

Charles Goodnight Area- Retiree 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, many museums, beautiful scenic drives and the infamous Crazy Water.

Jacksboro

Fort Richardson in Jacksboro was established in 1867 and then abandoned in 1878, leaving most of the building in ruin. The Fort's 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 and historical studies and fishing.

Drive right down the road and step back in time at the **Jack County Museum**. See one of the oldest homes in Jack County, which witnessed the birth of the Texas 4-H Club, and then the Corn Club, in 1907. There are also artifacts from life in early Jack County and military exhibits.

Graham

From the museum, head over and savor lunch from **526 Pizza Studio**. Their wide variety of toppings is sure to hit the spot, and the food is anything but dull. Make sure to eat up because next up is **Fort Belknap**.

Established in 1851, **Fort Belknap** was the 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, head back through Graham to **Wildcatter Ranch Resort and Spa**.

The **Wildcatter Ranch** offers beautiful country scenery and a relaxing atmosphere. Overnight accommodations include guest homes, cabins, and hotel rooms. Take a moment to enjoy your chance to unwind and savor the great outdoors. Don't forget to partake in dinner at the Dinner Bell to experience the flavors of the south with mesquite grilled steaks and more.

Mingus

After a restful night at the **Wildcatter Ranch**, drive down scenic Highway 16 to 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 reveals how it became a ghost town.

Palo Pinto

Drive back up scenic Highway 4 to arrive at the **Old Jail Museum Complex** in Palo Pinto. On the grounds, there are eight historical buildings that allow you to step back in time to early life in Palo Pinto County. The buildings include a jail, as well as a few cabins and a fort filled with significant artifacts from around the county.



Mineral Wells

Your next stop is lunch in downtown Mineral Wells at **Brazos Market Bistro**. This charming building houses unique knick-knacks and gifts as well as tasty bistro-style soups, salads, pizzas and daily specials.

After lunch, head next door to **Merrimac and North** to get a sweet treat like a cake ball, jumbo cupcake or fudge to eat on your way to the famous Baker Hotel.

In 1929, the **Baker Hotel** opened two weeks after the great stock market crash and was the first hotel with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. It was one of the top destination resorts in the nation. Its luxurious reputation was due in part to its many A-list guests such as Clark Gable, Judy Garland, and future President Lyndon B. Johnson, among others. After the closing of Fort Wolters, business in Mineral Wells suffered, and the hotel closed its doors for the final time in 1972. The building now sits vacant, its beautiful architecture is still intact, be sure to take a moment to admire this groundbreaking structure. People are not allowed inside, but a brief walk around the hotel reveals the magnificent beauty that once made this a weekend home to the stars.



Now's the time to see what the town of Mineral Wells was built on, Crazy Water. Head back to Mineral Wells and north on TX-281 to the **Famous Mineral Water Company**. Mineral Wells was founded in the late 1800s 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 of water with seemingly miraculous healing properties and people were coming from all over to be healed. It is from this same water that the town of

Mineral Wells got its name and to which it owes its existence.

The **Famous Mineral Water Company** bottles the infamous mineral water and continues to share the rich heritage of the town. The store is full of historic pictures, and you can still sit at the bar and drink your water just as people have since its discovery. 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 Bath House. And if you have time, you can stop and soak in the healing waters.

The next stop is **Clark Gardens Botanical Park** hidden down a country road just outside of town. This is not your typical garden or Botanical Park. The gardens are made up of native Texan, climate adaptable and drought tolerant plants that make the gardens beautifully unique. Check their website to see what plants are blooming when. But, if you happen to take your trip during April or May, make sure not to miss the rows of 4,000 named Irises blooming in the front of the gardens.

On your way out of town, stop by the **National Vietnam War Museum** off of Highway 180. The museum is home to a 1/2 scale version of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., Vietnam-era Huey helicopter and the only replica of the Camp Holloway Memorial Wall that was located on the post in Pleiku, South Vietnam.

Now that you've explored a couple of forts and museums and taken in the beauty of a native Texas

garden, it's time to get back to reality. Don't forget; there are still forts to see and more adventure to be had in the rest of the Texas Forts Trail.

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

Jack County Museum
241 W Belknap St, Jacksboro, TX 76458
(940) 567-5410
www.jackcountymuseum.com/about.html

526 Pizza Studio
526 Oak St, Graham, TX 76450
(940) 549-6606

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

Wildcatter Ranch
6062 Hwy 16 S, Graham, TX 76450
(940) 549-3500
www.wildcatterranch.com

W. K. Gordon Center for Industrial History of Texas
65258 IH 20, Mingus, TX 76463
(254) 968-1886
www.tarleton.edu/gordoncenter
Admission: Adults (12 years and older)- \$4.00
Children- (5-12 years old) \$2.00
Seniors and Military- \$3.00

Old Jail Museum Complex
5th & Elm, Palo Pinto, Texas 76484
(940) 325-2557

Brazos Market Bistro
216 N Oak Ave, Mineral Wells, TX 76067
(940) 468-2702
www.brazosmarket.com

Merrimac and North

208 N Oak Ave, Mineral Wells, Texas 76067
(940) 325-4722

Baker Hotel
200 E Hubbard St, Mineral Wells, TX 76067

Famous Mineral Water Company
209 NW 6th St, Mineral Wells, TX 76067
(940) 325-8870
drinkcrazywater.com

Crazy Bath House
609 N. W. 1st Ave, Mineral Wells, TX 76067
(940) 325-8870
www.crazybathhouse.com

Clark Gardens
567 Maddux Rd, Weatherford, TX 76088
(940) 682-4856
www.clarkgardens.org
Admission: Adults- \$9.00
Children (4 to 12 years of age) - \$5.00
Seniors (65 and over)- \$7.00

National Vietnam War Museum
12685 Mineral Wells Hwy, Weatherford, Texas 76088
(940) 325-4003
www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org