DINOS, CROCS AND GOLD

TOWNSVILLE CITY TO TOWNSVILLE CITY

Duration: 14 days / 2934 km

Start your 14 day Dinos, Cros and Gold journey from Townsville.

Highlights include fossicking for gold, digging for fossils on The Dinosaur Trail, heading underground at the Hard Times Mine Tour in Mount Isa, meeting the world's largest ever captured crocodile, spotting freshwater crocodiles on a Cobbold Gorge cruise and walking the path of a volcano at Undara Experience.

Experiences:

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Townsville to Charters Towers

Day: 1

Start: **Townsville City** End: **Charters Towers**

Day 1: Leave the beaches behind and head west on the Flinders Highway to the historic gold mining town of Charters Towers. Be prepared for some awesome tales as we follow the Ghosts of Gold Heritage Trail, which brings to life the legends and the characters of Charters Towers. You can even try your hand at pa ing for gold at the Miner's Cottage!n Watch a short film telling the story of the city's begi ings from the discovery of gold at the Charters Towers Visitor Information Centre. Hear how gold stocks and shares were traded at the National Trust's Stock Exchange Arcade then take a short walk to the Zara Clark Museum for an insight into Charters Towers' 140-year history. Tonight watch the Ghosts after Dark film screened at the amphitheatre atop Towers Hill. Hear some local tales and historical milestones, which will give you an understanding of how tough it was in 'The World' back then.

Charters Towers to Hughenden

Day: 2

Start: **Charters Towers** End: **Hughenden**

Day 2: This morning, point your family towards the west out to dinosaur country!n Along the way, take time to call into the townships of Pentland, Torrens Creek and be sure to stop at the Prairie Pub. Far more than a licensed venue, this family friendly establishment is laden to the rafters with antiques and collectables from times gone by. A wonderful opportunity to show the kids an array of items from old tools and saddlery to swagman's hats and a tricycle. Arriving in Hughenden, you will find the Flinders Discovery Centre where you can see an exciting Porcupine Gorge light and sound show recounting its formation over 500 million years. The Centre is also home to 'Hughie' the skeletal Muttaburrasaurus. Located on the edge of the inland sea, it's hard to imagine there are sea shells in the hills around this country town, or that once instead of cattle, dinosaurs roamed the land.

Hughenden to Julia Creek

Day: 3

Start: **Hughenden** End: **Julia Creek**

Day 3: Follow the highway from Hughenden to Richmond and Kronosaurus Korner - Australia's Premier Marine Fossil Museum. Hear the amazing discovery story of the 100 million year old pliosaur on a nearby cattle station. As you wander the museum, you'll see the most complete marine reptile fossils in the world originating from the Cretaceous Inland Sea that covered a large section of Queensland millions of years ago. Discover early pioneer stories at the Cambridge Downs Heritage Display Centre. Built from local flagstone rock, the Cambridge Downs Heritage Display Centre is a replica of the original Cambridge Downs Homestead built in the late 1860s. Red dirt country, rattling road trains and roaming kangaroos - you know you're in the Outback now. Go west to Julia Creek and visit 'At the Creek' and 'Beneath the Creek', the town's award wi ing Visitor Information Centre and hands-on interactive centre. If you're lucky you will catch a live feeding of the Julia Creek Du art - one of Australia's 'vanishing species'.

Julia Creek to Mount Isa

Day: 4

Start: **Julia Creek** End: **Mount Isa**

Day 4: Today you're headed for Mount Isa, the Rodeo and Mining capital of Australia. As you near Mount Isa, keep an eye out for super-sized machinery and the big stacks of the mines that seem to rise up out of the earth. Visit the Underground Hospital and Museum, a fully equipped hospital built in a large air-raid shelter during World War II and the bombing of Darwin. Everything is just as it was all those years ago!n Tonight, make your way to the City Lookout to view the super pits and ever-changing light show as you watch the sunset over this mighty town.

Mount Isa

Day: 5

Start: **Mount Isa** End: **Mount Isa**

Day 5: If you've ever wondered what working underground would be like or how an underground mine actually works, today's your chance with the Hard Times Mine Tour, at the Outback at Isa centre. You'll get to dress in high visibility gear, take the cage lift underground, learn the history of mining, see how the tu els are formed, feel the earth rumble with the firing of the blast face and maybe even get to use a drill. Also at Outback at Isa is the Riversleigh Fossil Centre, where you'll see 30 million year old mega fauna fossils from one of the world's richest fossil fields. This afternoon, take a short drive out to the picturesque Lake Moondarra for a relaxing barbecue, a swim or perhaps a kayak. If you like fishing, then you'll want to throw in a line here, for your chance to catch the prized barramundi.

Mount Isa to Cloncurry

Day: 6

Start: **Mount Isa** End: **Cloncurry**

Day 6: Spot the rodeo legends names engraved in the footpaths on Rodeo Drive (yes in Mount Isa not L.A.) and explore the quaint boutiques before travelling on to Cloncurry. At John Fly Place Museum, learn the great Australian story of how John Fly began the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The museum also plays tribute to Alfred Traeger, who gave a voice to Outback Australia through his invention of the pedal radio. At Cloncurry Unearthed you can fossick for gemstones and minerals. You will also see memorabilia from the Mary Kathleen Uranium Mine. Followers of the Burke & Wills story will be interested to see Burke's water bottle and photographs of their expedition.

