

Overview of Alberta

Alberta is blessed with a diversity of natural splendour, and makes for great outdoor adventures in this part of Canada. Tourism in Alberta is centred around the famous Rocky Mountains, which flank its western border with British Columbia, offering a host of alpine attractions. The north is a sparsely-inhabited wilderness of forests, lakes and rivers, while on its eastern border with Saskatchewan, the atmosphere takes a turn for the Wild West with its prairies and the Canadian Badlands. For those looking for a more urban experience, the capital Edmonton is centrally located and decidedly cosmopolitan.

But even in the cities and towns, visitors to Alberta can be sure that nature is never far away. Albertans love the outdoors, and urban environments are interspersed with plenty of lush river parks and greenbelts. In fact, Edmonton has more parkland per capita than any other North American city.

An important aspect of Alberta's heritage is the preservation of aboriginal culture. Home to 34 First Nations found in 14 reserves, the province hosts a number of educational attractions such as native interpretive trails and markets selling exquisite handmade crafts, as well as the world's largest teepee.

The natural beauty of this Canadian province is world-renowned, so it's no surprise to discover that it's home to five of Canada's 14 World Heritage Sites: Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump; Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park; Banff-Jasper National Parks; the enormous Wood Buffalo National Park; and Dinosaur Provincial Park.

An outdoor enthusiast's paradise, beautiful Alberta is a must for the adventurous at heart.

Key Facts

Language:

The official languages are English and French (spoken predominantly in Quebec).

Passport/Visa:

All visitors must hold a valid passport, and it's recommended that passports always be valid for six months after the intended period of travel. Visitors are required to hold onward or return tickets, all documents needed for the next destination and sufficient funds to cover the period of intended stay. Travellers from most visa-exempt countries arriving in Canada by air need to fill in an Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) form online prior to visiting Canada. This requirement is applicable to all but U.S citizens and travellers with a valid Canadian visa. Canadian citizens, including dual citizens, and Canadian permanent residents cannot apply for an eTA. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel documents to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA a valid passport will be required by immigration authorities.

Currency:

The currency used is the Canadian dollar (CAD). Banks and bureaux de change will change cash, as will some hotels. Major credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs are widespread. US dollars are widely accepted.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. American-style flat two-pin plugs and a plug with a third round grounding pin are standard.

Travel to Alberta

Climate for Alberta

Alberta has a dry continental climate, with four distinct seasons including hot summers and very cold, snowy winters. Summer runs between June and August, when days are warm and evenings are cool.

Winters, between December and February, are cold with heavy snowfalls, particularly in the Rockies. The province is large and extends over multiple terrains, making the climate highly variable from area to area.

Health Notes when travelling to Canada

Travellers should be up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines before traveling to Canada, and should consider taking routine vaccines as a standard precaution. Medical care is excellent but expensive, so medical insurance is advised.

Safety Notes when travelling to Canada

While most visits to Canada are trouble-free, the country does share the common international risk of terrorism. The crime rate is low but travellers are advised to take sensible precautions to safeguard their belongings, as they would anywhere. Parts of Canada are prone to tornadoes between May and September.

Customs in Canada

Rowdiness and loud speech are inappropriate except under special circumstances or in places such as bars, as Canadians tend to be soft spoken, patient and almost apologetic in their public behaviour. They are generally tolerant of the complex network of cultural differences in public behaviour, particularly in cities where such diversity is more common place. Recreational cannabis is legally available throughout Canada, though local laws can vary depending on the province or territory travellers are visiting.

Duty Free in Canada

Travellers to Canada are allowed to enter the country with the following items without incurring custom duties: gifts to the value of C\$60 per recipient (excluding advertising material, tobacco and alcoholic beverages); 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or cigarillos and 200g of tobacco or 200 tobacco sticks; 1.14 litres of liquor or wine or 24 x 355ml bottles or cans of beer or ale. There are strict regulations governing the import of the following: explosives, endangered animal and plant species, items of heritage, fresh foodstuffs and weapons.

Doing Business in Canada

Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, and Montreal are the main business centres, and English is the language of business except in French-speaking Quebec, where all written material and business cards should be in French. Business cards are not traditionally exchanged during an initial meeting, but at some appropriate time thereafter; it is best to wait for the host to offer theirs first.

A firm handshake is used by way of greeting and punctuality should be taken seriously for meetings. Canadians dress conservatively and smartly for business and suits are the norm. Gifts can be given in conclusion to celebrate a deal, but should be understated; taking someone out for a meal is a popular way to conclude business dealings.

Canadians are reserved and frown on emotional outbursts. Business is based on facts and figures rather than relationships, so it is best to be as prepared as possible for meetings. Hours of business are usually 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Communication in Canada

The international access code for Canada is +1. The outgoing code is 011 followed by the relevant country code. The outgoing code is not necessary for calls to the US and the Caribbean. Hotels, cafes and restaurants offering free WiFi are widely available. As international roaming costs can be high, purchasing a local prepaid SIM card can be a cheaper option.

Tipping in Canada

A tip of around 15 percent is standard in restaurants, and hairdressers and taxi drivers are usually tipped at the same rate. Bellhops, doormen, porters, and similar service providers at hotels, airports, and stations are generally paid at the customer's discretion.

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Airports in Alberta

Calgary Airport (YYC)

Calgary International Airport

www.yyc.com

Location: Calgary The airport is 12 miles (20km) northeast of downtown Calgary.

Time: GMT -7 (GMT -6 from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: +1 (403) 735 1200.

