

Golden Quest Discovery Trail 3-5 days



The Golden Quest Discovery Trail is a true Australian outback adventure. Purchase the Golden Quest Discovery Trail Guidebook and CD to plan your itinerary, and along the way, discover ghost towns, explore rugged landscapes, meet local characters and visit the famous Antony Gormley sculptures.

Suggested itinerary

Day 1 » Coolgardie to Kookynie 350km

Your adventure begins in Coolgardie, the start of the Golden Quest Discovery Trail. Coolgardie is world-famous for two major events in Western Australia's mining history. It's the birthplace of the great gold rush of 1892 and the site of Varischetti's amazing mine rescue after nine days

trapped in a flooded underground mine. It was once the third largest town in Western Australia with 2 stock exchanges, 3 breweries, 7 newspapers and 26 hotels. Today, reminders of Coolgardie's colourful gold rush history can be found in its charming grand heritage buildings and wide main street. Visit the town's gold rush museums before heading north east along the trail, passing through Ora Banda and Goongarri to Menzies. Stop for lunch at the Menzies hotel. Drive to Lake Ballard and the remarkable Antony Gormley sculptures. Continue north, stopping at Niagara Dam before arriving in Kookynie, where you can try your hand at fossicking for gold. Kookynie attracts people for miles around because of its unique character. It is virtually a ghost town, but Australian and overseas tourists just love visiting its famous quintessential outback pub, the Grand Hotel. Built in 1902, the hotel attracts visitors who come to enjoy country fare and hospitality in a unique



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Australian outback setting. Rooms, caravan sites and camping grounds can be booked in advance for those wishing to stay overnight.

In the gold rush era, Kookynie boasted a racecourse, shops and factories, and even a red light district run by local Japanese residents. It was also the first town in the Western Australian Goldfields to have swimming baths.

Day 2 » Kookynie to Leonora 70km

Before departing Kookynie, spend some time checking out the artworks on display at Old Miners' Cottage Craft. For a real adventure, take the unsealed road to Leonora and the gold rush ghost town of Gwalia. Home to the famous Gwalia Historical Site, Leonora is the largest commercial centre north of Kalgoorlie and offers many services and facilities for travellers to enjoy. Discovered and named in 1869 by the great pioneer of Western Australia, John Forrest, it has a picturesque main street and many historic buildings. Surrounding the town are old gold mining centres and cemeteries that are popular with visitors interested in Australian gold rush history and genealogy. The town hosts many of the Northern Goldfields' events, from outback race meetings to the annual Golden Gift - a weekend of entertainment and athletics held on the Foundation Day long weekend in June. Keen bird watchers should venture out to the Malcolm Dam, built in 1902 to provide water for the railway it is a haven for many native bird species. Also check out the Terraces - a large breakaway formation about 40 kilometres north-east of Leonora, providing good bushwalking and magnificent views.

Visit Gwalia Museum and the site of historic Hoover House, once home to the former American President, Herbert Hoover, who managed the local mine. A further 115km east of Malcolm Day, lies Laverton. Originally established as the British Flag Mine in the gold rush era, Laverton was gazetted in 1900, in recognition of Dr Charles Laver who rode into town on a pushbike from Coolgardie in 1896 and remained as the town's doctor. A statue in the main park stands as a tribute to his contribution to the town. The town's people suffered many hardships following the end of the gold rush, not least the removal of the train line in 1956 and the depression in the 1930s. But when nickel was discovered at nearby Windarra in 1969, the town gained a new lease of life and today is a fascinating mix of modern mine operations, history and Indigenous culture. The fearless explorers and pioneers of the region are honoured in a splendid state-of-the-art exhibition, aptly named The Great Beyond - Explorers' Hall of Fame. Here you can step back in time, listen to the explorers'

personal stories of hardship and discover what it was like for the early pioneers living and working on the Goldfields during the Australian gold rush. This innovative centre also houses the Laverton Visitor Centre. Laverton is the starting point of the Outback Way which links Kalgoorlie and the Northern Goldfields with Alice Springs and Winton in Queensland. It lies at the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert and is also the start point for the Anne Beadell Highway leading to Coober Pedy in South Australia. Once you have looked around Laverton, return west via Leonora or Kookynie and south to Kalgoorlie to complete the Discovery Trail.

Day 3 » Leonora to Kalgoorlie-Boulder 235km

Take the western trail through stunning outback landscapes and seasonal wildflowers to the mining hub of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. After a day on the road enjoy a cold drink on the wide verandah of one of the many hotels in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Kalgoorlie and Goldfields

Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Goldfields offer a real Australian outback adventure and a fascinating insight into the region's colourful gold rush history. The towns and small communities of the Goldfields were built on the hopes and dreams of fortune-seekers who flocked to Western Australia following the discovery of gold in the 1890s. Life was tough for these early gold diggers, with disease and lawlessness widespread. But while multimillion-dollar mining corporations have replaced the smaller gold prospecting operators, and Kalgoorlie-Boulder has been transformed into a modern cosmopolitan town, reminders of the wild and vibrant early days are everywhere you look. Historic buildings, character pubs and even the brothels of Kalgoorlie-Boulder are remnants of more than a century of gold rush history. While across the Western Australian outback, the ghost towns of Leonora and Gwalia tell the story of early gold prospecting dreams that have long been abandoned. You can still try your luck at gold prospecting and fossicking here, or you can discover the region's diverse natural riches found in the tranquil eucalyptus forests, wide sweeping plains, dry lake beds, low lying scrub land and spinifex fields. As well as being home to a huge number and wide variety of bird species, the threatened bilby, chuditch, mallee fowl and dunnart thrive here. This natural bounty, combined with its striking landscapes, gold rush heritage and Indigenous history, make the Goldfields a truly unique Australian outback getaway.

Highlights

- » The Golden Pipeline
- » Indigenous experiences
- » Gold prospecting and fossicking
- » Outback walking trails
- » Outback pubs
- » Golf courses
- » Outback wildflowers
- » National Parks
- » Native flora and fauna in natural environments
- » Antony Gormley sculptures at Lake Ballard
- » Indigenous art and galleries.

RAC Recommends

Inattention affects all drivers, especially in rural WA. Fatalities in the Wheatbelt are 6x higher than that of the WA state average. RAC recommends rest, before driving, stopping regularly, sharing the drive and allowing enough travel time.

Visitor Centres

Kalgoorlie Goldfields	(08) 9021 1966
Coolgardie	(08) 9026 6090
Laverton	(08) 9031 1361
Kambalda	(08) 9080 2115

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Accommodation

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