Cloncurry to Adels Grove

Day: 7

Start: **Cloncurry** End: **Lawn Hill**

Day 7: Today is a big day of driving to Adels Grove and the spectacular Lawn Hill Gorge, a beautiful oasis in the Outback. This magnificent gorge is perfect for spotting wildlife, scenic walks, canoeing and visiting cultural sites. Travel north along the Matilda Highway via the Burke and Wills Roadhouse, an ideal lunch stop. Next take the Wills Development Road to Gregory Downs with time to relax on the riverbank, before travelling on to the Century Mine turn off. The last 40 kilometre stretch to Adels Grove is via an unsealed road, suitable for both conventional and four wheel drive vehicles with the exception of wet weather. Adels Grove is located 10 kilometres from the Lawn Hill Gorge, Boodjamulla National Park. You have the option of camping or enjoying their di er, bed and breakfast accommodation in either furnished river tents or rooms. Stay the next two nights at Adels Grove.

Adels Grove

Day: 8

Start: **Lawn Hill** End: **Lawn Hill**

Day 8: Meet your guide at reception for a 7.30am departure to experience the wonder of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park. Upon arriving at Boodjamulla, explore the Park walks and learn about the unique flora and fauna in the area. Enjoy some morning tea then hop in your canoe to explore the winding emerald green waters of the gorge and Lawn Hill Creek. Your afternoon is free to wander more scenic walks, visit cultural sites or swim in Lawn Hill Creek, a pere ial and spring fed waterway. Tonight you may like to join the Sunset on Harry's Hill Tour and watch the beautiful Outback sunset over this special part of the world.

Adels Grove to Normanton

Day: 9

Start: **Lawn Hill** End: **Normanton**

Day 9: Depart Adels Grove early for the Burke and Wills Roadhouse. The Roadhouse is right on the route taken by the intrepid explorers Burke and Wills, hence its name. Make a stop here, fuel up your car and grab some lunch. The Burke and Wills trail continues as you drive north to Normanton where their last northern camp is signposted on the Normanton-Burketown road. They say never smile at a crocodile but today you could kiss Krys the Crocodile - replica of the largest crocodile caught in the world!n If you choose to stay at the Normanton Tourist Park, enjoy a swim in the largest resort pool in the North West. While in town, check out the legendary Gulflander rail motor, also known as the 'Tin Hare', one of the last great characters of the rail world.

Normanton to Georgetown

Day: 10

Start: **Normanton** End: **Georgetown**

Day 10: Wind the windows down, take in the fresh Gulf Sava ah air and head for Georgetown today. Just after the half way mark, your travels will bring you to Croydon, a small town with a big history that started with the discovery of gold in 1885. Let the kids out for a run around at Lake Belmore, stop for lunch and call by the Visitor Information Centre to learn more about the local region. Continue your journey west to Georgetown and call it a day for the road. Visit TerrEstrial - The Ted Elliot Mineral Collection containing over 4,500 mineral specimens in a myriad of colours.

Georgetown to Cobbold Gorge

Day: 11

Start: **Georgetown** End: **Forsayth**

Day 11: Leaving Georgetown, travel east to Forsayth, originally known as Fi egan's Camp, then Charleston and finally Forsayth. This part of the Etheridge Goldfield has plenty of stories to tell. The area was known as the 'Poor Man's Goldfield', as a prospector did not need expensive equipment to search for gold. Your destination today is something truly special. Deep in the heart of the Gulf Sava ah region is the hidden outback oasis of Cobbold Gorge. Located on the huge Robin Hood Cattle Station, Cobbold Gorge offers an impressive selection of facilities to include comfortable accommodation, an infinity swimming pool, fully licensed bar/restaurant, and a full program of tours and activities.

Cobbold Gorge

Day: 12

Start: **Forsayth** End: **Forsayth**

Day 12: So many options today and all day to do them! Go bushwalking, birdwatching, or enjoy a swim the infinity pool. A must do is the three-hour Gorge Tour which includes a boat cruise on their custom-made, electric powered boat and a tour of the magnificent sandstone gorge. If you missed your chance yesterday, today's a great opportunity to take the family out on the Robin Hood Station Experience to explore this 1284 square kilometre cattle grazing property. For an aerial view, you can't beat a scenic helicopter flight to parts of the Gorge not accessible to the public any other way. There's nothing like a campfire di er to finish off a day in the Outback. Gather around and see who has the best yarn to share from your adventures so far.

Cobbold Gorge to Undara

Day: 13

Start: **Forsayth** End: **Undara**

Day 13: An early start and onward to your next adventure - today you are destined to walk the path of a volcano at Undara Lava Tubes. Fuel up in Georgetown this morning, have a bite to eat, and continue on to Undara. It's worth aiming to arrive at Undara in time for lunch and to join one of the afternoon tours (remember to phone ahead and book). During daylight hours there are the Archway or Active Tours, or see the big sky sunset and insect-eating micro bats on the Wildlife at Sunset Tour. At 8pm nightly, pull up a chair at 'Round the Campfire' for this wonderful free activity that includes bush yarns, singing with the guitar and talks on the environment.

Undara to Townsville

Day: 14

Start: **Undara** End: **Townsville City**

Day 14: With a bush breakfast in your bellies, there's time for one last exploration of the bush at Undara before you set out for the drive back to Townsville. Along the way, be sure to stop for morning tea at The Lynd Oasis Roadhouse on the Lynd Junction, home to Australia's Smallest Pub - a tiny 1.2 metres square!n Travelling south on the Gregory Development Road, if time permits, call into Greenvale. Situated on the Burdekin River and made famous in Slim Dusty's song 'Three Rivers Hotel', Greenvale was the end of the line for the Townsville to Greenvale railway line until it closed in 1993. After lunch, turn east onto Hervey Range Road and leave the country sunrises and sunsets behind on your return drive to Townsville. As you cross over to the eastern side of the range, be sure to take in the expansive view of the coastline below. Who will be first to spot Castle Hill? Magnetic Island? The North Queensland Cowboys stadium? Arrive in Townsville late afternoon.