

Tips for the Goldfields Trail at Babinda Boulders

Fiona Harper



Trail runners and bushwalkers are spoilt for choice in Tropical North Queensland. It's hard to put a figure on how many trails there are but trust me, there are hundreds. Situated in lush, heritage-listed rainforest, the Goldfields Trail, between Babinda and Goldsborough Valley, is one the most iconic in the region.

Some trails are used by mountain bikers or trail bike riders too, others are strictly for trail walkers or runners. Active clubs in the area hold regular events which visitors are welcome to join – these are a great way to meet locals and find out where the really good trails are.

Once you've discovered the joy of trail running in TNQ's rainforests, winding your way over rocks and boulders, through creeks, over fallen logs and up and down stony terrain, you'll be hooked! There's a real pleasure in savouring the forest at your own pace, enjoying the solitude and introspection that the rainforest provides whether you run or walk.

One trail that should be on every adventurer's 'to do' list is the Goldfield Trail in Wooroonooran National Park. The trail starts near Babinda Boulders and ends at Kearney's Falls, 800 metres from the stunning Goldsborough Valley Campground. This track has it all. Beautiful, crystal clear creeks fringed with moss covered boulders and emerald green tree ferns. The sunlight breaks through the trees creating dancing silver sparkles on the bubbling water. These creeks offer a place to top up water bottles, splash cooling water on to your forehead and just sit and savour the ancient backdrop of mountains, trees and water whilst watching the freshwater perch lazily cruise the shallows.



Goldfields Trail, Babinda

Photo by Fiona Harper

As you travel further along the track you start to ascend the mountain ridge. This is where the going gets a bit tough as there are calf burning inclines and daunting declines, which can be slippery if it has been raining. You need to have runners with good grip or hiking boots as a lot of the track is loose shale and quite slippery in places. From the highest ridges you catch glimpses of Goldsborough Valley accompanied by the sound of trickling mountain streams. Listen out for the call of the rare spotted catbird and suck up the smell of the Lemon Aspen tree when it's in fruit.



Causeway on the Goldfields Trail, Babinda

Photo by Fiona Harper

After about 10 km the track emerges from the shadows of the rainforest onto the sunlit banks of the Mulgrave River. The waters of this beautiful, wide river are as clear as any swimming pool. The track follows the river bank until you get to a causeway with still water upstream and swiftly flowing, turbulent rapids downstream.



Goldfields Trail, Babinda

Photo by Fiona Harper

Once across the causeway the vegetation thins a little, becoming more open and grassy. Towards the end of the trail Kearney's Falls with its three drops can be seen high up in the mountains. 19 kilometres after you left Babinda Boulders the trail ends at the Goldsborough Valley Campgrounds. Here you can set up camp (permits required) and spend the evening resting your weary legs, sipping a wine and watching the sun go down.



Goldfields Trail, Babinda

Photo by Fiona Harper

The entire length of the Goldfields Track should only be tackled by people with a high fitness level. However, it's easy to do an 'out and

back' from the Babinda Boulders end, turning around when you're ready and following the same route back. The Goldfields Track can also be done in reverse, starting from Goldsborough Valley Campgrounds but the Babinda end is the most scenic. Make sure you pack sunscreen, plenty of water (take water purification tablets if you plan to replenish water supplies from mountain streams) and a snake bandage (there is little mobile phone coverage on the trail). You'll also need to organise a lift at the other end if you're not going to camp the night or don't relish running or walking the return journey.

Explore or relax

From adrenaline or adventure activities to wellness and spas, check out what Tropical North Queensland has to offer.