

WELCOME TO HUGHENDEN

A relaxed, friendly outback escape — perfect for travellers who like to explore at their own pace.

Target Market

This itinerary has been specifically designed for the over-50s self-drive market, who make up the largest and most consistent visitor segment to Hughenden. This cohort values safe and easy driving routes, comfortable accommodation, friendly local interaction, nature-based experiences, cultural heritage, and the flexibility to explore at their own pace. The activities, timings, and accommodation options in this itinerary have been selected to suit their interests, comfort levels, and preferred travel style.

If you're craving a change of scenery, a break from the coastal humidity, or simply a chance to slow down and reconnect with wide-open spaces, Hughenden is the perfect weekend getaway. Just a comfortable 4-hour drive west of Townsville, the journey itself is part of the experience — big skies, warm colours, and that unmistakable feeling of the outback gently unfolding around you.

For over-50s self-drive travellers, Hughenden offers exactly what you're looking for:

- safe, easy roads
- friendly locals
- comfortable accommodation
- great coffee and hearty meals
- accessible nature experiences
- rich history and culture
- plenty of space to breathe

The best time to visit is April to October, when the days are warm, the nights are cool, and the skies are clear — perfect for walking, exploring, and stargazing.

Whether you're towing your home behind you or travelling light, Hughenden has accommodation to suit your style. The Allen Terry Caravan Park offers powered and unpowered sites plus cabins, and the Free RV Park near the showgrounds is ideal for fully self-contained travellers. If you prefer a room and a comfy bed, the Royal Hotel and Great Western Hotel offer classic country hospitality, meals, and a friendly bar. And if you enjoy a touch of charm, Hughenden has several Airbnbs with country character and modern comfort.

Now — let's get your stay started.

DAY 1 — MORNING

Sunrise on the Flinders River (5 minutes from town centre)

There's no better way to begin your Hughenden weekend than with a sunrise walk along the banks of the Flinders River. This walk spans two parkland areas: Robert Gray Memorial Park on the eastern side, celebrating the pioneers who built Hughenden, and the Eco Walk on Flinders on the western side, which takes visitors through the diverse bioregions of the Shire with interpretive signage along the way.

Morning is the coolest, calmest part of the day, and the colours are spectacular — deep oranges melting into pinks and soft blues as the sun climbs over the horizon.

The birdlife is a show of its own. You'll hear the raucous chorus of Corellas and Major Mitchells, spot Egrets and Pelicans fishing in the shallow pools, and almost certainly hear a Kookaburra laughing from a gum tree. Keep an eye out for the flocks of Guinea Fowl who have made the riverbanks their permanent home.

This walk is flat, easy, and perfect for all fitness levels.

Breakfast at Golden Lab Espresso (Brodie Street — 2 minutes from anywhere in town)

After your walk, head to **Golden Lab Espresso**, the bright yellow converted shipping container that has become a social hub for locals and travellers alike. You'll find homemade muffins, croissants, slices, and a seriously good coffee — the kind of place where you'll spot a crowd of locals, which tells you everything you need to know.

Grab breakfast, enjoy the friendly chat, and soak up the relaxed pace of the morning.

Google Reviews: <https://share.google/dd7Y1l9z14QW77u1C>

Order Online and have your order waiting for you: <https://www.golden-lab.com.au/>

Flinders Discovery Centre & Museum (Allow 1–1.5 hours)

A short stroll away is the Flinders Discovery Centre, your gateway to understanding Hughenden's landscapes, history, and ancient past. And local insider info of course!

Inside, you'll find:

- “Hughie” the Muttaborrasaurus, a life-sized replica with sound effects
- local fossils from the region’s prehistoric marine past
- a shearing shed display explaining the rise and fall of the wool industry
- short films with captions, including the story of Porcupine Gorge friendly local staff (Bea and Claire) who are full of stories and tips

Before you leave, pick up:

- the Porcupine Gorge Information Booklet
- the Hughenden Destination Guide
- A town map and hot spots

These will come in handy later.

Find more info: <https://www.visithughenden.com.au/flinders-discovery-centre/>

Main Street Wander (Allow 45 minutes)

Take a relaxed stroll up Brodie Street to explore the shops. The Hughenden Artisan Collective (check their Facebook page for weekly opening hours) is a lovely stop for locally made arts and crafts, jams, chutneys, and gifts. The talent hidden out west is remarkable, and you’ll be able to take home a unique piece of Hughenden. Keep an eye on socials for the latest - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090655505473>

Along the way, look for the historical photo panels tucked into alleyways — each with a QR code linking to stories from Hughenden’s past.

For lunch, pop into FJ Holden’s Café, a quirky little spot filled with Holden memorabilia and Elvis nostalgia. Specials and information is shared here:

<https://www.facebook.com/p/FJ-Holdens-Cafe-100046478305567/>

DAY 1 — AFTERNOON

You’ve got two great options depending on your interests and energy.

OPTION 1 — Fossicking & Treasures (Allow 2–3 hours)

Belemnite Fossil Site (20 minutes from town)

Just 16 km out of town along the Kennedy Development Road, you’ll find a fossicking hotspot where you can search for Belemnites — ancient squid-like creatures from the Eromanga Inland Sea. The Visitor Centre can give you a map and tips. You’re looking for objects shaped a little like fishing sinkers.

Flinders Riverbed Rockhounding (5 minutes from town)

If you prefer to stay close, explore the dry riverbed for:

- agates
- colourful rocks
- old bottles
- ceramics
- the occasional fossil or relic

Every wet season reveals new treasures.

