

## Charles Goodnight Area- Family Itinerary

The northeast part of the Texas Forts Trail Region is only an hour from Fort Worth and makes for the perfect weekend getaway. This part of the region includes two forts, a ghost town, the infamous Crazy Water and the best chicken fried steak you'll ever have.

### Mingus

Start your trip right off Interstate 20 in the ghost town of Thurber. In the late 1800's, the company town of Thurber was created from the ground up by the Texas and Pacific Coal Company. The **W.K. Gordon Center** is an interactive museum that looks into the lives of the residents of Thurber, explains what life was like in the diverse company town and recaps how it became a ghost town.

### Lipan

From Thurber, head east on Highway 20 then south on Highway 281 to **Natty Flat Smokehouse** in Lipan for lunch. Not only do they boast delicious BBQ and homemade fried pies, but also the Star of Texas Rocker which stands over 29 feet tall. It's the perfect photo op for your weekend vacation!

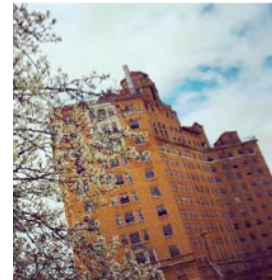


### Mineral Wells



North on Highway 281 in the heart of Mineral Wells is the **Famous Mineral Water Company**. Mineral Wells was founded in the late 1800's by James Lynch. He and his wife (who suffered from rheumatism) and their family settled in the hills of Palo Pinto County, dug a well and after drinking the "funny tasting" water, Lynch and his wife were cured of their rheumatism. Soon word spread and people were coming from all over to be healed by these waters giving birth to the town of Mineral Wells.

The **Famous Mineral Water Company** bottles the infamous mineral water which the town was built on and continues to share in the rich heritage of Mineral Wells. The store is full of pictures, and you can still sit at the bar and drink your water just as the Lynch family did years ago. If you ask the owners, Carol and Scott Elder, they will tell the story of how Famous Water came to be. If you walk out behind the store, you'll see the new **Crazy Water Bath House**, which holds bath rooms and massage rooms, the first bathhouse since the days of the infamous **Baker Hotel**.



After hydrating with Crazy Water, head west of town on Highway 180 to the **Mineral Wells Fossil Park**.



A borrow pit for the city landfill unearthed over 300 million-year-old fossils of ancient sea species such as brachiopods, crinoids, corals, trilobites, echinoids, etc. In the "pit," you can look down and see the Pennsylvanian Period fossils covering the area and they are even more apparent after a good rain. You can spend as much or as little time digging as you wish, but make sure to hydrate with your Crazy Water.

## **Perrin**

After your afternoon at the Fossil Park, grab food to cook out on the grill and head north on Highway 281 to **Mitchell RV Resort** in Perrin. Choose one of their 46 cozy, country cabins and enjoy the great outdoors with your family. There is no shortage of family fun at this resort, so make sure you pack your swimsuit, golf clubs, and a putt-putt game face.

## **Jacksboro**

Wake up the next morning and head north on Highway 281 to **Fort Richardson** in Jacksboro. The Fort was established in 1867 and then abandoned in 1878, leaving most of the property in ruin. The Forts remaining seven structures have been restored and are now maintained by Texas Parks and Wildlife and are part of the National Historic Landmark that is **Fort Richardson**. While at the park, enjoy other activities such as hiking, biking, nature, historical studies, and fishing.

## **Graham**

After building an appetite at the Fort, get on US 380 West and for lunch at **Marlene's at the Big Chill** in Graham. This hometown favorite will not disappoint. Their traditional small town southern dishes will fill you right up for your next adventure at **Fort Belknap**.

Established in 1851, **Fort Belknap** was a northern mainstay of the Texas frontier defense. Walk the grounds and see the remaining buildings in the park-like setting. After you've walked off your lunch and stretched your legs, you'll then be ready for the scenic drive down Highway 16 to **Mary's Café** in Strawn.

## **Strawn**

With your weekend adventure coming to an end, make sure to fill up (your stomach) for the drive home at **Mary's Café**. Mary's opened in 1986 and has since been known for its chicken fried steak, a popular choice among locals. The thin meat is covered in a delicate breading and served over a bed of Texas toast. As one of the few restaurants in the town of Strawn, there is something for everyone on the menu including the biggest hamburger you've ever seen.

Now that you've explored a couple of forts, dug for fossils, learned about a real-life ghost town and seen the biggest rocking chair ever, it's time to get back to reality. Don't forget; there are still more forts to see and more adventure to be had along the rest of the Texas Forts Trail.

W. K. Gordon Center for Industrial History of Texas

65258 IH 20, Mingus, TX 76463

(254) 968-1886

[www.tarleton.edu/gordoncenter](http://www.tarleton.edu/gordoncenter)

Admission: Adults (12 years and older)- \$4.00

Children- (5-12 years old) \$2.00

Seniors and Military- \$3.00

Natty Flat Smokehouse

19280 US-281, Lipan, TX 76462  
(254) 646-3844  
[www.nattyflatsmokehouse.com](http://www.nattyflatsmokehouse.com)

Famous Mineral Water Company  
209 NW 6th St, Mineral Wells, TX 76067  
(940) 325-8870  
[www.drinkcrazywater.com](http://www.drinkcrazywater.com)

Mineral Wells Fossil Park  
2375 Indian Creek Rd, Mineral Wells, TX 76067  
(940) 328-7803  
[www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com](http://www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com)

Mitchell RV Resort  
2730 FM 2210 E, Perrin, TX 76486  
(940) 798-4615  
[www.mitchellparkandresort.com](http://www.mitchellparkandresort.com)

Fort Richardson Historic State Park  
228 Park Road 61, Jacksboro, TX 76458  
(940) 567-3506  
[www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-richardson](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-richardson)  
Admission: Adults (13 years or older)- \$3.00

Marlene's at the Big Chill  
518 Oak St, Graham, TX 76450  
(940) 549-4772

Fort Belknap  
114 Fort Cir, Newcastle, TX 76372  
(940) 846-3222

Mary's Café  
119 Grant Ave, Strawn, TX 76475  
(254) 672-5741