

DRIVING THE NORTH



PRESS INFORMATION

Tourism North



THE STORY

There has never been a better time to consider a story about driving north along the highways of Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon. The drive is dramatic. The scenery is unforgettable. As with many of life's most rewarding experiences, it's the journey, not the destination. The tourism jurisdictions that comprise Tourism North- Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon- invite you to experience the adventure that makes traveling the roads of the North an incredible experience.

The region offers dozens of quirky side trips, some of the world's most remote and untouched national parks, colorful communities and scenic byways. In short, this is a story that begs to be told. Whether you're interested in family travel, indigenous cultures, Gold Rush history, seeing the Pacific coastline by ferry, crossing the Canadian Rocky Mountains, driving the famed Alaska Highway, floating the Yukon River or shopping and dining in the cosmopolitan cities of the North, this region is rich with editorial opportunity.

HOW TOURISM NORTH CAN ASSIST JOURNALISTS

Tourism North can assist qualified travel media with logistical and story/travel planning support as well as car/RV rentals, airfare and lodging. To qualify for media assistance, a journalist must be writing about the drive through the jurisdictions north to Alaska, and must plan to visit multiple jurisdictions for purposes of reporting the "drive north" story. Alaska ferries and trains also are included in the media assistance program.

WHOM TO CONTACT

To begin planning your drive north story, please contact one of the Tourism North media representatives listed below to discuss editorial possibilities and travel-related assistance.

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Email: jim.kemshead@gov.yk.ca
Web site: <http://www.tourismyukon.ca>

Photo credits in order of appearance: Dr. Allan W. King

A Diverse Drive: Cultural and First Nations attractions abound in the north.

by Amy Cockerham



Humanity traces its history to the northernmost corners of the globe: early man is believed to have crossed the Bering Land Bridge from what is now Russia to Alaska and Canada, and eventually south through North America.

In this spirit of great adventure, today's travelers to the northernmost reaches of the planet may celebrate a bit of that history by visiting any of the hundreds of cultural centers, museums and attractions that trace this early history of Canada's First Nations people and Alaska's five Native cultures.

No matter where in Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon or Alaska you go, you will find dozens of options for learning about the lifestyles of the indigenous and First Nations people of the north. Take time to explore in each region; northern cultures are incredibly diverse and traditional practices vary greatly region-to-region. Here is a guide to some can't-miss destinations:

Saamis Teepee – Medicine Hat, Alberta: This enormous teepee was constructed for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta as a symbol of Canada's First Nations heritage. Saamis (Sa-ah-ump-sin) is a Blackfoot Indian word for the eagle tail feather headdress worn by a medicine man, and the 215-foot tall steel and concrete teepee is an impressive monument to the Blackfoot culture. Tours of the teepee with information about Blackfoot culture are available.

Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump – Fort McLeod, Alberta: This fascinating site, which features an impressive visitor center, interprets the Blackfoot hunting tradition of herding and driving buffalo over cliffs for subsistence purposes. The site and interpretive center were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. The site has been used continuously by indigenous peoples for more than 5,500 years.



Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park – Kamloops, BC: The cultural history of the Shuswap people, including oral history and legends, hunting and gathering practices,

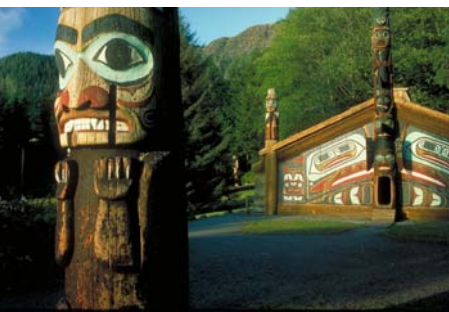


cooking, games, clothing and canoe-building is on display at this small museum. It is adjacent to a 12-acre First Nations Heritage Park that displays, among other buildings, a 2,000-year-old Shuswap winter village site.



‘Ksan Historical Village – Hazelton, BC: The ‘Ksan Historical Village chronicles this history of the Gitksan village of Gitanmaax with seven traditionally styled long houses, dancers and other performing arts, a collection of cultural relics and interpretive information about the Gitksan people. Tours of the museum and village site area are available.

Haida Gwaii Museum and the Queen Charlotte Islands, BC: The Queen Charlotte Islands are a rainforested step back in time off the west coast of British Columbia.



Nearly every town and village within the archipelago of 150 islands is an excellent place to learn about Haida culture – and take part in wildlife viewing, hiking, biking and fishing, to name a few. The term “Haida Gwaii,” which means “islands of the people,” is the First Nations name for the islands, and the museum here appropriately bears the same moniker. The museum itself is a 10,000-square-foot cedar post and beam building located on the site of the old Haida village of Qay’lnagaay (or “sea lion

town”) with a focus on the history, culture and art of the Haida people and an impressive collection of contemporary Haida art. The Qay’lnagaay Heritage Centre is currently under construction next door and is set to open during the summer of 2006.

University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology – Vancouver, BC: Opened in 1949, the Museum of Anthropology, on the campus of the University of British Columbia, is one of the world’s great repositories of First Nations cultural items. Even though the museum features items from indigenous cultures all over the world, its specialty is Northwest Coast cultures. The building’s renowned architecture, based on Northwest Coast post-and-beam style buildings, is set off spectacularly by large, carved doors at the entrance to the Great Hall, which were crafted by four Gitksan artists. The museum features 535,000 ethnographic and archaeological items, including totems, carved boxes, bowls and feast dishes, to name a few.

Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre – Teslin, Yukon: Located on the shores of Teslin Lake, this museum features exhibits, interpretive displays and a gift shop focused on the Tlingit First Nations people. The Great Hall is the home of Clan Governance for the Teslin Tlingits.



Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre – Whitehorse, Yukon: During the Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1800s, scientists from all over the world came to this area of Canada to collect and record the dozens of fossils being dug up by anxious miners. This collection helped form the complete understanding of the migration of early humans from Europe and Asia to North America thousands of years ago. The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre houses a collection of ethnographic and archaeological information relating to this migration with murals and dioramas that depict the Beringia landscape. There are short films, information about flora and fauna, works of art and even preserved skeletons of a woolly mammoth and a scimitar cat.

Totem Poles – British Columbia and Alaska: Throughout coastal Alaska and British Columbia, silent sentries guard the forests and roiling mists that encircle them. Totem poles are huge carvings in cedar logs that tell stories or commemorate historic events. Contrary to popular belief, totems are not religious symbols nor are they worshipped. Totems are the work of several First Nations and Alaska Native groups. While each tribe has its own identifying style of carving and unique symbolism, there are a few constants: most were carved using knives and adzes and were painted using organic materials. Today, poles are carved using modern tools and paints, but still retain their primal magic. To see totems in Alaska and Canada, consider any of these cities or parks: Totem Bight Park in Ketchikan, Alaska; Sitka National Historical Park in Sitka, Alaska; Chief Shakes Island, home of the national historic monument, Chief Shakes Tribal House, in Wrangell, Alaska; the Alaska Indian Arts carving shed in Haines, Alaska; and the totem park at Saxman Native Village outside Ketchikan, Alaska, in the traditional village of Saxman. In British Columbia, eight totems may be found at Vancouver's Stanley Park near the Brockton Oval; the Qay'Ilnagay Heritage Site and SGang Gwaay Llnagaay site in the Queen Charlotte Islands; or the First Nations Carving Shed at the Museum of Northern British Columbia in Prince Rupert.

Alaska Native Heritage Center – Anchorage, AK: The expansive Alaska Native Heritage Center features cultural and historic information on Alaska's 11 Native cultural groups and an outdoor village site with replica dwellings from several different regions of the state. The center regularly hosts workshops, demonstrations, Alaska Native dance performances and Native craft shows in its central hall and theater area. Guided tours of the indoor exhibits and outdoor village sites are available.

Anchorage Museum of History and Art – Anchorage, AK: The Anchorage Museum of History and Art is the regional repository for all things Alaskan; the museum has detailed ethnographic information and artifacts to correspond not only with Alaska Native history but also non-indigenous residents.

The museum also has an impressive collection of Alaska art, including a stunning display of contemporary Native art from some of the most respected and well-known Alaska Native artists, as well as dramatic landscapes by artists like Sydney Laurence. The museum has at least 20 traveling exhibits each year as well as films and special programs. It is the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History and Arctic Studies Center regional office.

University of Alaska Museum of the North – Fairbanks, AK: Located on the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the UA Museum of the North is in the midst of a major renovation and expansion set to be complete by September of 2005. This expansion will allow some of the thousands of natural and cultural exhibits currently housed in its storage area to be displayed in the museum. Architectural plans for the renovation are ambitious, and attempt through form to create a space that evokes Alaska. The museum is open throughout the renovation, and in the meantime there is much to see: the Gallery of Alaska has art and artifacts and flora and fauna from Alaska's five regions. No trip to this area of Alaska would be complete without a visit to the UA Museum of the North.

