

SCENIC AND HISTORIC DRIVES

ROUTE 4 SAPPHIRE & GOLD COUNTRY

DRIVE DESCRIPTION

This region is interwoven with waterways many of which contain gold and precious gems. Whilst alluvial gold was prevalent, the area around Dalton is dotted with mine shafts chasing the elusive reefs. This drive takes you from Gunning to Tuena, across classic Southern Tablelands landscapes, with rolling hills and stunning vistas, as you explore country that brought riches to some and hardship to others during the gold rush times of the mid to late 1800s.

POINTS OF INTEREST

• Gunning

The historic village of Gunning is located around 75 km from Canberra, between Goulburn and Yass. Dating back to the 1820s, Gunning has a rich and fascinating history, much of which revolved around the gold hungry bushrangers who terrorized the area.

• Dalton

Around 10 km from Gunning, the sleepy little hamlet of Dalton has some surprising claims to fame. One of these is that it is located on a geologically active fault line and experiences regular earth tremors. Another is that it is home to the famous Dalton fossil leaf deposits, a sample of which can be seen in a shelter in Oolong Park. But for us the main attraction is that this area was the scene of active gold mining in the late 1800s and it has been reported that in 1879 stone crushing batteries were active 24 hours a day. Although active mining no longer occurs in the area, a visit to Dalton can give you a sense of what it was like back in the gold rush days when this was a rough frontier town.

• Grabben Gullen

After visiting Dalton, its time to head back to Gunning and then on to Grabben Gullen. From Dalton the drive is around 43 km and it will take about 36 minutes. Grabben Gullen means "Small Waters" in the Wiradjuri language. There is a designated fossicking area on Grabben Gullen Creek along Sapphire Road, where you can find sapphires, zircons, garnets and flecks of gold if you're lucky. The Albion Hotel in Grabben Gullen dates back to 1886 and has a reputation for serving great pub meals, so this might be a good spot for a lunch break, or you can head on to Crookwell which is about 15 km away.

• Crookwell

Crookwell features a whole host of interesting specialty shops, including Arcadia, Top Paddock, Mad Hatters, Lindner Sock Factory, the Crookwell Visitor Information Centre and more. There are some great eateries in the town too, so it's a great place to take a break, have some refreshments and spend some time exploring before you head off to the historic gold rush town of Tuena.

• Tuena

Located in a sheltered valley around 60 north of Crookwell on the Bathurst Road, Tuena offers camping, fishing, bushwalking and gold fossicking. Gold was first discovered here in 1851 and the town experienced a massive gold rush soon after. Call into Parson's General store to see a fascinating array of relics from the gold rush era, purchase refreshments and get information on gold fossicking in the area. Try your luck panning in Tuena Creek and you may find some gold!

DISTANCE

Total drive is around 120 km

Driving Time

Approximately 2 hours (remember to take it easy on country roads!)



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