

A JOURNEY THROUGH PREHISTORY

• Dinosaurs • Mega Fauna • Inland Sea • Ancient Lands



DISCOVER A NEW MEANING TO THE



LAND DOWN UNDER

www.digthetropic.com.au

Planning your trip...
Start your geo journey online at www.digthetropic.com.au
If you are already on the road, drop in or call one of the local Visitor Information Centres on the Tropic of Capricorn:

Boulia Visitor Information Centre
Min Min Encounter and Information,
Herbert Street, Boulia 07 4746 3386

Winton Visitor Information Centre
Waltzing Matilda Centre
50 Elderslie Street, Winton
1300 665 115

Barcardine Visitor Information Centre
Oak Street, Barcardine
07 4651 1724

Emerald Visitor Information Centre
3 Clermont Street, Emerald
07 4982 4142

Rockhampton Visitor Information Centre
208 Quay Street, Rockhampton
07 4922 5625

The Tropic of Capricorn Spire
Gladstone Road, Rockhampton
07 49272055

Yeppoon Visitor Information Centre
Ross Creek Roundabout, Yeppoon
07 4939 4888



Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum



Starlight's Lookout

'Hands On' the Tropic of Capricorn

DIG for fossils on a dinosaur dig or prepare a specimen at Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum, Winton.

FIND your very own boulder opals in Opalton and fossick for precious gems on the Sapphire Gemfields.

EXPLORE ancient limestone caverns at Capricorn Caves, near Rockhampton.

CLIMB Starlight's Lookout and stand in infamous bushranger's footsteps at Longreach.

SWIM in the prehistoric waters of the Great Artesian Basin at the Ilfracombe Spa.



Yellow and Green Sapphires

Did you know?

- Bore baths from the Great Artesian Basin are said to heal and rejuvenate because of their mineral wealth
- The rivers that flowed across these plains around 98 million years ago are thought to have been comparable in size to the present day Amazon or Mississippi.



Ilfracombe Spa



What is the Tropic of Capricorn?

The Tropic of Capricorn is one of Earth's major circles of latitude. It lies 23.5 degrees south of the equator and marks the most southerly latitude at which the sun can appear directly overhead at noon. Running through Australia, Chile, Southern Brazil, and South Africa, it links extreme conditions and dramatic landscapes.



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Dinosaur Discovery

Gondwanaland abounded with creatures we can hardly imagine, but as time passed the earth shifted in a gradual, sensational, evolution of the land. Australia's vast inland sea and its surrounding wetlands disappeared, leaving behind a prehistoric burial ground.



Experience the living museum that remains today, a route embedded with tell-tale fossils along the Tropic of Capricorn. Here are three creatures you may uncover on your journey:



Thylacoleo: This majestic marsupial lion was the largest mammalian carnivore ever found in Australia. It had massive teeth and a pouch! Thylacoleo fossil deposits have been uncovered in cave sediments in the Capricorn Caves District, near Rockhampton.

Platypterigius: This marine reptile resembled a cross between a dolphin and a shark. Fast and agile swimmers, Platypterigius grew to 6-7m long, breathed air and gave birth to live young under water. Visit the Stone House Museum, Boulia, to see marine reptile fossils and learn about the ancient inland sea.



Did you know?

- 'Sauropod' is derived from 'lizard foot' in Greek; 'theropod' is derived from the Greek 'beast footed'; and 'ornithopod' from the Greek 'bird feet'.

Theropod: These meat-eating dinosaurs ran quickly on strong hind legs, grabbing prey with claws on their short, front limbs. Their feet had three toes and their strong jaws had sharp teeth. You can see the remains of these amazing dinosaurs at Winton's Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum.



Meet more dinosaurs and mega fauna online at www.digthetropic.com.au

Treasure Unearthed

Dramatic shifts in the earth's crust, volcanic eruptions and environmental changes, have left behind a country embedded with great mineral wealth. Discover the secrets of the ages in the treasures atop and layers below the Tropic of Capricorn...

Opals: Unique to Queensland's Tropic of Capricorn, boulder opal occurs within a belt of deeply weathered Cretaceous sedimentary rocks, known as the Winton Formation. Dig for your own opals at Opalton, 157km from Winton (unsealed road).

Fossilised Wood: The petrification process occurs underground, when wood is suddenly buried under sediment, such as mud washed over a floodplain after a storm. Water flowing through the sediment can deposit new minerals in the plant's cells, most often a silicate such as quartz. This forms a perfect cast of the original object. See a collection of petrified wood at the Rowley Roberts Information Centre, 45 Shakespeare Street, Alpha.

