

The Art Of Slow

A Perfect Country Weekend in Toogoolawah

There's a new kind of weekend emerging where busy is replaced with slow, where packed itineraries give way to wandering and overcrowded hotspots are quietly swapped for space and plenty of fresh air.

Located just an hour and a half from Brisbane, Toogoolawah is the kind of town that doesn't try too hard and that's all part of its charm. This is a town that invites you to take your time — to linger over coffee, to wander without purpose, and to rediscover the simple pleasure of being somewhere that feels both grounded and quietly creative. Here, sleepy streets come to life on a weekend and conversations with the locals are as much a part of the experience as everything else on your itinerary.

For those looking to enjoy something quiet but real, relaxing but rewarding – this is your guide to a slow weekend in Toogoolawah, one of Queensland's quietly compelling regional escapes. No passport or lengthy planning required, just an esky or cooler bag to bring home your fresh foodie finds while in region!

Day 1 (Saturday):

- Your slow weekend starts with an easy drive from Brisbane, winding through rolling hills and heading west into the Somerset region.
- Almost immediately, the landscape begins to shift. The city fades behind you, replaced by rolling hills, open paddocks and wide skies that seem to stretch a little further with every kilometre.
- Crossing the Wivenhoe Dam spillway will set the tone for your weekend head — water views, vast landscapes and the immediate sense that you've left the city hustle behind.
- Rather than heading straight through Somerset, take your time and ease into the morning with a stop at the Esk Country Markets. There's something about a regional market that sets the tone perfectly for a slow weekend. Browse handmade goods, chat with stallholders, buy direct from the maker and pick up a few local treats for later.
- From Esk, you'll take a short and scenic 15-minute drive through to Toogoolawah.
- Arriving mid-morning, you'll be just in time for a coffee break at Thee Coffee Shack. This lovely little cottage stands proud in Toogoolawah's main street and is popular with locals for a reason, offering great coffee, cakes and light meals. Order a coffee, perhaps something sweet and take a moment to simply sit and take in the village's unassuming atmosphere.

The Art Of Slow

A Perfect Country Weekend in Toogoolawah

Day 1: continued

- After your coffee stop, enjoy a wander through the main street, where a growing collection of small, independent stores and creative spaces give Toogoolawah its unique character. A highlight is Two Galahs Gallery, a vibrant collective showcasing the work of more than 80 local artists and makers. Inside, you'll find an eclectic mix of paintings, ceramics, textiles, jewellery and handcrafted pieces.Browse their range before continuing on your slow wander through the main streets.
- Just a short stroll away, the Toogoolawah History Museum offers a different perspective on the town. Set within the original railway station, the museum is filled with artefacts, photographs and memorabilia that bring the region's past to life. There's a sense of pride here — a deep connection to history that adds another layer to your experience of the town. If you're curious, the local historian even offers a family search service, making your visit personal and perhaps with the unexpected thrill of a local family connection.
- By now, you'll likely be ready for a relaxed lunch. Right next door, Have' A'Chat Café delivers exactly what the name promises — good food in a friendly, welcoming setting. It's unfussy and comfortable, the kind of place where conversations flow easily and no one is watching the clock. Enjoy a light lunch here before crossing the road to check in at Peddlars Rest.
- This boutique accommodation has quickly become a favourite for visitors, known for its central location and exceptionally comfortable beds. It strikes that perfect balance between country charm and includes welcome provisions (including bike storage) for those utilising the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.
- The rest of the afternoon is yours to shape, and your stay will be guided by your preferred pace.
- If you're feeling active, lace up your shoes or hop on a bike to explore the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail. One of the longest rail trails in Australia, it runs directly through Toogoolawah and offers options for every level of experience. Casual riders might prefer a gentle ride around town, taking in local highlights like the mural near the Fire Station on Cressbrook Street. It's an easy, enjoyable way to explore without any pressure. You can either bring your own bike or you can hire a bike through Out There Cycling.
- More avid cyclists can take the afternoon to explore a full leg of the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.Pre-book the shuttle with Out There Cycling who will drop you at Linville where you can explore the town before cycling back to Toogoolawah (allow two hours for the return leg). This section of the trail is particularly scenic, passing through changing landscapes, historic railway sites and the much-loved Yimbun Tunnel. It's a ride that feels both adventurous and deeply connected to the region's history — a highlight for more confident cyclists.
- Whichever option you choose, return to town in the late afternoon for a well-earned rest.

The Art Of Slow

A Perfect Country Weekend in Toogoolawah

Day 1: continued

- As the day begins to wind down, head out for dinner at the Exchange Hotel. This is classic country pub dining done right. The atmosphere is warm and relaxed, the meals are hearty and satisfying, and there's an ease to the environment – perfect for conversation and sharing trip highlights so far.
- After dinner, lean into the nostalgia of the town with a visit to the Toogoolawah Pictures.
- This old-style cinema is a rare find — complete with sling-back canvas chairs and the unmistakable smell of freshly made popcorn. Watching a film here feels like stepping back in time, offering a simple but memorable end to your first day.
- Return to Peddlars Rest for the night, where a quiet, comfortable sleep awaits.

Day 2: Explore Esk

- The morning begins gently — whether that means sleeping in a little longer or stepping out early for a quiet walk through town. There's something special about Toogoolawah in the early hours. The streets are calm, the air is fresh, and the day feels full of possibility without any sense of urgency.
- After checking out from Peddlars Rest, make your way to Picnic Society for breakfast. This much-loved local spot is known for its beautifully curated grazing offerings, but in the morning, it's all about the simple pleasures. Steve's freshly baked pasties are a standout — golden, flaky and best enjoyed with a good coffee. Before you leave, take the time to browse the shelves and stock up on house-made relishes, jams and chutneys. These small, thoughtful products make perfect take-home reminders of your weekend.
- Be sure to collect your pre-ordered grazing board from Picnic Society for the trip home.
- A must-do on your return trip home is to venture beyond the farm with a farmgate stopover at Cumquats Australia.
- This family run cumquat orchard features a farmgate shop that's open on weekends. Buy home homegrown ginger and a range of handcrafted goodies, including cumquat marmalades, preserves, relishes and drinking shrubs. You can also explore the farm's paddock-to-bottle distillery and discover small-batch spirits made using homegrown produce. Check their website for farm opening dates and tour dates before setting off.
- If time permits, make a short stop over at Esk for a wander through the main street and shops before heading home. Aside from excellent fashion finds, Esk is a great stop over for curious foodies. Fill an esky or cooler bag with fresh fruits, vegetables and gourmet goodies from local makers at the Esk Fruit Shop and be sure to stop at Brisbane Valley Meats on the way through for prime cuts of locally produced beef. Their lamb chops are well revered by locals!
- Stop at Cormorant Bay to enjoy your Picnic Society Grazing board and lakeside views before continuing the short journey home.
- Arrive home in Brisbane late-afternoon, refreshed and relaxed after your slow escape in Somerset.