IF YOU GO

Saamis Teepee – Medicine Hat, Alberta

<http://www.travelalberta.com>

(800) 661-8888

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump – Fort McLeod, Alberta

<http://www.head-smashed-in.com>

(403) 553-2731

Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park – Kamloops, British Columbia

<http://www.ohwy.com/bc/s/secwepem.htm>

(250) 828-9801

'Ksan Historical Village – Hazelton, British Columbia

<http://www.ksan.org>

(877) 842-5518

Haida Gwaii Museum and Queen Charlotte Islands – British Columbia

<http://www.HelloBC.com>

(800) HELLO-BC

University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology – Vancouver, British Columbia

<http://www.moa.ubc.ca>

(604) 822-5087

Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre / Tourism Yukon
<http://www.touryukon.com>
(867) 667-5340

Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre – Whitehorse, Yukon
<http://www.beringia.com>
(867) 667-8855

Totem Poles of Alaska and Canada
<http://www.travelalaska.com>
(800) 327-9372
OR
<http://www.HelloBC.com>
(800) HELLO-BC

Alaska Native Heritage Center – Anchorage, Alaska
<http://www.alaskanative.net>
(800) 315-6608

Anchorage Museum of History and Art – Anchorage, Alaska
<http://www.anchoragemuseum.org>
(907) 343-6173

University of Alaska Museum of the North – Fairbanks, Alaska
<http://www.uaf.edu/museum>
(907) 474-7505

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Sailing North! to Alaska: BC and Alaska ferries enrich any itinerary.



by Amy Cockerham

The Pacific Northwest coast is an emerald rainforest teeming with seals, bears and swirling sea birds. Wildlife, incomparable scenery and thick forests are what make cruising the Inside Passage so popular. But if you've felt that a cruise was out of reach, don't despair. There's a relaxed, personalized way to get all the same sightseeing at a fraction of the cost. BC and Alaska ferries slip silently past feeding humpbacks and frolicking seals every day of the year, and offer travelers a chance to get up close to this magnificently primal coast.

Between the two systems, you can literally travel thousands of miles north along the famed Inside Passage with stops in all the quaint, boardwalked villages, small towns and cosmopolitan cities along the way.

BC Ferries is a commercial line with many exciting travel options and dozens of ports of call from Victoria on the southern end of Vancouver Island all the way north to Prince Rupert, BC with stops at towns along the way.

The company divides its service area into four distinct areas: Southern Gulf Islands; Northern Gulf Islands; Major Routes including Vancouver/Sunshine Coast or Vancouver/Vancouver Island; and, the Northern Routes, including the Queen Charlotte Islands, Inside Passage and the Discovery Coast. Through partnerships with other tourism businesses, they also offer packaged travel deals with motorcoach lines and hotels in order to offer visitors some amazing choices.

A good bet would be to start in Vancouver and see bits of all these areas by hopping north along the coast to Port Hardy, then continuing north past Bella Bella and on to Prince Rupert. In Prince Rupert, you can take a VIA Rail train back to Vancouver by way of Jasper. But why stop now?

If you've just begun to get your sea legs under you, switch over to Alaska's Marine Highway in Prince Rupert. This state-owned ferry system has a fleet of 11 vessels, including two new fast-vehicle



ferries, that provide both visitors and locals with regular service to most towns on Alaska's Inside Passage coast and beyond.

Northbound from Prince Rupert, you'll stop in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg and Juneau before arriving at either Haines or Skagway, both on the northern end of the marine highway system and both linked to the Alaska Highway via connecting roads.

While Alaska's Marine Highway ferries primarily serve Southeast Alaska, there are multiple "cross-Gulf" sailings – across the Gulf of Alaska – each summer to towns like Cordova, Valdez, Whittier, Seward and Homer in Southcentral Alaska. And if you really want to get off the beaten path for bird watching, bear viewing or exploration of Native cultures, take the ferry on to Unalaska and the rest of the Aleutian Island Chain.

No matter which line you choose – or if you choose both – there are a few constants. Both lines welcome your car, RV, truck, bicycle and even kayaks. Both have staterooms available for an additional charge, but both also allow travelers to sleep in lounges or other public areas, like the solariums on Alaska Marine Highway ferries. Reservations are strongly recommended, particularly for travel between May and September; if you're traveling with a vehicle, reservations are necessary.

When you explore British Columbia and Alaska by ferry you're certain to experience the magic and charm that make this coastal route a memorable part of any itinerary.

IF YOU GO

Alaska's Marine Highway
Ask_AMHS@dot.state.ak.us
<http://www.ferryalaska.com>
(800) 642-0066

BC Ferries
<http://www.bcferrries.com>
(250) 386-3431



Photo credits in order of appearance: John Hyde/Southeast Alaska Tourism Council, Alaska Division of Tourism, Michael DeYoung/ATIA.

Camping Your Way North! to Alaska: Dozens of campgrounds make roughing it easy

by Amy Cockerham



If the idea of loading up the family station wagon with a tent, sleeping bags and cooler sends you reeling with nostalgia for family vacations of decades' past, come experience the modern-day equivalent as you head north to Alaska.

With dozens of campgrounds, RV parks and attractions along the way, the trip can be as rustic or as comfortable as you like. Road nomads will find no shortage of options along the way, whether you prefer provincial, state and

national parks or commercial RV campgrounds. For instance, many Alaska State Parks feature rustic cabins available for rent by the night in addition to campgrounds for more traditional tent-style roughing it. The list below just barely scratches the surface of what is available, so invest in a good guidebook, load up the car and hit the road. Your adventure awaits you!

Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta: The first stop on your camping trip should be Waterton Lakes National Park, just 35 miles northwest of the U.S./Canada border crossing at Sweetgrass, Montana. The area is just across the border from the legendary Glacier National Park and is known for its spectacular mountain-and-lake scenery. The park contains over 850 miles of maintained hiking and mountain biking trails; bike rentals are available through vendors in the park. Boat cruises across Waterton Lake – which is actually one large lake in three sections, Upper, Middle and Lower – are available mid-May through late September. The park has several modern campgrounds nearby and a few backcountry spots within the park itself.

Tunnel Mountain Campground, Banff National Park, Alberta: Banff National Park is the oldest national park in Canada, founded after railroad workers for the Canadian Pacific Railway discovered one of the now-legendary hot springs burbling out of a cave in 1883. The park has over 1,000 miles of trails and tons of wildlife within its 2,564 square miles. The Tunnel Mountain Campground is located about 1.5 miles from downtown Banff on Tunnel Mountain. Food and laundry services are available nearby, as is a waterslide for the little ones. With an incredible view of the Banff valley, hoodoos and Banff Springs Golf Course, as well as full-service, power-only and regular tent camping sites, there's something for everyone.





For a truly magnificent experience, take the Icefields Parkway to Jasper National Park, listed below. Jasper National Park, Alberta: Jasper National Park is one of the crown jewels in the Canadian park



system, filled with mountains, a superb backcountry trail system and the world famous Columbia Icefield—one of the only ice fields in the world accessible by road. Another fun fact to stump your travel companions: the Columbia Icefield is the hydrographic apex of North America – water flows to three different oceans from one spot! If you travel to Jasper from Banff, take the Icefields Parkway, studded with a chain of ice fields straddling the continental divide. Jasper National Park is open year-round; peak season in the park is July and August. Visitors planning on coming to

the park in these months are advised to book early to be sure your campsite is waiting for you. The park has a variety of accommodations, ranging from lodges to all manner of campgrounds, from primitive to full-service.

Misty Meadows Campground, Naikoon Provincial Park, Graham Island, BC: The Misty Meadows Campground is located on Graham Island, the largest island in the Queen Charlotte



Islands archipelago. The campground lies within Naikoon Provincial Park, which is a relatively undeveloped park with primitive campsites. Long, sandy beaches stretch for miles, and interpretive programs and guided walks are a regularly scheduled feature during the summer months. The park is accessible via scheduled flights from Vancouver and Prince Rupert, BC and by BC Ferries from Prince Rupert to Skidegate. From Skidegate, a small island highway takes

you north a short distance to Tlell and the boundary of Naikoon Provincial Park.

Muncho Lake Provincial Park, BC: Muncho Lake Provincial Park sits astride the Alaska Highway in a 55-mile swath dotted with interpretive signs, trailheads and Muncho Lake – copper oxides leached from surrounding bedrock turn the lake jade green. The park area begins about 155 miles west of Fort Nelson, and offers tons of outdoor options including hiking, boating and just enjoying the lovely setting. There are two main campgrounds at the park, Strawberry Flats Campground (15 vehicle/tent sites) and MacDonald Campground (15 vehicle/tent sites) with small beaches at each location. The park is open May through September, but even during the summer the wind may necessitate a sweater or light jacket.

Liard Hot Springs, BC: Nothing looms more welcome on the Alaska Highway than Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park, approximately 475 miles north of Dawson Creek. The remote but very popular hot springs features two main pools along a boardwalk path from a camping area. Families will find playground equipment in the campground, and there is nothing more magical than soaking in the outdoor springs on a spring or fall evening while watching the first glimmering northern lights of the season dance across the sky.

Carcross Desert, Carcross, Yukon: The Carcross Desert is known as the world's smallest desert and was formed after the last ice age, when a large glacial lake disappeared after the glaciers retreated. The sandy lake bottom was left behind, and strong winds now allow little vegetation to grow. Today, the desert is an International Biophysical Programme site for ecological studies. Mountain biking is a popular activity in the desert, as is simply viewing this northern oddity. Camping is available just south of the desert on the South Klondike Highway, roughly 32 miles south of the turnoff from the Alaska Highway. Carcross Campground has 12 campsites available for a nominal fee.

