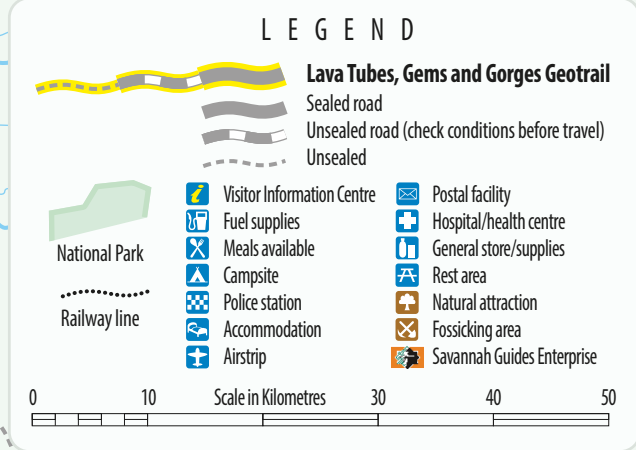


Dramatic gorges, lava tubes and brilliant gemstones are the highlights of the **Lava Tubes, Gems and Gorges Geotrails** which loop from the Savannah Way through the Etheridge Shire. Experience the Australian outback and its wildlife on an adventure taking in the McBride Volcanic Province where eruptions millions of years ago formed a spectacular landscape and left behind a rich mineral heritage.

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# Unearth Etheridge

## Lava Tubes, Gems and Gorges Trail

Travel through the Australian outback, on a Savannah Way drive, to see the spectacular gorges, lava tubes and fossicking fields of the Etheridge Shire.



## Highlights for a week-long journey

Drive times are approximate and can vary depending on the condition of dirt roads



### Undara

**275km (4 hours) from Cairns**

Undara is an Aboriginal word for a long way, and the lava flow that created the Undara Lava Tubes, at over 160km, is the longest in the world. Ancient roof collapses have created deep impressions in the tubes allowing rainforest plants and animals to thrive in unique ecosystems. Savannah Guides conduct tours of the tubes and take you on a sunset tour to experience the wildlife. Undara Experience on the edge of the Undara Volcanic National Park has unique accommodation, camping and home-style meals. **Visit [www.undara.com.au](http://www.undara.com.au) or call 1800 990 992 for more information.**

### Mount Surprise

**55km (30 minutes) from Undara**

Mount Surprise is a centre for gem fossicking with topaz, quartz and garnet among the semi-precious gemstones which can be found at nearby O'Brien's Creek Gemfields. Mount Surprise has two caravan parks, a hotel and a camp ground and it is an overnight stop for the Savannahlander train, with rail tours available from here (see [www.savannahlander.com.au](http://www.savannahlander.com.au)). There is a blackwater dump site at the roadside toilet block.

### Georgetown

**92km (1 hour) from Mount Surprise**

The administrative hub for Etheridge Shire, Georgetown owes its existence to the gold found there in 1870. Gold fossicking is still popular and you can see the town's major finds including the 858g Providence Nugget at the TerrEstrial Centre, a modern display of more than 4500 gemstones and minerals from around the world. The Centre is also the official Visitor Information Centre for the region. **Phone (07) 4079 9027 or visit [www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/terrestrial](http://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/terrestrial).** Wander the town to see its historical buildings and follow the River Walk to go bird watching. There is a free barbecue, toilets and blackwater dump site at Heritage Park and free swimming at the public pool. Georgetown has one caravan park and a hotel. Latara Motel has air conditioned rooms, a laundry and fully licensed restaurant and bar open 7 days. **Phone (07) 4062 1190 or visit [www.georgetownaccommodation.com](http://www.georgetownaccommodation.com).**

### Flat Creek Station

**45km (1 hour) from Georgetown**

Flat Creek Station is a family run beef cattle grazing property of 30,000 acres where travellers come to prospect for gold. Birdwatching is also popular with an array of native birds including the rare Gouldian finch. A shady campground, hot showers and flushing toilets make it a popular place for campers. **Call (07) 4062 5304 for more information.**

### Forsayth

**45km (1 hour) from Georgetown**

The former gold mining town of Forsayth is the terminus for the Savannahlander Train with half day rail trips available. Relics from the rich gold days including a rail engine can be seen in Caschafor Park where there are public toilets. The Goldfields Hotel and Finnigan's rest offer hotel, accommodation, mini-mart and postal agency. **Phone (07) 4062 5374.**



Savannahlander

### Cobbold Gorge

**45km (1 hour) from Forsayth**

An electric boat tour beneath narrow 30m rugged sandstone cliffs is the highlight of staying at Cobbold Gorge. The Savannah Guide Enterprise is located on a privately owned family cattle property that has become an outback oasis for travellers. Cruise the gorge, explore ancient geological landforms and spot wildlife including freshwater crocodiles on the guided tours. Accommodation includes cabins and caravan/RV friendly camping. There is a pool, bar, coffee shop and laundry. **Visit [www.cobboldgorge.com.au](http://www.cobboldgorge.com.au) for more information or call 1800 669 922.**



Cobbold Gorge

### Agate Creek

**70km (1.5 hours) from Forsayth, 37km (45 mins) from Cobbold Gorge**

The Agate Creek gem fields are famous for the world's most colourful agate, or thunder eggs as they are known. The agate is the result of the region's large number of volcanic banoiliths which are huge bodies of igneous rock that solidified beneath the earth and are now exposed. There are no facilities here and camping is not permitted in the fossicking area, but there is a campground nearby.

