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KOOTENAYROCKIES.COM

Photo by David Gluns

FAMILY FUN IN THE KOOTENAY ROCKIES

By NICOLE SKINNER, *Marketing Correspondent*

This summer is the perfect time to take your family on a unique, international adventure – and the easiest way is to head north to the pristine Kootenay Rockies.

This breathtaking eastern edge of British Columbia includes beautiful rivers, lakes, waterfalls, beaches, mineral hot springs, alpine meadows and more.

With four of British Columbia's national parks located in the Kootenay Rockies, your family will see flourishing wildlife and discover epic outdoor experiences. In addition to the outdoor adventures, you'll also find restored heritage towns, thriving arts communities and fascinating cultural activities.

Here are five family-friendly fun things you won't want to miss on your Kootenay Rockies trip:



Photo by David Gluns

1 3 Valley Gap Heritage Ghost Town

Open daily April through October, this ghost town will give you a peek in to the colorful pioneer days of the 1800s. Thousands of people came searching for gold in 1862, but the gold rush was short lived. Many booming towns turned to ghost towns in the blink of an eye. See over 25 historic buildings, a wagon and buggy shop, antique auto museum and more. The Heritage Ghost Town is located right next to the 3 Valley Lake Chateau. Visit 3valley.com for more information, hours and admission rates.

2 Yoho National Park

The origins of Yoho sum up this park perfectly. Named for a Cree expression of "awe and wonder," this park may just take your breath away. Make memories with your family as you explore your way through this park's soaring peaks, expansive glaciers and impressive waterfalls; all of which have attracted visitors for over a century. Some specific points of interest in the park are Wapta Falls, Hoodoos, Natural Bridge, and the Lower Spiral Tunnel Viewpoint. Watch out for mountain goats; they are the most abundant large mammal in the park.

Plus you'll want to stop at the Burgess Shale, one of the world's most important fossil finds, located right in Yoho National Park. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1981, the Burgess Shale Formation contains the fossilized remains of more than 120 marine animal species dating back 515 million years.

To find out about more park highlights, hiking trails, and camping accommodations, visit PC.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/yoho/index.aspx.

3 Kimberley Underground Mining Railway

Mining is a huge part of the culture and history of the Kootenay Rockies area. Take the Kimberley Underground Mining Tour and ride the rails through the beautiful Mark Creek valley as you listen to the history of Kimberley and the Sullivan Mine. This enlightening tour will offer your family the chance to learn about life as a miner, see real old-time mining equipment and more.

Visit KimberleyUndergroundMiningRailway.ca for tour schedules, rates and other information.

4 Kicking Horse Mountain Resort – Grizzly Bear Refuge

Just outside of Golden you can visit a grizzly bear named Boo. At the Grizzly Bear Refuge at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, Boo lives in fenced area high on the mountainside. This once orphaned bear has been living here since 2003. The refuge provides an unprecedented opportunity for biologists to study grizzly bear behavior, and a chance for you to see this magnificent animal in an enclosed but otherwise natural setting. To access the refuge, you get to ride on the chairlift and then take a short walk to the interpretive center. The best times to visit are the morning or late afternoon when Boo is most active.

You can also catch other wildlife viewing opportunities near Golden, such as renowned bird watching along the Columbia Wetlands, or a scheduled walk with a pack of gray wolves at the Northern Lights Wildlife Centre. Learn more at KickingHorseResort.com.



Pulpit Rock Look-out above Nelson, BC

Photo by Phil Best

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(PS, Don't forget about the remarkably great currency exchange rate!)

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Standard Kimberley club scene.

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Fort Steele Heritage Town

Photo by Andrew Penner

5 Fort Steele Heritage Town

Step back in time with a stop at Fort Steele Heritage Town. This living museum literally brings history to life. In the summer enjoy street theater, museum displays, livestock demonstrations, live theater shows, steam train rides, horse-drawn wagon rides, and heritage trades demonstrations. All with the backdrop of the spectacular Rocky and Purcell Mountains. There are more than 60 historic buildings to see that have been restored and reconstructed; you might just feel like you have traveled back to the 1890s. The town also features gardens, and a railway company. Check out the full town attractions, shopping, dining and more at FortSteele.ca

BONUS: Ainsworth Hot Springs

All your outdoor adventures and other hands-on activities might leave you tuckered out. Before you head home, take a relaxation break at Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort. Plan to stay a night at Ainsworth and soak in the naturally warm mineral water pools, wade through the natural mineral cave or wake up your body with a dip in the cold plunge pool. The resort includes onsite lodging with newly renovated rooms and a restaurant. The resort also has views of Kootenay Lake and the Purcell Mountains and offers a truly rejuvenating way to end a spectacular vacation. HotNaturally.com

Or consider Fairmont Hot Springs, another nearby popular resort that includes hot springs, golf courses, natural hot springs, and other activities. For more information, visit: FairmontHotSprings.com.