Kluane National Park, Yukon: Kluane National Park offers otherworldly beauty. Enormous Kluane Lake stretches along the Alaska Highway north of Haines Junction for some 50 miles and possesses landscapes that are both raw and inspiring. Several small motels and campgrounds dot the shore of the lake, and the small settlement of Destruction Bay is located at roughly the midpoint of the lake along the highway, offering a few convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants and motels. Before heading up to Kluane, though, take a moment to tour the park's visitor center in Haines Junction, about 70 miles south of Destruction Bay. The visitor center has information on park trails, camping, natural history, scheduled campfire talks and safety in bear country.



Wonder Lake, Denali National Park, Alaska: If The Almighty were to pick a swimming hole, it would be Wonder Lake. There's no better spot for soaking in nature's grandeur. Wonder Lake, located at the base of North America's tallest peak, Mount McKinley, is a 90-mile trek from the Parks Highway and Denali National Park headquarters. For urbanites, the scenery is nearly inconceivable.

Part of this incomprehensible effect is created by the sheer remoteness of Wonder Lake; backcountry camping is the only option here, and a free permit for which may be acquired at the Denali National Park Visitor's Center off the Parks Highway, 237 miles north of Anchorage and 124 miles



south of Fairbanks. Diversions like canoeing, kayaking and the like are unnecessary. Just enjoy being there. Camping here should be done with some forethought, however. Bears and other wild creatures are common in this area and food must be secured in bear-proof containers to discourage human-bear encounters. Wonder Lake is accessible from the visitor's center via the simply named Park Road, on which private vehicles are not allowed most of the year; hikers and campers must take a shuttle bus.

The Kenai Peninsula, Alaska: The Kenai, as it's known by the locals, is located just a couple hours south of Anchorage along Alaska's only federally designated All-American Road, the Seward Highway. (A designation bestowed on just 20 highways in the U.S., All-American Road status indicates outstanding scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archaeological and recreational qualities). About 90 miles south of Anchorage, you'll reach the 'Y,' where the Seward Highway continues south to Seward and the Sterling Highway heads west to Soldotna, Kenai, Ninilchik and, ultimately, Homer. A perfect balance of wild and accessible, the Kenai offers boundless opportunity for hiking, wildlife viewing, rafting, horseback riding and more, not to mention world-class fishing for halibut and salmon. Boat rentals and guided fishing trips are available in most any community along the way to the official western terminus of the U.S. road system in Homer.

Kachemak Bay State Park, Alaska: The end of the Sterling Highway leads you to Homer and Kachemak Bay. Surrounded by a leering grin of jagged, toothy mountains, Kachemak Bay is a playground for outdoor enthusiasts, bird watchers, fishers and nature enthusiasts. The park itself is not accessible by road; the 400,000-acre park may be reached by boat or airplane, and numerous air and water taxis operate out of nearby Homer. Camping is permitted in most areas of the park, and a number of sites are developed and include fireplaces, picnic tables, tent platforms, information, outhouses and bear-safe food caches. Public use cabins in Halibut Cove Lagoon, Leisure Lake, Moose Valley and Tutka Bay are also available for rent through the state park service. Kachemak Bay State Park is only one among many spectacular state parks in Alaska, so check them all out!

IF YOU GO

Parks Canada National Office
25 Eddy Street, Gastineau, Quebec, Canada K1A 0M5
<http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca>

National Park Service – U.S.
<http://www.nps.gov>

The Milepost
A comprehensive guidebook on driving the Alaska Highway and all the roads of the North with detailed information on Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska; available at <http://www.milepost.com> or through your local bookstore or online retailers.

Bell's Travel Guide
A guidebook featuring Canadian and Alaskan communities in northern British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska, available for purchase at <http://www.bellsalaska.com>

Alberta

Travel Alberta
P.O. Box 2500, Edmonton, AB, Canada, T5J 2Z4
800-ALBERTA (800-252-3782)
<http://www.travelalberta.com>
travelinfo@travelalberta.com

Waterton Lakes National Park
Box 50, Waterton Park, AB, Canada, T0K 2M0
http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/waterton/index_e.asp
waterton.info@pc.gc.ca
403-859-2224

Tunnel Mountain Campground – Banff National Park
Box 900, Banff, AB, Canada, T1L 1K2
http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/index_E.asp
Banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca
403-762-1550

Jasper National Park
Box 10, Jasper, AB, Canada, T0E 1E0
http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/index_E.asp
JNP_info@pc.gc.ca
780-852-6176

British Columbia

Tourism British Columbia

<http://www.HelloBC.com>

800-Hello-BC (800-435-5622)

Discover Camping – online reservations for BC Provincial Parks

<http://www.discovercamping.ca>

800-689-9025

Misty Meadows Campground – Naikoon Provincial Park

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/naikoon.htm>

Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/liard.htm>

Muncho Lake Provincial Park

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/muncho.htm>

Yukon

Tourism Yukon

<http://www.touryukon.com>

vacation@gov.yk.ca

800-661-0494

Carcross Campground

Use the Yukon website above for general information, or call the Carcross Visitor Reception Centre in Carcross at 867-821-4431 (Mid May to mid September).

Kluane National Park and Reserve

P.O. Box 5495, Haines Junction, Yukon, Canada Y0B 1L0

http://www.parksCanada.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/kluane/index_e.asp

kluane.info@pc.gc.ca

867-634-7250

Alaska

Alaska Travel Industry Association

2600 Cordova St. Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99503-2745

<http://www.travelalaska.com>

ATIAMedia@gci.net

800-327-9372

Alaska Campground Owners Association

Database of privately owned campgrounds in Alaska

<http://www.alaskacampgrounds.net>

907-883-2262

Denali National Park and Preserve
Superintendent's Office
P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755
OR
Talkeetna Ranger Station
Box 588, Talkeetna, AK 99676
<http://www.nps.gov/dena>
907-683-2294

Alaska State Parks – Katchemak Bay State Park
Kenai Peninsula area office
P.O. Box 1247, Soldotna, AK 99669
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/kbay/kbay.htm>

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Family fun on four wheels: 14 kid-friendly destinations on the road north

by Amy Cockerham



If the idea of a nice, long road trip with the kids first conjures up the image of kids from the backseat yelling “Are we there yet? Are we there yet?” – take heart. The roads that lead north to Alaska through western Canada are full of inspirational vistas for the grown-ups and loads of fun for younger travelers.

With attractions along the way like dinosaur skeletons, the world’s largest mall, a park designed by kids for kids and none other than Santa Claus himself, this trip is a no-brainer for families.

These days, rental agencies allow visitors to drop cars or RVs off at your final destination, giving you the freedom to fly home. Or you can put your vehicle on the Alaska Marine Highway or BC Ferries for a portion of the trip and let someone else “drive” for a change. Rail routes throughout this inspiring land also are plentiful, and there are even freight companies that will ship cars and RVs back to Seattle for pick up.

With so many travel options, incredible things to see, culture to experience, museums to explore and huge hot springs pools to splash in, the question you’ll be hearing from the backseat is “Are we leaving already?”

Beginning in Alberta, Canada and heading north through the Yukon, here are the top 10 kid-friendly attractions you’ll want to see while driving North! to Alaska.

Zoo City – Calgary, Alberta: Begin your road trip in Calgary, well known for its frontier spirit, youth and energy. However, the kids are likely to remind you that you’re here for the zoo. The Calgary Zoo features some incredible habitats and also features family programs like educational sleepovers. After the zoo, consider any of the following great add-ons: rodeos and horseback riding, fly fishing the Bow River, shopping at Eau Claire Market or the Glenbow Museum and Heritage Park. Then head north on Highway 2 for a stop at Drumheller.





Dinotopia – Drumheller, Alberta: On your way to Edmonton, the side trip to Drumheller on Highway 9 is a journey into pre-history. Visit the Royal Tyrrell Museum, a world-class facility featuring the remains of many of the region's earliest residents. Dino-themed attractions dot the highway north to Edmonton, so after your roundtrip to Drumheller, get back on Highway 2 north and plan to stop in Red Deer for more prehistoric discovery.

West Edmonton Mall – Edmonton, Alberta: The city of Edmonton offers dozens of kid-pleasers, but sure to top that list is a trip to the expansive West Edmonton Mall. It's the world's largest, and it's more than just a mall. A water park, an amusement park, an arcade, an NHL-regulation ice rink (home to the Edmonton Oilers), a themed hotel and a submarine ride are all housed in the gigantic West Edmonton Mall. Budget several hours to explore, and after you're thoroughly wiped out, consider staying the night here before heading north to cowboy country.

Cowboy Country – Alberta: For city slickers seeking a dude ranch or rodeo experience, go west. Every weekend in the summer, from Grande Prairie, Alberta to the west, rodeos, fairs and good old fashioned country fun can be found all over this province. Canadians in this part of the country embrace their cowboy heritage, and information about local round ups can be found at any local visitor reception center. A calendar of events is available at <http://www.travelalberta.com>.

Alaska or Bust! – Dawson Creek, BC: After galloping across the rolling plains north of Alberta, you'll arrive at Dawson Creek, BC and Mile '0' of the Alaska Highway. Play a round of mini golf or take a dip in the town's outdoor swimming pool before getting back in the car and heading up the highway. On your way north, stop at Fort Nelson, home to the Fort Nelson Heritage Museum or the skateboard park.

Hot Springs Hopping at Liard River, Northern BC: A little more than 100 miles north from Dawson Creek, the whole family will appreciate a chance to soak at Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park. There's plenty of tent camping and a lodge, restaurant and playground here.