OPTION 2 — Scenic Tourist Drives (Allow 2–4 hours)

Hughenden has three tourist drives — Basalt Byways, Flinders River Byway, and Eromanga Sea Byway — each offering something different:

- basalt ridges
- jump-ups
- sweeping valleys
- wildlife (emus, kangaroos, brolgas, plains turkeys)
- the occasional camel

These roads are unsealed, so check conditions at the Visitor Centre before you go. Always close any gates you open.

Check out more details and maps online:

<https://www.visithughenden.com.au/itinerary/4wd-tracks-of-hughenden/>

DAY 1 — EVENING

Sunset & BBQ Dinner at Mt Walker (15 minutes from town)

After a day of exploring, head up to Mt Walker for one of the most memorable evenings you'll have in Hughenden. The drive is short and easy, and when you reach the top you'll be greeted with 360-degree views that stretch across the plains in every direction.

Mt Walker has picnic shelters, BBQs, and toilets, making it the perfect spot to settle in for a relaxed outback dinner. Bring along some snags from the local butchery, a salad, and your favourite drink, and enjoy a classic Aussie BBQ as the sky begins its nightly show.

The sunsets here are spectacular — deep reds, golds, and purples washing over the landscape as the sun dips behind the horizon.

It's peaceful, safe, and wonderfully quiet. You'll likely have the lookout mostly to yourself, which only adds to the magic.

Stargazing at Mt Walker

Once the last light fades, stay right where you are — Mt Walker is one of the best stargazing spots in the region. With no light pollution and wide-open skies, the **Milky Way** appears bright and clear, stretching across the darkness like a river of stars. Bring a chair or a picnic blanket, lean back, and take your time. You'll spot satellites drifting overhead, constellations you may not have seen in years, and if you're lucky, a shooting star or two. It's the kind of simple, grounding experience that makes an outback trip unforgettable.

When you're ready, make the short drive back into town for a good night's rest — tomorrow, you're heading to the gorge.

Find out more about Mt Walker: <https://www.visithughenden.com.au/attraction/mount-walker/>

DAY 2 — MORNING

Breakfast at Holden's Bakery

Start your day with a classic bakery breakfast — fresh pastries, toasties, and a good coffee. Why not pick up some sandwiches while you're there for a picnic lunch at the Gorge?

Pyney's Pie Reviews and Travels - <https://pyneyspiereviews.com/holdens-bakery-hughenden-qld/>

Supplies for the Gorge

Pick up:

- plenty of water
- snacks
- swimmers & towel
- hat & sunscreen
- your camera

Drive to Porcupine Gorge (45–55 minutes, fully sealed road)

Follow the Kennedy Development Road north. Along the way, you'll pass points of interest like:

- the Whistling Bore
- the old Cobb & Co Track
- bush graves – Bill Crossley a local teamster and an unmarked grave said to be of a woman and her twins

(These are listed in your handout from the Flinders Discovery Centre — don't forget it!)

Porcupine Gorge Lookout (5 minutes from carpark)

Your first stop is the lookout — a short walk to a viewing platform with spectacular views of the canyon and the winding creek below. If you're quiet, you'll often see white cockatoos flying through the gorge.

Pyramid Camping Area & Walking Tracks (15 minutes further)

You have two options:

Option A — Easy Rim Walk (30 minutes return)

A gentle stroll around the top of the gorge with views of the Pyramid.

Option B — Gorge Walk (1.2 km each way)

Moderate fitness required (tough on knees). Approx. 30 minutes down, 60 minutes up.

Each step down represents roughly 10,000 years of geological history.

At the base, you'll find:

- spring-fed pools
- colourful sandstone
- peaceful swimming spots

It's a magical place — take your time.

More information about Australia's Little Grand Canyon -

<https://www.visithughenden.com.au/attraction/porcupine-gorge-national-park/>

DAY 2 — AFTERNOON

OPTION 1 — Relax at the Lake (5 minutes from town)

After your hike, unwind at the Hughenden Recreational Lake. Enjoy:

- swimming

- fishing
- SUP or kayak paddling
- a good book in the shade

Sometimes the best part of a getaway is doing absolutely nothing.

Hughenden Recreational Lake:

<https://www.visithughenden.com.au/attraction/hughenden-recreational-lake/>

OPTION 2 — Art Trail & Points of Interest (Allow 1–2 hours)

Explore:

- the Coolabah Tree (blazed by Landsborough and Walker during the search for Burke and Wills, opening the west to further development)
- the 35-foot Comet Windmill and Federation Rotunda — learn about the vital resource these big machines deliver: water
- an array of metal art sculptures depicting elements of the region's story — from the Yirandali Dreamtime Creator, Moonda Nurra, to prehistoric creations such as ammonites and pterosaurs
- water tank murals — breathtaking pieces that reveal something new with every viewing

Keep track of where you're going with your handy map and points of interest from the Flinders Discovery Centre team.

Hughenden Art Trail - <https://www.visithughenden.com.au/attractions/art-and-history-trail/>

Dinner

After a busy day, don't stress over dinner. Head for a cold beverage and hearty meal at one of the hotels. Alternatively, Hughenden has a gem of a Chinese restaurant — well-rated by travellers over the years as one of the best in Australia. Grab some takeaway and enjoy dinner overlooking the Flinders River. Although it will most likely be sandy and dry, take a moment to imagine it gushing with water — Queensland's longest river, rising just north of the township and travelling all the way to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Great Western Hotel - <https://www.facebook.com/greatwesternhotelhughenden/>

Royal Hotel Motel - <https://www.facebook.com/royalhotelhughenden/>

Chengs Chinese Restaurant - <https://share.google/NVGmNwlv36wkt6YUm>

FAREWELL

We hope you've enjoyed your outback stay. Hughenden is a small town with a big heart — a place where ancient landscapes meet warm hospitality, and where visitors are always welcomed like friends.

Come back soon, especially during one of our local events. There's always something happening out west.