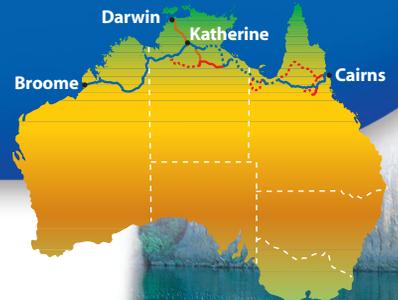




Australia's Adventure Drive

FACT SHEET



The Savannah Way is one of Australia's ultimate adventure drives, linking Cairns in Tropical North Queensland with the historic pearling town of Broome in Western Australia, via the natural wonders of Katherine in the Northern Territory.

The Route

Total Length: 3699km
(main route - Cairns to Broome via Katherine)

Unsealed Section: 700km
(main route - Normanton to Borroloola)

Alternative Route: 3872km (2990km unsealed)
(Cairns to Broome via Dunbar, Daly Waters)

Average distance between fuel stops: 128 kms

Attractions

One-third of Australia's World Heritage Areas are along the Savannah Way, with 5 World Heritage listed sites as well as 15 national parks and many more natural features.

The tropical savannas through which the Savannah Way runs are home to a large number of birds – 55 of Australia's 90 seed-eating species are found here including parrots, quails, pigeons and a particularly large representation of finches. In fact, 14 of Australia's 18 finch species inhabit the savannas, and no fewer than 13 species of seed-eating birds, plus 10 additional subspecies, are endemic to the savannas, meaning that they live nowhere else in the world.

Fascinating Facts

- Compared to other tropical regions in the world, **Australia's tropical savannas** have a sparse population with fewer than 350,000 residents – less than Tasmania.
- The **largest crocodile** ever captured was shot by Mrs Krys Pawlowski – a North Queensland taxidermist – in the Norman River, near Normanton Queensland in 1958. Named after its captor, 'Krys the Croc' measured 8.63 metres and a replica now sits in the main street of Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria.
- **Normanton** is internationally recognised as an important location for an estimated third of Australia's **migratory wading birds** (eg brolga, sarus crane).

- **Magnetic termite mounds** found in the Northern Territory are precisely oriented with their narrow edges facing north-south. The mounds are built by tiny blind insects and are oriented so that they get the least sun at the hottest time of the day.
- The **Argyle Diamond Mine** in the far north of Western Australia, is the world's largest diamond mine. The Kimberley area in Western Australia is three times the size of England, and produces 35% of the world's diamonds.
- The **Sun Pictures Outdoor Picture Garden in Broome** is the oldest operational outdoor picture house in the world.

The Environment

The tropical savannas cover 1.9 million square kilometres – or about a quarter of mainland Australia's – and comprise of 19 bioregions across two states and one territory. The tropical savannas are landscapes of dense grass and scattered trees that stretch across northern Australia from Broome to Townsville. They are home to an extraordinary variety of plants and animals – from tropical rainforest to grassy woodlands. The tropical savannas are an internationally significant refuge for biodiversity and are home to hundreds of species of native plants, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, plus tens of thousands of different species of invertebrates. Many of these groups are found nowhere else in the world.

The Gulf Savannah region is incredibly diverse. In addition to the rainforests of the Tropical North, there are also rocky gorges, arid areas, mangrove swamps, wetlands and river habitats. These variations in the landscape support the biodiversity that makes the region unique.

Climate

The tropical savannas lie in a climatic zone characterised by two distinct seasons: the 'wet' and the 'dry'. The wet summer months, December to March, are hot and humid, in contrast to the dry winter months of May to October which are cooler and have less.

Much of the tropical savannas' annual rainfall arrives in heavy bursts from thunderstorms, widespread monsoon depressions or from the passage of associated tropical cyclones.