Watson Lake Sign Post Forest, Yukon: Further on at Watson Lake in the Yukon, travelers will have the opportunity to stretch legs and minds by visiting both the Watson Lake Signpost Forest – an outdoor collection of

roughly 52,000 signs from all over the world – and the Northern Lights Centre. This planetarium is the only one in North America that features the mystery of the Northern Lights in video and laser displays.

Wooly Mammoths and Mounties in Whitehorse, Yukon: Another highway stretch and you've landed in Whitehorse, Yukon, and gold rush country. Whitehorse is the small but cosmopolitan center of the Yukon. Check out the Beringia Interpretive Centre, which features skeletal remains of some of the area's earliest inhabitants – woolly mammoths, scimitar cats and more – the circa 1929 SS Klondike National Historic Site, Takhini Hot Springs and plenty of shopping and dining. Whitehorse also is home to the territorial headquarters of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Gold Rush Country – Skagway, Alaska: From Whitehorse, drive 100 miles south to Skagway, home of the gold rush of 1897-1898. Kids can pan for their very own gold and take the stunning three hour ride on the White Pass & Yukon Route railroad, which once carried gold seekers over the White Pass. From Skagway, book passage for both passengers and car on Alaska's Marine Highway to nearby Haines.

Welcome to Kid Country – Haines, Alaska: In downtown Haines, kids will appreciate Tlingit Park, a community-built, kid-centric community park with plenty of room for youngsters to burn off steam. Several local museums present more interesting opportunities. Plan to picnic on the grass at Fort Seward and take a walk on the beach, examining the tidewater life that teems in dozens of small tide pools. From Haines, head north on the Haines Highway. As you leave town, you'll drive through the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve. Haines is home to the world's largest concentration of bald eagles each fall, but even if you're there at another time of year, you're sure to see dozens of eagles near the Chilkat River, which runs through the preserve. Here you can take a guided tour for interpretive information on the history and culture of the area. A little over 100 miles later, you'll reach Haines Junction and rejoin the Alaska Highway as it winds closer and closer to Alaska.



Dog days – Tok, Alaska: Welcome to Alaska! It's fitting that a town named after a spunky husky pup is still a center of dog mushing activity. In Tok, take the kids to Mukluk Park for gold panning and local history and check out one of Tok's sled dog kennels, many of which feature free demonstrations in summer. You can even ride in the sled with these eager northern athletes!

Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus – North Pole, Alaska: After Tok, you're only 200 miles from the end of the Alaska Highway in Fairbanks, Alaska.

In between, be sure to stop at the Santa Claus house in North Pole, where Santa is on duty 365 days a year. With an enormous statue of Santa outside, you simply can't miss it as you drive through town. The Santa Claus house features toys and goodies along with souvenirs, so get your Christmas shopping done early and make sure Santa knows what you want before heading on to Denali National Park.

The Great One – Denali National Park & Preserve, Alaska: Denali National Park and Preserve is home to North America's highest peak, Mount McKinley, which offers near-limitless opportunities for family fun. Try rafting, horseback tours and flightseeing, along with a bus tour into the park itself.

Musk Oxen and More Near Palmer, Alaska: Continue heading south on the Parks Highway to Wasilla and the home of the world-famous Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Tour race headquarters and learn about the sport of dog mushing – the official Alaska state sport — before continuing a few short miles to Palmer and the Musk Ox Farm. If you're here in August, cap off your incredible family adventure with the Alaska State Fair in Palmer.

IF YOU GO:

For information about these kid-friendly treks and others, check out these web sites. Travel planners and other printed information can be ordered online.

<http://www.travelalberta.com>

<http://www.hellobc.com>

<http://www.touryukon.com>

<http://www.travelalaska.com>

<http://www.northtoalaska.com>

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Join the Stampede: Fascinated history along the trail to northern gold

by Amy Cockerham



200 pounds of bacon. 400 pounds of flour. 50 pounds of oatmeal. 25 cans of butter. 85 pounds of assorted dried fruit. 50 pounds of cornmeal. 35 pounds of rice. 24 pounds of coffee.

This is just a small portion of what gold seekers, rushing to Alaska and the Yukon, were required to bring with them over the Chilkoot Trail. The government of Canada (which at the time was under the British Crown) was not interested in having starving miners on its hands, so the hopeful millionaires were required to be fully outfitted for their trek.

Thousands of down-and-out, depression-battered hopefuls gathered these supplies and more and carried them – many by hand – through some of the most treacherous, unexplored and unpredictable country on earth. Very few of them actually became rich.

While European explorers had the north in their sights long before gold was discovered in the mid- to late-1800s, it was the shiny yellow metal that spurred mass migrations and even the foundation of modern governments throughout British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska.

The Klondike push was just one of several major drives north that evolved out of the already established – but not nearly as lucrative – fur trade in the north. Major booms happened around gold discoveries in the Fraser River and throughout the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region of British Columbia, and when the Klondike claims were all established, many belated hopefuls scattered west across Alaska in search of new, richer finds.

Today, visitors can trace the fascinating history of gold discoveries in the north on a grand driving tour of these regions. While the sun has set on many of the most prominent gold discoveries, the quest for gold left an indelible impression on the culture of the north that is celebrated through preservation efforts and visitor opportunities.

Your trip through prospecting past begins in Seattle, at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and the Klondike Gold Rush Museum in historic Pioneer Square. It was downtown Seattle

docks where the first boatloads of gold were hauled in from the Klondike in 1897, and through the cunning business minds in the Northwest at the time, the city of Seattle gained a toe-hold as a major economic power in the still-developing Northwest. When word spread of the Klondike discovery, the Seattle business community shook itself loose from a major depression and set to work outfitting miners. Restaurants, saloons, hotels and rooming houses sprung up practically overnight. By aggressively marketing itself as the gateway to Alaska and Canada, Seattle shook its image as an obscure regional outpost – and bested competitors like Portland, San Francisco, Vancouver and Victoria – and never looked back.

Today, the National Park Service-run historical site and museum offers daily walking tours of Seattle's downtown harbor district and offers movies, gold-panning demonstrations, ranger programs and readings from the North Country's poet laureate, Robert Service.



After exploring Seattle, jump in the car and head north on Interstate 5 toward Vancouver, BC. Back in the mid-1800s, several decades before the Klondike find, the British Hudson's Bay Company had a firm handle on the fur trade in what would later become British Columbia. The infrastructure established by Hudson's Bay Co. – wagon roads, roadhouses and maps of the territory – would prove pivotal when in 1858 gold was discovered in the Fraser River valley.

While in Vancouver, stop at Fort Langley National Historic Site, located right on the banks of the Fraser River. The Parks Canada-operated site includes both the original fort, built by Hudson's Bay Co. in 1827 and mostly destroyed by fire in 1840, and the rebuilt fort. The fort plays a major role in BC history; British Columbia was declared a British Crown Colony in 1858 in a ceremony at the fort after word of the lucrative gold finds reached Britain.

Take BC Ferries to Victoria on nearby Vancouver Island for a tour of several historically significant spots. Helmcken House, Craigflower Manor and Point Ellice House are just a few of the restored homes and buildings in Victoria that conjure the area's boom days. Visitors may still enjoy a formal high tea here by taking the Harbour Ferry to Victoria's legendary Empress Hotel.

After exploring Vancouver and Victoria, get on Highway 1 headed north out of Vancouver. At the town of Yale, roughly 80 miles north of Vancouver, you'll hit the head of the Gold Rush Trail.

Prospectors took sternwheelers upriver from Yale, which later became the starting point of the Cariboo Waggon Road during another rush in the mid-1860s. The Church of St. John the Divine was built here in 1863 to serve the miners and tradespeople and has remained practically the same since.

The next stop along the Gold Rush Trail is at Cache Creek. Historic Hat Creek Ranch in Cache Creek was a key location during the Cariboo Gold Rush, and was built in 1861 by a Hudson's Bay Co. trader. Originally just a small log structure, the site boomed when the Cariboo Waggon Road brought highway engineers and miners right to the front door. Today, the property has 20 historic buildings that commemorate the gold rush, agriculture in the Bonaparte Valley and the traditional uses of the area by the Shuswap First Nation.

At Cache Creek, get on Highway 97 north to Quesnel, some 200 miles further up the highway. The Quesnel Museum and Archives is a repository of gold rush memorabilia, and while you're in town you can also visit the 1928 Fraser River Bridge and the remains of the circa-1863 steam sternwheeler Enterprise. Across the street from the Enterprise is the oldest building in Quesnel, the restored 1882 log Hudson's Bay Co. building, which is now a restaurant.

Just north of Quesnel on Highway 97 is the cutoff to Barkerville (Highway 26), the epicenter of the Cariboo Gold Rush. Between 1862 and 1870, over 5,000 people poured into Barkerville to test their luck in the goldfields. In its heyday, Barkerville was one of the busiest towns in the Canadian west. There are over 125 heritage buildings in Barkerville for visitors to explore, along with Theatre Royal shows, exhibits, street theater and shops, some of which are filled with unique Victorian-era merchandise.

After you've thoroughly explored Barkerville, head back to Highway 97 and continue north. You'll pass through Prince George and Fort McLeod on the way to Chetwynd, where you'll take the scenic Hudson's Hope Loop Road north about 90 miles to its intersection with the Alaska Highway.

