BONEYARD FOSSIL FUN SITE

Dig Up Some Fun at THE BOREYARD KIDS

BY DANI MORTIZ

ocated near the entrance to DinoLand U.S.A. is every aspiring paleontologist's dream: a dig site made just for kids. My dinosaur-loving 4-year-old and I recently adventured to this DinoLand discovery called The Boneyard, and we absolutely *dug* this prehistoric play area.

WHAT'S THE BONEYARD?

The Boneyard is an open-air play space themed around DinoLand U.S.A.'s backstory. This entire area of Disney's Animal Kingdom is based on the legend of amateur paleontologists uncovering dinosaur bones in the fictional Diggs County in 1947 (hence the date on The Boneyard's sign, which is a replica of a real archeological find—a Stegosaurus' shoulder blade).

The discovery resulted in The Boneyard dig site, as well as the nearby Dino Institute. The Boneyard is perfect for kids 10 and younger, and it features an array of opportunities to play and learn.

PALEONTOLOGIST AT PLAY

Throughout the site, your little one will find plenty of things to play with and on, ranging from tunnels and rope bridges to caves and slides—and even a dig site where they can help excavate fossils themselves. All the while, they'll find equipment and archeological notes left behind by the paleontologists who founded the site decades ago.

Although the dig site looks like it's covered in sand, it's actually a no-stick substitute called Texas Grit. While it's great to avoid getting covered in sand, put your kiddo in closed-toe shoes and socks as opposed to sandals to keep the tiny pebbles from hurting their exposed feet.

One of the more unique finds in this dig site is the xylobone, a fossil that plays music when kids press on the bones. It's located near the entrance, but you can ask a Cast Member to help you find it.

PRO TIP

The Boneyard is split into two sectionsthe main play area, which features plenty of things to climb on and slide down, and the excavation site. The sections are connected by the Oldengate Bridge, a fossil gateway marked by a replica of a Brachiosaurus discovered in Colorado in 1900 (the real-life fossil is housed in the Field Museum in Chicago). Learn from my mistake and don't panic if you temporarily lose sight of your child; they're likely just across the bridge digging up some bones. (I saw so many parents arrive at the dig site in a panic ... the same as I did). It's also good to know that there's only one way in and out, which makes it easier for supervising paleontologists to mind their young recruits.



ABOVE: Talk about some prehistoric fun! PHOTO BY DANI MORITZ RIGHT: Texas Grit sand, just like in Jurassic times! PHOTO BY LAURIE SAPP



Location: Recycled Materials Sculpture, DinoLand U.S.A.



Photo by Marisa Alvarado







That's not a real dinosaur fossil ... or is it? PHOTO BY DANI MORTIZ