How incredible is it that a fun, international family vacation is just a few hours away? Pack the car and head out to the Kootenay Rockies for a one-of-a-kind experience. Need more ideas or help planning your Kootenay Rockies trip? Be sure to visit KootenayRockies.com where you can find anything and everything there is to do.



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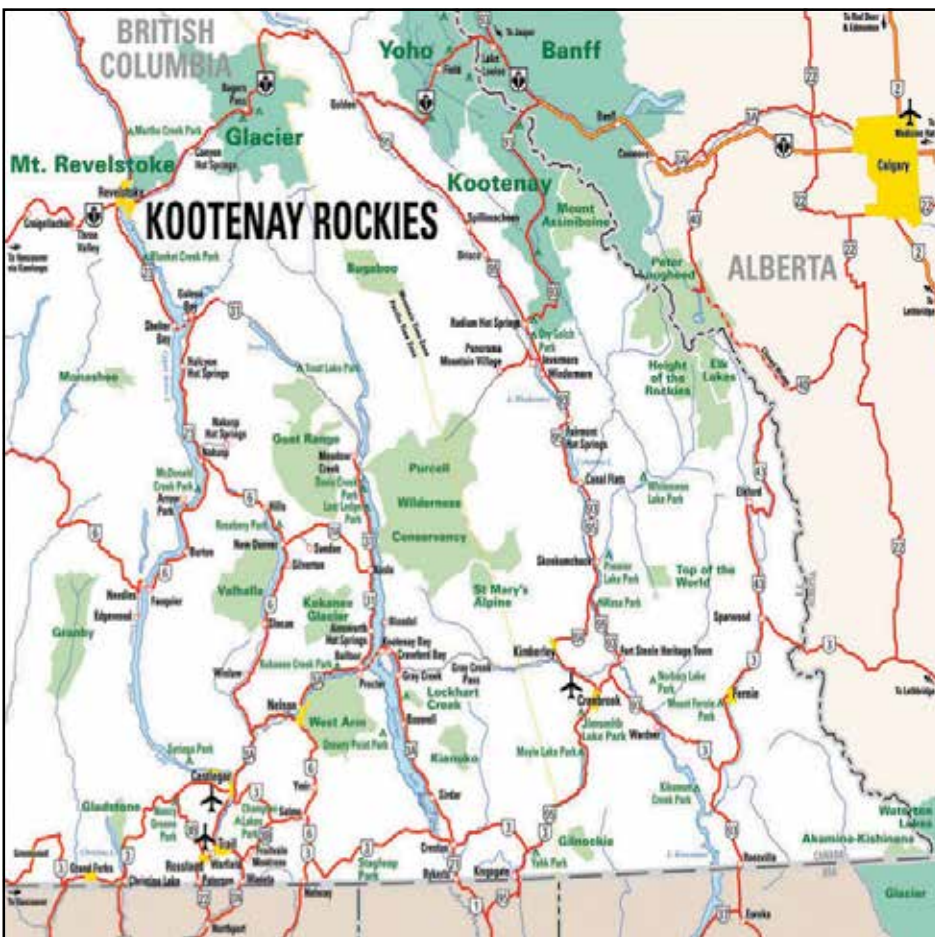


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Kootenay Rockies

Events, Activities and More



Celebrating at Kaslo May Days

Photo by Sara Rainford

May 15-17 Golden Mountain, *Golden*.

Celebrate the mountain town's heritage with fun activities. TourismGolden.com

May 15-17 Blossom Festival, *Creston*.

The 74th annual floral festival includes a concert, parade, car show, street fair and kids' activities.

BlossomFestival.ca

May 16-18 Kaslo May Days, *Kaslo*.

Spend Victoria Day here with the world's longest May Pole Dance, plus the May Days Parade, Logger Sports Competition, Sk8Park Demonstration and Antique Car Show and Shine. KasloMayDays.com

May 17-18 New Denver May Days, *New Denver*.

Enjoy a parade, races, games, artwork and the traditional pancake breakfast.