Here, your historical journey veers back to the Klondike Gold Rush. As you enjoy the scenery along the Alaska Highway, make time to stop and enjoy the interesting and diverse communities dotted along the route. Some 600 miles later, just shy of Whitehorse, you'll reach the South Klondike Highway, which cruises over a mountain pass and down to the Alaskan staging grounds of the Klondike Gold Rush in Skagway. Most prospectors headed north to Dawson City and the Klondike goldfields arrived by sea in the port town of Skagway, where they set to acquiring the supplies and provisions for the passage up over either the White Pass or the Chilkoot Trail. On the other side of

these treacherous mountain passes, miners would craft hand-hewn barges or makeshift boats to float through a series of lakes and eventually to the Yukon River, which carried them to Dawson. Skagway is home to the northern end of the far-reaching Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, and has a park headquarters with Skagway-specific information downtown.

Skagway embraces its colorful niche in Alaskan history, and many attractions serve visitors interested in reliving this chapter. Consider visiting the abandoned village of Dyea, which was located a few miles from Skagway and sits at the head of the Chilkoot Trail. A few crumbling monuments of the past remain on the spot that was once a boozing, brawling city of 8,000.



Back during the gold rush, a rivalry of sorts existed between Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail route and Skagway-based White Pass route. Skagway gained undeniable supremacy in this battle when in 1898 the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad was built through the White Pass. This made passage north much less dangerous and obviated the need to hand-carry all those 200-pound sacks of bacon over a dangerous mountain pass. The White Pass & Yukon Route still operates today, giving visitors a glimpse at the travails of the journey optimistically tackled by so many.

After you've experienced Skagway's downtown, head back to Whitehorse and explore the Yukon's capital city. While the Whitehorse area didn't have much in the way of gold, prospectors on their way to Dawson did tap into some rich copper finds, and several stayed behind to settle the area and work those finds.

From Whitehorse, follow the Klondike Loop up to Dawson City and the heart of the action. This is where the thousands of miners who worked the Klondike goldfields settled, and the entire town is like a step into the past. Restored brothels, sternwheelers and dance halls make exploring Dawson fun and colorful; the surprisingly sophisticated offerings of local restaurants and eateries make it tasty, too. The following attractions are some not-to-be-missed spots in Dawson City: Robert Service's Cabin, the Jack London Interpretive Centre, the Grand Palace Theatre, Diamond Tooth Gertie's Casino, the sternwheeler SS Keno, the Dawson City Museum and Dredge No. 4.

When you're ready to go, take the Yukon's free ferry, the George Black, across the Yukon River. The ferry operates 24 hours a day and carries cars and people across the river to connect to the Top of the World Highway. Disgruntled miners packed up and left Dawson in droves when they realized



that most of the lucrative gold finds were already claimed. Some headed back where they came from, but many others continued west into Alaska looking for more and better finds.

Stay on the Top of the World Highway until you reach Jack Wade Junction, approximately 80 miles later (you will cross the U.S. – Canada border). There, turn toward Eagle on the Taylor Highway and enjoy the scenic, 65-mile drive. The town of Eagle was established in 1897 near a massive bluff along the Yukon by some of these downtrodden miners. Strikes were made at several nearby creeks, and the United States Army established a post in Eagle in 1899 to bring order to the lawless region. Fort Egbert is now a National Historic Landmark and walking tours of Eagle are available through the active Eagle Historical Society.

Next follow the Taylor Highway south to Tok, where you'll rejoin the Alaska Highway and head north to Fairbanks in Interior Alaska. Fairbanks was founded after an Italian immigrant named Felix Pedro discovered gold near the Chena River in 1902. Today, visitors can explore historic Gold Dredge No. 8 and El Dorado Gold Mine.

Your gold rush history odyssey ends in Fairbanks, but your Alaska exploration doesn't have to. Drive south to Anchorage on the Parks Highway, through Denali National Park and Preserve and dozens of unique Alaskan towns. When you get to Anchorage, spend some time enjoying Alaska's largest city before arranging for barge service back to Seattle for your vehicle while you fly in comfort, or hit the road and do it in reverse!

IF YOU GO

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park – Seattle unit
117 S. Main St., Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 553-7220
<http://www.nps.gov/klse>

Tourism British Columbia
(800) HELLO-BC
<http://www.HelloBC.com>

Fort Langley National Historic Site
P.O. Box 129, Fort Langley, BC V1M 2R5
(604) 513-4777
http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/bc/langley/index_e.asp
fort.langley@pc.gc.ca

BC Ferries
<http://www.bcferrries.com>
(250) 386-3431

Point Ellice House
2616 Pleasant St., Victoria, BC V8T 4V3
(250) 380-6506
<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/peh/>

Historic Yale
P.O. Box 74, Yale, BC V0K 2S0
(604) 863-2324
<http://www.heritage.gov.bc.ca/yale/yale.htm>

Historic Hat Creek Ranch
Box 878, Cache Creek, BC V0K 1H0
(800) 782-0922
<http://www.hatcreekranch.com>

Quesnel Museum and Archives
705 Carson Ave., Quesnel, BC V2J 2D6
(250) 992-9580

Barkerville Historic Town
Box 19, Barkerville, BC V0K 1B0
(250) 994-3332
<http://www.heritage.gov.bc.ca/bark/bark.htm>

Tourism Yukon
(800) 661-0494
<http://www.touryukon.com>
vacation@gov.yk.ca

Skagway Convention & Visitors Bureau
P.O. Box 1029, Skagway, AK 99840
(907) 983-2854
<http://www.skagway.org>
infoskag@aptalaska.net

Alaska Travel Industry Association
2600 Cordova St., Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99503-2745
(800) 327-9372
<http://www.travelalaska.com>
atiamedia@gci.net

White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad
P.O. Box 435, Skagway, AK 99840
(800) 343-7373
<http://www.whitepassrailroad.com>
info@whitepass.net

Klondike Visitors Association
P.O. Box 389W, Dawson City, Yukon Y0B 1G0
(867) 993-5575
<http://www.dawsoncity.ca>
kva@dawson.net

Eagle Historical Society
(907) 547-2325
<http://www.eagleak.org>
ehsmus@aptalaska.net

Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau
550 First Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(800) 327-5774
<http://www.explorefairbanks.com>
info@explorefairbanks.com

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Great Icons of the North: Take time to see them all

by Amy Cockerham



Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska are big, bold places. They command your attention and hold it. They surprise and delight.

While you could chalk this up to the magnificent scenery or the unparalleled recreational opportunities, you'd be missing the big picture – the picture cemented in the mind's eye by some of the most interesting and memorable icons in the world. This great northern country is full of iconic wonder. Whether it's a raucous rainforest alive with growth and life or a fantastic meal in an unexpected and delightful roadside diner, you will not be disappointed by your driving trip North! to Alaska.

The link that joins these spectacular places is the famed Alaska Highway, perhaps the most tangible of the great icons of the north. This daring ribbon of road stretches over 1,500 rugged miles from its official start in Dawson Creek, BC to Fairbanks, Alaska. Built in 1942 in a desperate bid by the U.S. Government to protect its interests in Alaska during the Second World War, the highway has long since been a conduit to unrivaled adventure. Whether it's Alberta's West Edmonton Mall en route to Mile 0 at Dawson Creek, BC, the living history at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon or the more than 100,000 glaciers in Alaska, the Alaska Highway will take you there.

Here are a few other northern icons you won't want to miss:

Alberta

Calgary Stampede – Billed as the “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth,” the Calgary Stampede is a rollicking celebration of Alberta's cowpoke past. Held each July, the event includes Half Million

Dollar Rodeo – a major draw for some of the world's top professional cowboys – live music, food, fireworks, a parade, chuck wagon races, a livestock show, gambling and much more. The event has been a mainstay on Calgary's calendar of events since its inception back in 1912 and is a salute to



the rugged men and women of the late 19th century who worked on large cattle ranches near Calgary. In 2000, the Calgary Stampede welcomed more than 1.2 million visitors. During Stampede, the whole city of Calgary goes western: business people shed their 9-to-5 wear in favor of cowboy boots and a cowboy hat.

Canadian Rockies – One of Alberta’s biggest assets is, without a doubt, the scenic and recreational goldmine of the Canadian Rockies. Alberta is home to two major national parks in the Rocky Mountains, Banff and Jasper, both of which hug the province’s western border with British Columbia. Banff, the older and more southerly of the two parks, was established in 1883 and was Canada’s first national park. Today, the 2,564 square miles of Banff National Park offer visitors near-limitless outdoor recreation opportunities, from soaking in hot springs to exploring some of the park’s unique cave systems or paddling past the historic Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel on the shores of Lake Louise. North of Banff via the Icefields Parkway sits Jasper National Park, the larger of Alberta’s two Rocky Mountain parks. Jasper National Park boasts over 1,000 kilometers (more than 600 miles) of trails that wind through the mountains, valleys, and along the shores of the park’s many lakes. Scenic Maligne Lake offers hiking and the opportunity to paddle or tour to Spirit Island in the middle of the lake. A major force in carving and feeding the lakes and rivers in Banff and Jasper is the Columbia Icefield. This mass of compressed snow is 125 square miles of geologic action, and is made up of the Athabasca, Stutfield and Dome glaciers. The icefield straddles the Continental Divide and feeds four major rivers systems that flow both east and west off the icefield.

