 (0.1)	Park at Bar Mountain picnic area. Return to main track	65.8 (0.3)	Forest Tops campsite.
37.5 (0.1)	TL on main track		
40.5 (3.0)	TR at T-intersection. SP Blackbutts lookout		

Follow the downhill track to Sheep Station campsite – we have no trek distances for this short descent because the GPS was hampered by the dense forest canopy!



Some of the historic walks traverse through lush forests

Sheep Station Creek was the base for cedar cutters in the mid-1800s and there are still traces of their red gold activities. Not far from Brush Box Falls, on Palm Forest Walk, is a log-slide where forest giants were slid down the hillside to waiting horse-drawn jinkers. The loggers carved their names into a rock face and the historic graffiti survives today.

GETTING THERE

The loop trek we took through Border Ranges starts and ends in the town of Kyogle, which is easily reached from the NSW north coast, the New England region or from Brisbane.

MAPS

If you're planning extended bush-walking you'll need topographic maps, but for a driving tour Hema's North East NSW and the locally available 'mud maps' are adequate.

ACCOMMODATION & SUPPLIES

There's ample motel accommodation in Kyogle and Murwillumbah and also fuel and supermarkets.

PERMITS AND CAMPING

Day-use vehicle passes for the Border Ranges National Park are \$6 and camping is \$3 per adult per night. There are honesty boxes at designated camp sites and day use permit envelopes are at the Park entrance.

TREK NOTES

Our trek starts at the north end of Kyogle Township, on Summerland Way, at the turn-off to Murwillumbah and Nimbin. **44**

VEHICLE RECOMMENDATION

Some of this trek is navigable in a two-wheel drive but you'd be better off in a soft-roader, such as a Nissan X-Trail, or a vehicle with low range.