### Gilberton Outback Retreat

**56km (1 hour) for off-road vehicles and trailers only from Agate Creek. Conventional vehicles 160km (2.5 hours) from The Lynd Junction**

The luxurious Gilberton Outback Retreat is a rustic retreat for couples wanting to get away in comfort. Gold fossicking, visiting the old gold mining township of Gilberton, seeing Aboriginal rock art, wildlife spotting, swimming, fishing and kayaking are among the activities offered. Gilberton Goldfields offers camping and great fossicking. **Go to [www.gilbertonoutbackretreat.com](http://www.gilbertonoutbackretreat.com) or phone (07) 4062 5329 for more information.**

### Einasleigh

**72km (1 hour) from Forsayth**

The former copper mining town of Einasleigh sits beside the scenic rolling hills of the Caterpillar Range. The Savannahlander train stops right outside the pub so passengers can enjoy a beer in the outback and see the amazing collection of miniature antique furniture. It is a short walk to Copperfield Gorge where the river has cut through a lava fissure showing another aspect of the region's lava flow. There is a caravan park, a park with free barbecues and public toilets at the Town Hall in Baroota St.

### The Lynd Junction

**76km (1.15 hours) from Einasleigh**

The junction of the Kennedy Developmental Road and the Gregory Developmental Road is the southern access point to the Gems and Gorges Trail. The Oasis Roadhouse is where you will find Australia's smallest bar. The outback roadhouse is a hub for the local cattle stations and a major truck stop. It has rooms, camp sites and home-cooked meals seven days a week. **Phone (07) 4062 5291.**



**Visit the TerrEstrial Visitor Information Centre, Georgetown, for all regional updates, advice and information.**

### Events

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Easter</b>    | — Einasleigh Races and Rodeo  |
| <b>April</b>     | — Outback Rock & Blues at Undara Experience   |
| <b>May</b>       | — Georgetown Golf Club Annuals  |
| <b>June</b>      | — Mount Surprise Campdraft, Georgetown Campdraft  |
| <b>July</b>      | — Oak Park Races, Mt Hogan Treasure Chase, Georgetown Boars 'n' Bowls Competition, Georgetown Rodeo |
| <b>August</b>    | — Forsayth Turnout & Etheridge Show   |
| <b>September</b> | — Georgetown Bushman's Ball & Bush Races  |
| <b>December</b>  | — Einasleigh Horse Sports   |

**Contact the TerrEstrial Centre on (07) 4079 9027 for more information.**

### Road conditions

Sealed roads are marked on the map. Unsealed Roads are generally well graded.

**Contact Etheridge Shire Council on (07) 4079 9090 or [www.etheridge.qld.gov.au](http://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au) for more information.**

### Getting there and exploring further afield

- ◆ Drive from Cairns via the scenic Atherton Tablelands to Undara Experience
- ◆ Drive from Townsville and Charters Towers to The Lynd Junction
- ◆ Drive the unsealed Ootan Road from east of Mount Surprise to Almaden, Chillagoe and on to Mareeba
- ◆ From Georgetown continue west along the Savannah Way which is sealed to Karumba
- ◆ From Undara travel to Mount Garnet and follow the Kirrama Range Road to the Tropical Coast
- ◆ Catch the Savannahlander Outback Railway from Cairns – see [www.savannahlander.com.au](http://www.savannahlander.com.au)

## Experiences



### Birdwatching

The Gulf Savannah is a world-class attraction for birdwatchers thanks to a diversity of habitats and seasonal weather patterns. The best time to see birds is late in the dry season (September to December) when many migratory birds arrive and animals congregate around the remaining rivers and waterholes, although there are plenty to be seen all year round. Cumberland Chimney, 20km from Georgetown, is a popular location to see a variety of birds. Ask for bird lists at each of your stops to learn more about the species you may see.

### Fossicking

Fossicking for semi-precious gemstones, gold and the world's most colourful thunder eggs are a highlight of the Gems and Gorges Trail. O'Brien's Creek Gemfields near Mount Surprise is known for topaz, quartz and garnet, while Flat Creek Station is a favourite with those wanting to prospect for gold. The Agate Creek gem fields are aptly named for the colourful thunder eggs found there.

A fossicking licence is required and can be obtained online.



### Wildlife

Kangaroos, wallabies, emus, goannas, skinks, frogs and butterflies are among the Australian wildlife commonly seen in the Gulf Savannah. While driving, watch for magnificent wedge-tailed eagles which swoop from the sky looking for prey. At Undara Experience you can wait at the entrance to the lava tubes on dusk to see thousands of tiny micro-bats emerge to chase insects and witness pythons and Brown Tree Snakes hanging from the trees trying to capture the tiny bats for dinner.

### Heritage

The history of this fascinating region revolves around mining and cattle stations. The restored buildings of Georgetown date back to the early 1900s and just 20km away is the Cumberland Chimney, the remains of an old gold crushing plant. The Einasleigh cemetery gives a vivid picture of the hardships faced by pioneers and Caschafor Park in Forsayth is where you can see an old rail engine. The Ted Elliott Mineral Collection at TerrEstrial in Georgetown has more than 4500 specimens and is rivalled only by the Geological Museum in Canberra.