The Prince of Wales Hotel at Waterton Lakes National Park – Located in the southwestern corner of Alberta, Waterton Lakes National Park is unique. The park sits just across the border from Glacier National Park in Montana, and together the two parks form the world’s first International Peace Park, established in 1932 and co-managed by the U.S. Park Service, Parks Canada and the Blackfoot First Nation. The setting is dramatic: rising out of the rolling grasslands are mighty peaks surrounding the chain of lakes known as Waterton Lakes. The area was first settled back in the late 19th century, and the park’s iconic hotel, the Prince of Wales Hotel, was built in 1927 by the Great Northern Railway. Another relic from the same year, the cruise boat M/V International, still carries visitors on an exploratory journey from the town boat dock to the Goat Haunt Ranger Station in Glacier National Park. The park isn’t just a feast for the eyes. Waterton features the largest selection of Canadian wines, locally brewed Alberta beer on tap and the classic cuisine of southern Alberta at a number of local restaurants.



Dinosaur Provincial Park – Step back in time at Alberta’s Dinosaur Provincial Park, established in 1955 to commemorate what is now known as the “Great Canadian Dinosaur Rush” of the early 1900s, when tons of

fossils were unearthed in this rich badlands landscape. The park is hugely popular with Albertans and visitors alike, and features a variety of programs and opportunities for learning more about these giant lizards that roamed what is now Alberta some 75 million years ago. Guided and self-guided trails abound, including the Trail of the Fossil Hunters, which relives the excitement of the first pioneering paleontologists who discovered what would later be named *Albertasaurus* in the side of a hill. The park features two campgrounds, a visitor center, exhibits, a theater, bookstore and restaurants.



West Edmonton Mall – All the superlatives apply to the West Edmonton Mall – it is the largest in the world, and is chock-full of world-class shopping and just about any amusement you can think of, making it an ideal destination for any traveler. In fact, the mall is a destination unto itself. With three full-sized hotels inside, you don't even have to leave the property! The mall features over 800 stores, attractions, restaurants and services and features an NHL regulation-sized ice rink, an indoor water park, an amusement park, an aquarium with submarine rides, mini golf, an arcade and more. In addition to these on-site attractions, the mall regularly schedules special events, too, including concerts, day camps for kids and professional sports team appearances.

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre - Located in Fort McLeod, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre is a long name for a cultural site with a very long history. This fascinating site features an impressive visitor center that interprets the Blackfoot hunting tradition of herding and driving buffalo over cliffs for subsistence purposes, and has been used continuously by indigenous peoples for more than 5,500 years. The site and interpretive center were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981.

British Columbia

Gold Rush Trail – Much of British Columbia was originally settled by men and women with anything but settling on their minds. Starting in the 1850s, prospectors poured into British

Columbia via the cities of Victoria and Vancouver by the thousands, all of them entranced with the idea of getting rich quick. Along the rough, rugged trail were roadhouses and military outposts, many of which have been restored to their original condition and are accessible to visitors today. British Columbia's modern road system is largely based on these historic trails, and while the scenery is just as rugged as ever, the traveling is much easier. Towns like Yale, Cache Creek, Quesnel and Barkerville are definite must-sees along the way. And don't forget to look for some of the fantastic tributes to First Nations history in the province, like at the Historic Hat Creek Ranch, where the traditional uses of the area by the Shuswap First Nation are detailed.



Inside Passage cruise to Prince Rupert – In many ways, the coast defines life in British Columbia, and an Inside Passage day cruise on BC Ferries is a fantastically tranquil introduction to the culture. Headed north or south, Prince Rupert is easy to connect with via ferry from Port Hardy on Vancouver Island or by train or motorcoach from points inland. The trip will take you past dense rainforest and rugged coastline with great opportunities for wildlife viewing – on land, in the air or in the water – along the way. There’s much to see and do along B.C.’s Inside Passage, not the least of which is be exposed to the rich First Nations heritage of the area.

Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort – A quick one and a half hour drive north of Vancouver lies the town of Whistler and Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort, home to over 8,171 acres of skiable terrain, 200-plus trails and 360 inches per year in average snowfall: quite simply, a winter paradise. The ski resort is divided between Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain, which will provide a stunning setting for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The campaign to land the 2010 Games isn’t the first in Whistler’s history: in 1962, four businessmen from Vancouver made an unsuccessful plea to host the Games. Of course, back then, the resort hadn’t been built and the town had no road access, electricity or sewer. Today, things have developed substantially. Whistler is one of the world’s most renowned ski areas, and features 37 lifts, multiple terrain parks, ski and snowboard school, countless restaurants, world-class shopping and a vibrant nightlife.

Vancouver – Vancouver and its surrounding areas are incredibly urbane, and diverse with just over two million residents – nearly half the population of greater British Columbia. Visitors to the city will be amazed at the cultural mix. English is the primary language, followed in a strong second by Chinese. But the city also has scores of people speaking Punjabi, Tagalog (Filipino), Vietnamese, French, Spanish, German and Italian. In a city with four major daily newspapers, two are in Chinese! The Asian influence is visible and strong, and provides visitors with some stunning contrasting options – enjoy high tea, then go for a stroll in the tranquil Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden in the heart of Vancouver’s Chinatown. All the diversity contributes to a fantastic restaurant scene. The city embraces its arts and recreation, too. Vancouver has over 200 parks, including the expansive, 1,000-acre Stanley Park and three civic theaters, a symphony orchestra, an opera, a ballet company, dozens of museums and numerous eclectic galleries.

Dawson Creek, Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway – Dawson Creek was established back in the late 1800s, but it didn’t really flower as a crossroads until construction on the Alaska Highway started in 1942. During construction, Dawson Creek was a staging ground for supplies and materials. After the highway was completed, it became the launching point for millions of travelers’ trip of a

lifetime – the 1,520-mile trek on the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek, BC to Fairbanks, Alaska. While Dawson Creek offers plenty of entertaining diversions – museums, art galleries, antique stores, golf, hiking – it’s also symbolic of the journey to come as drivers head north on the highway.

Vancouver Island – This island right off the west coast of mainland British Columbia combines city sophistication and coastal ease in a stunning setting. The western half of the island is carved by fjords and mountains and dotted with small communities, while the eastern half is rich with timber, farmland, fishing streams and villages. To the south, the island is defined by British Columbia’s capital city, Victoria. This elegant setting, famous for its English gardens and afternoon tea, is home to 325,000 people and is easily accessible from Seattle, Bellingham or Port Angeles, Wash. Visitors can access Vancouver Island via regular passenger ferry service from Vancouver. BC Ferries also connect with dozens of small towns all over the island. Activities on the island run the gamut, from gallery hopping and fine dining in Victoria to bird and whale watching, kayaking and spelunking in any of the island’s 1,000 caves.

Yukon

The Klondike – home to the Gold Rush of 1898 – The Klondike Gold Rush brought thousands of fortune-seekers to Yukon in 1897-98. Many attempted the difficult and dangerous passage over the Chilkoot and White Passes to the goldfields in Yukon’s northern reaches, but few made it, and even fewer became rich. It was the world’s last great gold rush, and it created a wonderful historical legacy for today’s visitor to Yukon. Museums, historic sites and interpretive centers await visitors with information about the region’s history, the role of First Nations culture in the development of



Yukon, stories and diaries of the original western settlers and historical photographs that bring to stunning reality the impossible goal that so many desperate prospectors sought. Dawson City was the epicenter of the Klondike Gold Rush – the spot all those anxious prospectors were determined to reach. At one point a city of 30,000, Dawson is now home to less than 2,000 year-round residents. There is still plenty of Gold Rush lore here,

including the home of the Klondike Gold Rush’s de facto poet laureate, Robert Service.

Kluane National Park and Reserve – Located in Southwestern Yukon, this majestic park boasts 22,015 square kilometers (8,500 square miles) of wilderness and includes Canada’s highest peak, Mt. Logan, at 19,545 feet. The park area was the traditional home of the Southern Tutchone people, and today the Champagne, Aishihik and Kluane First Nations continue the tradition of

living off the land and are active participants in the management of the park. Kluane National Park and Reserve has two visitor reception centres, one in Haines Junction and one at Sheep Mountain, 74 kilometers north of Haines Junction. There are innumerable activities to enjoy in the park: hiking, rafting the Alsek River, cycling and mountain biking, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, camping and more.

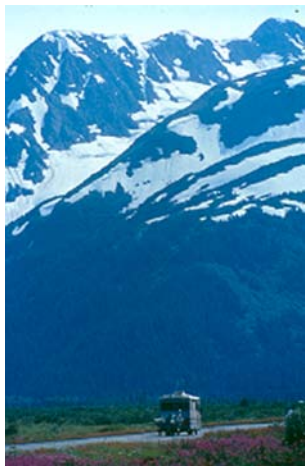
Yukon River – The very name of this mighty river conjures visions of sourdough miners and cold



winter nights, and it is the lifeblood of the Yukon. The history of the area can nearly be traced in its silky rivulets, and it cuts right through the heart of Yukon's capital city, Whitehorse. Summer and winter alike, Yukoners are out playing on the river, and it is the center of many athletic competitions in the area, from the Yukon River Quest canoe race to the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race. Though the river begins in British Columbia and

ends in Norton Sound, Alaska, the Yukon's heart is in its namesake Yukon Territory. The 2,300-mile long river ties for second among the longest rivers in North America, and should be included on every itinerary to the Yukon.