Blackwater Coal Mining



Sapphires: The largest sapphire gemfields in the southern hemisphere can be found on Queensland's Tropic of Capricorn. Dig for your own gems or take an underground tour at the Sapphire Gem fields. Sapphire Gemfields takes in the townships of Anakie, Sapphire, Rubyvale and The Willows just 45 minutes drive from Emerald.



Coal: The Tropic of Capricorn contains some of Australia's oldest deposits of black coal, formed around 180 million years ago. See the whole story at the Blackwater International Coal Centre, Capricorn Highway Blackwater, Phone (07) 4982 7755.

Gold: Mount Morgan is home to one of the oldest mines in Australia and provides evidence of the richness of the regional deposits. Over 225,000kg of gold has been extracted from the Mount Morgan area. Take a tour through the old Mount Morgan mine site.

Thundereggs: The layers of these 'volcanic birthstones' tell of an incredible geo journey formed in silica-rich volcanic rocks resulting from ancient lava flow. Dig for your own Thunderegg at Mt Hay Gemstone Tourist Park, 3665 Capricorn Highway, Wycarbah, Phone (07) 4934 7183.

Please Note:
You need a permit/licence to fossick on any public fossicking sites. Permits can be purchased for a small monthly fee and are available from numerous small businesses and licence agents throughout the region. Drop into an accredited Visitor Information Centre or log onto www.dme.qld.gov.au/mines/fossicking.cfm for more information.

Amazing Landscapes

Cawnpore Lookout: A stunning mesa which stands stark against the wide sky.

Starlight's Lookout: Capture the very same view Captain Starlight and his men used to keep lookout for their pursuers during the audacious cattle heist of 1870.

Blackdown Tableland National Park: A sandstone wonderland, the Blackdown Tablelands offer a walking tracks to heritage sites, creeks and lookouts.

Fan Rock, Double Head: Volcanic plugs on the Capricorn Coast will spur the imagination with incredible grooves on Fan Rock providing a great texture for photographers.

Dig the Tropic OVERVIEW

Take a Geo Journey through Queensland

The Tropic of Capricorn is one of Earth's major circles of latitude. It lies 23.5 degrees south of the equator and marks the most southerly latitude at which the sun can appear directly overhead at noon. Running through Australia, Chile, Southern Brazil and South Africa, it links extreme conditions and dramatic landscapes.

Sweeping through Queensland the Tropic of Capricorn reveals a host of geological wonders – from the vast

Outback, through Central Queensland, to the stunning Capricorn Coast and Great Barrier Reef. These contrasting panoramas showcase the results of drastic climate change over an unfathomable time.

Explore the Tropic of Capricorn and discover the secrets of the ages in the treasures atop and layers below... Plan your journey online: digthetropic.com.au or visit a local Visitor Information Centre.

Driving Tips FOR DIG THE TROPIC

Travelling along the Tropic of Capricorn is a safe and rewarding self-drive experience. Your east-west journey follows the Capricorn Highway to Barcardine, Landsborough Highway to Winton and Kennedy Development Road to Boulia.

To ensure you make the most of your drive holiday, here are some useful tips for driving in the region:

- Be aware of driving long distances, and fatigue. Plan your journey and share the driving with someone else.
- Avoid driving at dawn, dusk and at night to reduce the risk of hitting wildlife.
- If travelling alone tell people (such as your friends, accommodation provider or local police) of your plans.
- If your vehicle breaks down in a remote area, stay with the vehicle.
- Use accredited Visitor Information Centres for local and regional information, including local safety issues.

Meet the Monsters of the Outback Sea

Take a journey through time and discover why the ocean filled the Outback; and how approaching the Tropic of Capricorn completely transformed Boulia. The **Stone House Museum** offers an impressive display of fossils from this ancient underwater world.



Jump-ups Tell Gondwana Tale

2 Cawnpore Lookout and the Lilleyvale Hills did not always stand stark on the horizon, and the surrounding hues weren't always so intensely warm. Before the arid, dramatic landscape that exists today, a forested wetland thrived here.

Watch out! Dinosaur Stampede

3 Around 95 million years ago a herd of small two legged dinosaurs gathered on the banks of a forest lake near Winton. The herd was attacked by a four tonne Theropod and stampeded in a panic across the muddy flats. A record of this dramatic encounter is cast in more than 3300 fossilised footprints at the **Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways**.

