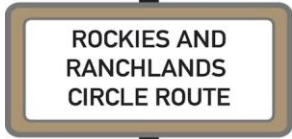


ROCKIES AND RANCLANDS

CALGARY – WATERTON – FERNIE – INVERMERE – RADIUM HOT SPRINGS

APPROX. 1,025 KM/631 MI



Fort Steele Heritage Town



Free & Educational Mine Tours



Fernie Alpine Resort



Lake Windermere & the Columbia Valley

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Fort Steele Heritage Town
- Elkford & Sparwood – Open Pit Mine Tours
- Fernie Alpine Resort – Aerial Playground, Bike Park, Zip-Line
- Waterton-Glacier National Park
- Fairmont, Lussier & Radium Hot Springs
- Kootenay & Banff National Parks

This tour reveals the character of both sides of the famous Canadian Rockies. Explore the foothills of southern Alberta's cowboy country and enjoy the beauty of big skies and wide open plains. Experience the dramatic vistas where the prairies meet the mountains. Then head west through the Rockies and cross the Continental Divide to find yourself in the deep forests, towering peaks and glaciers of British Columbia.

Starting in Calgary, head south on Hwy #2 and watch for signs to Spruce Meadows. Take a tour of this local success story, voted the #1 horse show jumping facility in the world.

Now head west on Hwy #22X until you come to Hwy #22, known as the Cowboy Trail, and swing through the rolling foothills of Alberta's high ranch country to the sister communities of Black

Diamond and Turner Valley. Turner Valley is the birthplace of Alberta's oil and gas industry - the site of the 1914 Dingman Discovery Well that began Alberta's first oil boom, now preserved as a National Historic Site. Continue south from Black Diamond to Longview and stop at Ian Tyson's Navajo Mug. Try to choose from 21 different kinds of luscious homemade pies. Thirteen kilometres (8 mi) further south is the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site which stands as a living tribute to the ranching industry in Alberta.

Continue south past Chain Lakes where you leave the Cowboy Trail to head east on Hwy #533. Continue to Hwy #2 and the town of Nanton and stroll its historic Main Street filled with antique and specialty shops. Just before you arrive in Fort Macleod, take Hwy #785 to Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump. This

UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved buffalo jumps in North America. In Fort Macleod, be sure to visit the Fort Museum of the North West Mounted Police and catch the famous NWMP Musical Ride. Then continue south to Cardston and visit the Remington Carriage Museum – North America’s largest collection of horse-drawn transportation. Less than an hour south is Waterton Lakes National Park.

Highway #6 north takes you to Pincher Creek and the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village – a turn of the 19th century historic village. Then head west on Hwy #3. There are a number of small former coal mining communities with a fascinating history to explore along the way. Be sure to stop at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre which does an excellent job of capturing the history of the Crowsnest Pass.

After you pass through Coleman, you cross the Continental Divide and enter the province of British Columbia. In Sparwood, it’s impossible to miss the town’s most famous visitor attraction. Painted in industrial green is the world’s largest tandem axle dump truck, the Terex Titan. This, the ultimate in monster trucks, was formerly used in the large open pit mine above the town. Tours of this active mine are available throughout the summer.

A quick side trip on Hwy #43 takes you to Elkford which is ‘Wild at heart’. This area has one of the largest bighorn sheep populations on the continent and is also home to Teck Coal-offering free tours of the open pit mine operations on Saturdays during the summer. Close to town, enjoy the easy 45-minute hike to a lookout above Josephine Falls or a round of golf. For the more adventurous, travel further north to the Elk Lakes Provincial Park.

Historic Fernie is packed with Victorian charm; pick up a Heritage Walking Tour brochure at the Fernie Museum and visit turn-of-the-century attractions such as chocolate making machines and a 1916 printing press. Thrillseekers can zipline at the Aerial Playground, raft whitewater on the Elk River or ride horseback through the alpine.

Take a side trip from the highway village of Elko to Lake Kooanusa where sandy beaches are the hallmark of this large lake and houseboating is very popular. Along route to Fort Steele, the Bull River turnoff leads you to the Kootenay Trout Hatchery. Take a self-guided tour of the extensive interpretive area, view trophy sized trout in the moat and watch turtles, fish and water insects in the pond.

Fort Steele Heritage Town is a restored boomtown of the 1890s, where colourful characters from the past entertain visitors on the street and period tradesman present fascinating demonstrations in their shops. Tour the town by horse drawn wagon, catch a ride on the steam train, do a little gold panning and enjoy hilarious comedy shows at the Wild Horse Theatre. Spring and fall ‘Gossip Tours’ are also a hit, as are their many year-round special events.

Continue your travels north toward Radium Hot Springs – Hwy #93/95 leads you by Wasa Lake where sandy beaches and warm water awaits. You also have the option of visiting the Lussier Hot Springs in Whiteswan Lake Provincial park and Fairmont Hot Springs. Another perfect place to stop along the way is Invermere – browse the quaint downtown, play a round of golf, enjoy lunch by the lake and take in a concert or theatrical performance at the Pynelogs Cultural Centre. Nearby Panorama Mountain Village offers the ultimate family destination – mountain biking, golf, chairlift rides, accommodation and more.

Once back on Hwy #93/95, the Radium Hot Springs Visitor Centre offers a ‘Cultures in Contact Exhibit’. It provides a historical overview of the Ktunaxa Nation people’s past, present and future. Take Hwy #93 and head into Kootenay National Park and to the Radium Hot Springs pools. Watch for wildlife-bighorn sheep, deer, elk, fox and bear are often seen along this beautiful mountain highway. Once you leave the park, connect onto Hwy #1 east towards Banff and back to Calgary.

KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM

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