Alaska Highway – Yukon – Your first stop along the Alaska Highway into the Yukon is Watson Lake, and it shouldn't be passed up. Watson Lake played an important role in the construction of the Alaska Highway because its airport was a crucial link in the supply chain, getting equipment and materials to construction workers. The construction of the highway is what put Watson Lake



on the map, and the city embraces its spot along the highway with the famous Watson Lake Signpost Forest, which features around 50,000 road signs from around the world in a colorful and interesting tribute to travel. As you continue north toward Yukon's capital, Whitehorse, keep an eye out for bison, bears and other wildlife along the road. In Whitehorse, make time for some of the city's impressive interpretive centres, including the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, the Yukon Transportation Museum, the SS Klondike National Historic Site and the MacBride Museum. Further north along the highway, look for Kluane National Park Visitor Centre and the Kluane Museum of Natural History.

Alaska

Glaciers – Glaciers are vast rivers of compressed snow that are constantly in motion, sliding through alpine valleys and exploding into the ocean all over Alaska. There are around 100,000 glaciers in Alaska, and just a scant 1 percent of these glaciers even have names. Not only do Alaskans have glaciers to thank for carving out some of the state’s most spectacular scenic spectacles, but glaciers also create excellent recreational opportunities. Several glaciers are easily accessible off main highways, including Exit Glacier near Seward, Portage Glacier off the Seward Highway south of Anchorage, the Mendenhall Glacier off the Glacier Highway in Juneau and the Matanuska Glacier, located off the Glenn Highway about two hours east of Anchorage. In addition to these drive-up glaciers, there are a few other special places in Alaska to see and appreciate this incredible force of nature: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, Prince William Sound and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.



Wildlife – There is perhaps no better place than Alaska to view a diverse selection of some of the world’s most spectacular animals. Alaska’s wildlife falls into three categories: marine life is found along Alaska’s 33,904 miles of coastline and includes whales, birds, seals, sea lions, otters, ocean fish, crustaceans, sea birds, otters and much more; land animals include bears, lynx, fox, caribou, moose, small birds like grouse and ptarmigan, tundra swans, wolves, and tons of other bird species; and finally, abundant quantities of freshwater fish are found in Alaska’s three million lakes and countless braided rivers.



Mount McKinley and Denali National Park & Preserve – The Alaska Native people refer to Mt. McKinley, the 20,320-foot tall centerpiece of this national park, as Denali, or “the high one.” And high it is: this peak is the highest in North America and is so large it creates its own weather systems. Mt. McKinley is the highest peak in the 600-mile long Alaska Range and its obvious matriarch – while there are dozens of other impressive peaks in the Alaska Range, they all pale in comparison to the behemoth Mt. McKinley. But there’s more to Denali than Mt. McKinley: six million acres of pristine sub-arctic wilderness, thriving wolf packs and caribou in the thousands, over 650 species of flowering plants, king and chum salmon, migratory birds and 39 species of mammals. And while everything about this incredible place is wild, it is still accessible to visitors. Buses take



travelers down the “park road” – the only road that accesses the interior portion of the park – to view this intense wilderness in carefully controlled numbers. Rafting, flightseeing, camping, hiking, kayaking, biking and dog mushing are also options.

The Alaska Highway and Alaska’s Scenic Byways – Driving Alaska’s highways is a great way to see the state on your own terms and at your own pace. Perhaps the most famous of these roads is the Alaska Highway, but it is hardly the end of the conversation on driving in Alaska. Two National Scenic Byways – the Glenn Highway and Alaska’s Marine Highway – and one All-American Road – the Seward Highway – should also be on your list of must-sees. Official designations aside, you will be hard pressed to find a road in Alaska that isn’t breathtaking: whether you choose the Parks Highway as it winds past Denali National Park & Preserve; Juneau’s Glacier Highway, featuring views of spectacular Mendenhall Glacier; the obscure but fantastic Taylor Highway to Eagle and the mighty Yukon River; the unpaved and unparalleled Denali Highway, which links Cantwell and the Parks Highway to Paxson and the Richardson Highway; or the Richardson Highway south over Thompson Pass through particularly pretty country – even for Alaska – en route to Valdez. This list just scratches the surface of the driving itineraries available in the Last Frontier, so gas up and hit the road!

Totem poles – These intimidating sentinels of Southeast Alaska’s moss-laden rainforest tell the story of clans and report historically significant events. Take the opportunity to come to Alaska and watch an Alaska Native artisan carve one – you’ll never forget it. Because totems sit in the rainforest, each one usually lasts just 50-60 years before rot and deterioration melt away their stories. For this reason, it’s difficult to see design progression over the centuries, though it is known that totem carving flourished in the 19th century after trade with Westerners provided Natives with ideal tools for carving: axes, adzes and other metal tools. Today, totems can be found throughout Alaska, though they are only culturally based in the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimpshian cultures of Southeast Alaska. Great places to see totems include Sitka National Historical Park and Totem Bight Park and Saxman Tribal Village near Ketchikan, but there are dozens of communities in Southeast where totems are prominent figures at community halls, government buildings and public parks.



IF YOU GO

Alberta

Travel Alberta

(800) ALBERTA

<http://www.travelalberta.com>

travelinfo@travelalberta.com

Calgary Stampede & Exhibition

(800) 661-1260

<http://www.calgary-stampede.com>

Banff National Park

(403) 762-1550

http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/index_e.asp

banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca

Jasper National Park

(780) 852-6176

http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/index_e.asp

JNP_info@pc.gc.ca

Waterton Lakes National Park

(403) 859-2224

http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/waterton/index_e.asp

waterton.info@pc.gc.ca

Dinosaur Provincial Park

(403) 378-4342

<http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/dinosaur>

West Edmonton Mall

(800) 661-8890

<http://www.westedmall.com>

tourism@westedmall.com

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump

<http://www.head-smashed-in.com>

(403) 553-2731

British Columbia

Tourism British Columbia

(800) HELLO-BC

<http://www.hellobc.com>

BC Ferries

(250) 386-3431

<http://www.bcferrries.com>

Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort

(888) 218-9690

<http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com>

Yukon

Tourism Yukon

(867) 667-5340

<http://www.touryukon.com>

vacation@gov.yk.ca

Kluane National Park and Reserve

(867) 634-7250

http://parksCanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/kluane/index_e.asp

kluane.info@pc.gc.ca

Alaska

Alaska Travel Industry Association

(800) 327-9372

<http://www.travelalaska.com>

atiamedia@gci.net

Denali National Park and Preserve

(907) 683-2294

<http://www.nps.gov/dena/>

denali_info@nps.gov

Alaska Marine Highway

(800) 642-0066

<http://www.ferryalaska.com>

Ask_AMHS@dot.state.ak.us

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North to Alaska: Rubber-to-road options near limitless in the North

by Amy Cockerham



When the Alaska Highway was completed in the late fall of 1942, it was the culmination of a dangerous and hurried year. Construction accidents, exhaustion and extreme weather took a physical toll on the thousands of troops who built the road in defense of the United States after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and, later, Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

But the task of forcing a road through muskeg meadows and over raw mountain passes wasn't all heavy lifting – it created a psychological shift, too. The grueling job helped further define the Northern identity of rugged individualism and further shaped the mythology of the North that still captures the imagination of visitors today.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the highway linked Canada and the “Lower 48” states to the Grande Dame of extremism: Alaska.

In the old days, such extremism meant you had to be able to “hold it” for hours on end because rest stops and gas stations on the highway were hundreds of miles apart (only cheechakos – an Alaskan term for greenhorn – even contemplated braving the mosquitoes long enough to go outdoors). But today, the Alaska Highway – and all the smaller highways that branch off through Alberta and the Yukon along the way – is a road traveler's delight.

Tons of options now allow road-trippers to fly one way, rent an RV and drive back, take Alaska or Washington state ferries to link to the highway, drive to Alaska and barge a car or RV home or fly



both ways and rent a vehicle for road travel.

Any way you do it, you'll find the North home to some of the most exciting and adventurous drives in the world. Today the Alaska Highway is paved its entire, 1,500-mile length with dozens of colorful and unique visitor opportunities in towns and small cities along the way. (The cost of fuel is comparable particularly when coupled with Canada's

favorable exchange rate). Amenities are plentiful and wildlife is commonly spotted right from the road, making this snaking, historically rich trek one of the last great undiscovered gems in world travel. Not to mention the fact that Northerners brew up a darn fine espresso.

Many travelers are intimidated by the planning of this trip of a lifetime, but there's nothing to it. Books like *The Milepost*, a comprehensive, mile-by-mile companion to roads of the North, guide neophyte adventurers to the best and brightest of this incredible land, as do websites, visitor bureaus and public lands information centers.



Most people considering a drive North balk at the perceived time involved in such a long drive. But then again, most people don't know about the abundance of options for travelers on a tighter schedule.

One-way Alaska Highway Adventure: Many RV and car rental agencies not only allow travel on the Alaska Highway and other roads in the North country, they encourage it through early – and late-season promotions. For instance, some RV rental agencies offer discounts to southbound travelers in the fall or to northbound travelers in the spring and waive one-way penalties. Alaskan shipping companies will also transport your car or RV via container ship to ports in Washington so you can drive up, drive around, and ship your vehicle home – or vice versa.