There's no Town like Opal Town

4 The rustic mining settlement of **Opalton** lies around 120km south west of Winton, and is home to the Queensland Boulder Opal.

The Rise & Fall of the Age of Dinosaurs

5 Do you dare to tread Dinosaur Country? Winton's eternal flats once swarmed with prehistoric wildlife and lush flora. From the frightening to the fantastic, see the remains of these

Captain Starlight

6 On the run with a herd of stolen cattle, Captain Starlight and his men kept a lookout for their pursuers from a Longreach jump-up. Young and old enjoy the story of the Tropic of Capricorn's most daring bushranger and the jump-up he used in his bold getaway at **Starlight's Lookout**.

Capricorn dinosaurs at Winton's **Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum**.



LEGEND

- Dig the Tropic Geo Journey ————
- Dig the Tropic Attraction ———— 1
- Other Branded Tourism Routes ————
- Roads - Sealed ————
- Roads - Unsealed ————
- Distance in Kilometres ———— 27
- National Highway ———— A1
- National Route ———— A7
- State Route Number ———— 67
- Accredited Visitor Information Centre ————
- National Park/National Reserve ————

Prehistoric Water of the Great Artesian Basin

7 A result of Australia's long lost inland sea, the Great Artesian Basin now provides for communities and industries along the Tropic of Capricorn. Feel the benefits of these therapeutic mineral waters as you soak your travel weary muscles in the **Ilfracombe Artesian Spa**.

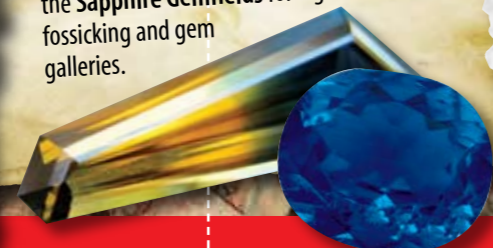
Roam the Stone Land

8 As you hold a piece of fossilized wood or admire the **Drummond Range**, you are connected to an ever evolving story. Dramatic shifts in the earth's crust and environmental forces have sculpted the landscape you see today, just as changes in modern climate will transform the landscape tomorrow.



Treasure Hidden in Volcano Country

9 Buried treasure waits! The largest sapphire gemfields in the Southern Hemisphere lie in Queensland's Central Highlands: Anakie, Rubyvale, Sapphire and The Willows. Head to the **Sapphire Gemfields** for a guided mine tour, fossicking and gem galleries.



Black Gold!

10 Relive the history and explore the future of coal mining at the **Blackwater International Coal Centre**. If you still want more after visiting the interpretive centre, be sure not to miss a guided tour to see a real working coal mine first hand.

Gorgeous Sandstone Sisters

11 The Central Queensland sandstone belt is home to Australia's most gorgeous National Parks. At the north-eastern edge, the spectacular gorges of **Blackdown Tableland National Park** rise boldly above the plains. The steep escarpments offer a dramatic sight and protect a beautiful National Park adorned with waterfalls and aboriginal rock art. A short journey over the Great Dividing Range will take you to **Carnarvon National Park**, where Carnarvon Gorge stretches over 30km and 600m deep!

Thundereggs: Trapped in Time

12 These geo treasures might be ordinary on the outside, but hidden in their stunning layers are the treasures of time. These crystalline formations occur when lava gas bubbles cool and solidify. Find your very own at **Mt Hay** – once a rumbling volcano, now a great place to make a real discovery!



Gold Fever Strikes Tropic of Capricorn

13 Not only is **Mount Morgan** home to one of the oldest gold mines in Australia, it also lays claim to the discovery of over **300 dinosaur footprints** in a cavern surrounding the township.



Enter the Living Laboratory

14 The **Capricorn Caves** offer a dramatic example of climate change. Evidence lies in the stunning rock formations, the fossils of creatures who did not survive, and the inhabitants that have. These above ground, limestone caves are particularly special because of their location on the Tropic of Capricorn. Explore this 380 million year old coral reef – no goggles necessary!

Great Dividing Range and the Great Barrier Reef

15 A sinking coast, a chain of eruptions, and many millions of years created the Tropic of Capricorn's stunning seascape. Stand on what remains of an ancient volcanic plug – once part of the Great Dividing Range – and soak in the gorgeous headland at **Bluff Point**, Capricorn Coast National Park.