NewDenverMayDays.com

May 23 Castlegar Garden and

Nature Fest, *Castlegar*. Check out local gardens and outdoor resources including food production, organic living, hiking and battling invasive plants. CastlegarGardenFest.com

June 5-7 Castlegar Sunfest. Celebrate summer with this annual community all-ages event that includes a barbecue, crafts, music and the Miss Castlegar pageant. CastlegarSunfest.ca

June 6 Marysville Daze, *Kimberley*.

The 55th annual Mark Creek Lion's Club Marysville Daze includes a fun family with local music, craft fair, pancake breakfast, demonstrations from local dance troupes and gymnasts and an adults-only light show/dance. TourismKimberley.com

June 6-7 Monster Spectacular, *Cranbrook*.

Enjoy two days of motorized excitement with monster trucks plus freestyle motocross and a bike stunt show. \$25-\$45. **250-426-SEAT**

June 12-14 Tiny Lights Festival, *Ymir/Nelson*.

enjoy 80 performances, hands-on workshops for adults and children in spoken word, theatre and film. TinyLightsFestival.com

June 13-14 Wasa Lake Triathlon.

"Try" one of three different endurance events, the Olympic event, the Sprint and the TriKids.

RMEvents.com

June 18-19 Sam Steele Days, *Cranbrook*.

Commemorate a Canadian hero with a parade, music, talent show and pancake breakfast.

SamSteele.org

June 19-20 East Kootenay Beer

Festival, *Fairmont*, 4th annual beer event promises 70 varieties of craft beer from 20-plus breweries. FairmontHotSprings.com/4th-annual-beerfest

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Revelstoke Bike Fest

Photo by Bruno Long

June 21 Round the Mountain,

Kimberley Nordic Centre. Choose from seven hiking, running and mountain biking challenges around North Star Mountain, followed by a celebration with music, kid's events. RoundtheMountain.ca

July 1 Dominion Day, Fort Steele. Dig into birthday take and learn about the area's heritage at this historic town that features street drama, wagon rides and a live theater. FortSteele.ca

July 1 Tour De Farm, Creston, If you love to bike, you'll love this farm-to-farm tour of the Creston Valley. CrestonValleyBC.com

July 12-18 Canadian National Hang Gliding Championships, Golden.

Enjoy watching top pilots soar over the Columbia Valley from Mount 7. TourismGolden.com

July 17-19 JulyFest, Kimberley. Enjoy the best of the local fests, with three days of music, beer gardens, bocce tournaments and more fun. KimberleyJulyfest.com

July 17-19 Starbelly Jam Music Festival, Crawford Bay, This eclectic music festival includes all sorts of tunes, plus workshops, jugglers and more. StarbellyJam.org

July 24-25 Kootenay Gut Buster, Crawford Bay. The KGB Show is Canada's only outdoor comedy concert, and includes stand-up comedy both nights and other fun. KGBComedy.com

July 25 Kootenay Festival, Castlegar. Celebrate diversity with entertainment from many cultures. KootenayFestival.com

July 31-Aug. 3 Kaslo Jazz Summer Music Festival, Kaslo. Enjoy beautiful music overlooking the lake in a natural green amphitheater. KasloJazzFest.com

Aug. 7-10 Shambala Music Festival, Salmo, Canada's top electronic music festival includes top DJs on six stages and an unforgettable dance party. ShambalaMusicFestival.com

Aug. 7-14 Kimberley Kaleidoscope, this annual festival celebrates the arts, including performing, visual and culinary. KimberleyArts.com/KKFestival

Aug. 7-8 Wapiti Music Festival, Fernie, Celebrate Canadian Indie artists like Elliot Brood, Said the Whale, Library Voices, Yukon Blonde, Shred Kelly and more at this annual gathering. WapitiMusicFestival.com

Aug. 9 Pirate Day on the S.S. Moyie, Kaslo. The 5th annual swashbuckling celebration includes activities for kids aboard the historic steamboat. KHS.bc.ca

Aug. 22-23 Invermere MusicFest. This waterfront music festival includes great tunes on six stages. InvermereMusicFest.com

Sept. 10-13 BikeFest, Revelstoke. If you're a fan of cycling, you'll like this gathering of like-minded riders that includes group rides, music, the Revelstoke Steamer and more fun. SeeRevelstoke.com

Sept. 12 Kootenay Rockies Gran Fondo, Cranbrook. The bike tour begins and ends at St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino and includes a Gran Fondo of 152 km and a Piccolo Fondo of 58 km. KRGF.ca

Sept. 19-20 6 in the Stix, Cranbrook. Ride as much as you want on this solo or two-person cross-country bike race can take up to six hours on this 13 km forested single track. RMEvents.com

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