Ferries: With thousands of miles of rainforested coastline to enjoy, consider adding a leg on Alaska ferries to your trip. These economical alternatives to cruising allow you to bring your vehicle with you and explore port towns at your own pace. Options abound for your ferry travel adventure, so visit any of the above ferry systems online by using the contact information at the end of this story.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles: With dozens of choices for getting around and through Alaska and Canada's north country, why not fly to the city of your choice and rent a car for shorter day trips? Fly to Whitehorse, for instance, rent a car and drive to Haines, ferry to Skagway and take the White Pass & Yukon Route train while you're at it.

With so many possible routes and itineraries, your imagination is the limit when it comes to your own personal "trip of a lifetime" in the abundant North.

IF YOU GO
North! to Alaska
<http://www.northtoalaska.com>

Alaska

Alaska Travel Industry Association
(907) 929-2200
info@alaskatia.org
<http://www.travelalaska.com>

Alaska Marine Highway
(907) 465-3941
Reservations (800) 642-0066
<http://www.ferryalaska.com>

White Pass & Yukon Route
Reservations (800) 343-7373
info@whitepass.net
<http://www.whitepassrailroad.com>

Alaska Campground Owners' Association
(907) 883-2262
<http://www.alaskacampgrounds.net>

Alberta

Travel Alberta
(800) 252-3782 or (780) 427-4321
<http://www.travelalberta.com>

Calgary
<http://www.visitor.calgary.ab.ca>

Edmonton
<http://www.tourism.ede.org>

Alberta's North
<http://www.travelalbertanorth.com>

Alberta Central
<http://www.travelalbertacentral.com>

The Canadian Rockies
<http://www.travelalbertarockies.com>

Alberta South
<http://www.travelalbertasouth.com>

Yukon

Tourism Yukon
(800) 661-0494
vacation@gov.yk.ca
<http://www.touryukon.com>

Klondike Visitors Association – Dawson City
(867) 993-5575
kva@dawson.net
<http://www.dawsoncity.org>

Yukon Visitor Reception Centers
Operated by Tourism Yukon and open daily from mid-May to mid-September in the following communities:

Watson Lake
(867) 536-7469

Carcross
(867) 821-4431

Whitehorse
(867) 667-3084

Haines Junction
(867) 634-2345

Beaver Creek
(867) 862-7321

Dawson City
(867) 993-5566

Loop of a Lifetime: A little planning goes a long way in the North



How often have you thought about driving north to Alaska, but said you don't have enough time

because there is too much to see in just a couple weeks.

Or, perhaps it is because you're not sure you want to spend that much time in the car together?"

The answer to either dilemma is easy. Planning an epic adventure to Alaska through Alberta and the Yukon is a cinch, and it's entirely possible to do it in about two weeks without missing any significant landmarks along the way.

Here's how.



Beginning in either Calgary or Edmonton, Alberta, travelers can enjoy everything from a real life rodeo to the world's largest shopping and entertainment mall, the West Edmonton Mall. Most major air carriers offer flights into both cities, and with its mix of prairies, boreal forests and snowy mountains, the province offers something for everyone – its Canada's Rocky Mountain playground.

If you choose early July for your vacation, you'll arrive just in time for the Calgary Stampede.

While you're there for one of the most famous rodeos in the world, enjoy the ballet, the zoo and incredible dining.

If you choose Edmonton as your gateway city, you'll find the region uniquely Canadian – comfortable, beautiful, modern and friendly. Edmonton is home to the Provincial Museum of Alberta, Muttart Conservatory, Odysium and easy hiking along the North Saskatchewan River trails.

In either city, rent a car and prepare for some eye popping scenery. From Calgary, a day's drive west along Highway 93 will take you to Banff National Park. Banff, along with Jasper Kootenay and Yoho National Parks, comprise the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site, one of the largest protected areas in the world. Camping, glacier viewing, wildlife watching and luxury accommodations, including the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, all are easily accessible. The hard part is deciding which option to choose.

As you head north, Highway 93 becomes the Icefields Parkway that runs along a chain of massive icefields straddling the Continental Divide and delivers you to Jasper National Park. The park also is a three hour drive west from Edmonton via the Trans-Canada Yellowhead Highway 16.

When you reach Jasper, plan on spending a night or two so that you can really appreciate the icefields and other outdoor attractions in the park as well as Miette Hot Springs, which makes a nice place to warm up after a day spent admiring glaciers.

In Jasper, return your rental car and board the VIA Rail's Skeena and begin your trek to Prince Rupert, BC. The trip to Prince Rupert aboard the Skeena is a two-day, all-daylight affair in order to maximize sightseeing opportunities. You'll spend the night in Prince George, BC along the way. The route from the Rocky Mountains to the coastal rainforest in Prince Rupert is among the most beautiful rail journeys in the world.

Once you reach Prince Rupert, book yourself on one of the Alaska Marine Highway's ferries for a trip north along Alaska's Inside Passage. Make sure you have reserve passage and a stateroom; while sleeping in lounge chairs or in the scenically endowed solarium is adventurous and allowable, the trip does take three days, and you may want privacy. Regardless, communal showers are available for all passengers, though staterooms have private facilities. All vessels in the Alaska Marine Highway system have cafeterias for dining three times a day, but it doesn't hurt to pack a cooler for snacks and beverages.

While you wait for your ferry to depart Prince Rupert, you may want to visit the quaint Cow Bay area of town or spend time in the Chatham Village Longhouse, which houses the Museum of Northern British Columbia.

As you sail from Prince Rupert, sit back, relax and enjoy the amazing scenery, plentiful wildlife and colorful communities you'll encounter along the way. During the summer, National Forest Service naturalists are onboard the larger ferries to provide interpretive information for visitors. Movies, games, books and great conversation are all par for the course on the peaceful journey. Entering

Alaska, the ferry will make calls on the seaside towns of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau and Haines. But on this itinerary, you're final ferry destination, the Gold Rush town of Skagway.



Disembarking in Skagway is like stepping back in time. Near the end of the 19th century, thousands of hopeful miners flooded there on their way to the legendary Klondike gold fields in the Yukon. Today, the town salutes its colorful past by providing visitors with a very close approximation of the Skagway of old. Boardwalks line the central downtown district, which is Victorian in style with plenty of interesting shopping to draw visitors beyond the paned windows of the storefronts.

From Skagway, you'll head 100 miles north to Whitehorse, so why not take advantage of another chance to understand the hardships encountered by the optimistic miners of the past? The White Pass & Yukon Route railroad was built in 1898 to haul provisions into the gold fields and is today designated an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. Construction of the line was death defying, and after traveling on this historic railway, you'll understand why. The train trips are either round-trip scenic excursions or may be booked with a short bus ride out of Fraser, B.C. to Whitehorse, Yukon's capital.

With several world-class museums, lively, youthful energy, great food and entertaining nightlife, Whitehorse should be absorbed at your leisure. During the day, check out the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, which tracks the journey of early man (a traveler just like you!) across the Bering Land Bridge and into Alaska, Canada, and ultimately all of North America. Other good bets are the Yukon Transportation Museum, the SS Klondike Sternwheeler and the MacBride Museum. For the adventurous, tour companies offer rafting trips on the Yukon River, helicopter flightseeing and wilderness trekking. In the evening, stroll through downtown Whitehorse and pop in to one of the many good-natured local watering holes.

When you're ready to go, rent a car or RV for your trip along the historic Alaska Highway north to Fairbanks, Alaska. The Alaska Highway was completed in a mad rush in 1942 as the U.S. shored up its defenses against Japanese attack during WWII. The project was a miracle of sheer will and human engineering: the ribbon of road winds neatly around mountains and skims past lakes. It's no six-lane interstate, but the modern highway is paved with plenty of visitor services spread across the entire length of the trip (some road construction is inevitable, as it is on virtually any road in the U.S. or Canada).

The trip to the highway's end in Fairbanks is just barely over 600 miles, but don't rush it. Enjoy the rural communities of Haines Junction, the drive along Kluane Lake through Kluane National Park to the boarder town of Beaver Creek, then on to Tok and Delta Junction, Alaska. As the crossroads of Alaska, Tok makes a great place to stay overnight on the way to Fairbanks.

Fairbanks is the second-largest city in Alaska, and, like Whitehorse, has a unique flavor and boasts many fun visitor activities. Take a river cruise on the sternwheeler Discovery III, pan for gold at El Dorado Gold Mine, visit the University of Alaska Museum of the North or stop by the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau's log cabin, right on the banks of the Chena River downtown.

After spending a day or two in Fairbanks, shake off your disbelief. Could you really have seen so much? The answer is: Yes. But the better question might be: Why did you wait so long?

IF YOU GO

Alberta

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P.O. Box 2500, Edmonton, AB, Canada, T5J 2Z4

800-ALBERTA (800-252-3782)

<http://www.travelalberta.com>

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VIA Rail Canada

3 Place Ville-Marie Suite 500, Montreal, QB, Canada, H3B 2C9

888-VIA-RAIL

<http://www.viarail.ca>

Yukon

Tourism Yukon

1-800-661-0494

<http://www.touryukon.com>

vacation@gov.yk.ca

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2600 Cordova St. Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99503-2745

800-327-9372

<http://www.travelalaska.com>

ATIAMedia@gci.net

Alaska's Marine Highway

6858 Glacier Highway, Juneau, AK 99801-7909

800-642-0066

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