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Car rental: Alamo, Budget, Avis, Hertz, National, Alamo, and Thrifty are all represented at the airport and can be found in the Rental Car Centre opposite the main terminal building. There are also offsite car rental companies.

Airport Taxis: Airport taxis are available outside Arrivals.

Facilities: There are shops and duty-free shopping, restaurants and bars, ATMs, a foreign exchange, and an information booth within the terminal. There are also business centres. Disabled passengers are well catered for and there are plenty of children's entertainment facilities.

Parking: All parking lots are within walking distance of the terminal.

Edmonton International Airport (YEG)

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www.flyeia.com

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Facilities: Airport facilities include ATMs, currency exchange, a bank, shopping (including a duty-free shop), an information booth, child entertainment facilities, baggage storage, a chapel, WiFi, workstations, a bar, cafes, and restaurants.

Parking: Parking is available at the airport. There are free pick-up and drop-off zones. Parking options include valet parking, executive parking, easy parkade, and value parking.

Calgary

Calgary is situated on the banks of the beautiful Bow River at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, 200 miles (322km) north of the US border. Although Alberta's second city, Edmonton, is the state capital, Calgary is its largest, offering all the trappings of urban life as the territory's commercial and cultural centre, along with the pleasure of enjoying the dramatic countryside that surrounds the city.

Splendid national parks flourishing on Calgary's doorstep act as a magnet for hikers, fishermen and lovers of the great outdoors. Set on the Trans-Canada highway, the city is also the gateway to the Rocky Mountains resorts which attract skiers from all over the continent during winter.

The downtown area of Calgary not only serves as a shopping, entertainment and cultural hub for locals, but it also welcomes four million visitors a year who come for the annual attractions and festivals, wonderful parks and open spaces, and a selection of excellent shops, restaurants and bistros.

The city is perhaps best known for the Calgary Stampede, a world-class cowboy carnival and rodeo that draws more than a million people every year to watch the action and enjoy the accompanying festivities.

The site on which Calgary sits today is historically home to the native Blackfoot people, with the first European settlers not arriving until 1860. Colonel James Macleod established the small trading post, naming it Fort Calgary after Calgary Bay on his native Isle of Mull in Scotland. The Pacific Railway reached the town in 1883, but it was not until the discovery of oil in Turner Valley, 22 miles (35km) southwest of the city, that the population started to explode.

There's also a certain cowboy feel to the city. Wander the streets in your Stetson beneath the sparkling skyscrapers built on the back of the oil boom or dine on juicy steaks in a saloon with country music playing in the background. It will be hard to discern whether you're in Calgary or Texas...

There's a lot to see and do in Calgary, which means it attracts all types of travellers. It's both a great stop for those wanting to explore the surrounding wilderness while also an attractive option for a holiday of gastronomic indulgence and cultural education.

Getting around in Calgary

Getting around in Calgary is easy as most of the city's attractions are concentrated within the city centre. The streets downtown are laid out in a numbered grid with avenues running east to west and streets running north to south, while in outlying areas neighbourhoods have more meandering streets which can be confusing to visitors.

Because of the grid system, walking around downtown Calgary is a simple way to get around. The Eau Claire market area and the Stephen Avenue Mall are pleasant pedestrian-only areas. Calgary's public transport system is efficient and reliable, with a light rail and bus system servicing the city centre. The light rail runs from 4am to midnight every day, and the buses operate from 5am to midnight, with some routes continuing until 1am. There is a fare-free zone in the middle of town, and in other areas a pass can be purchased at many convenience stores.

There are plenty of taxis available, either by hailing them in the street or calling the dispatch. Note that taxis cruise mainly the central areas of the city. Driving in Calgary is relatively stress-free. Many streets are one-way, and streets marked 'transit only' are for public transport vehicles only.

Parking downtown can be scarce and confusing, as the city uses an automated pay system that requires you to enter your zone and license plate number into a pay station. It is often easier to park in a private lot. There are numerous companies from which you can hire a car in Calgary.

Nightlife in Calgary

Calgary's nightlife is thriving, which is no surprise considering more than half of its population is under 30 years old. The most popular nightlife areas are in the city centre, including the lounges, pubs, and restaurants in the Mission district, focusing at the intersection of 4th Street and 17th Avenue. Stephen Avenue is bustling in the early evening as young professionals empty their offices downtown, and you'll find quite a few clubs, pubs, and live music venues there.

There are a number of live music venues, including the Ironwood Stage and Grill in 9th Avenue, which hosts country, blues, and folk bands, while there are establishments catering to the varied tastes of Mount Royal College's students.

Calgary's dance clubs are as varied as its live music, so you'll find offbeat places, which play everything from retro funk to breakbeat, alongside more mainstream entertainment venues. For those who enjoy live comedy, you can visit the Comedy Cave in MacLeod Trail, or the Laugh Shop Comedy Club at the Blackfoot Inn in Blackfoot Trail.

Dining in Calgary

Calgary's affluence has meant a restaurant boom that encompasses nearly every worldwide cuisine, so eating out in Calgary can include a range of experiences. The city's specialty is Alberta beef, generally acknowledged to be some of the best in the world. But expect to see elk or bison on the menu as well. There are a range of great international options as well, from sushi and Asian to French and Italian cuisine.

The best Calgary restaurants are generally located within easy distance of the city centre and are concentrated in three areas: the Eau Claire district on Prince's Island, the chic 4th Street and 17th Avenue Mission district, and the downtown area that includes Chinatown and the Stephen Avenue pedestrian mall.

All restaurants in Calgary are smoke-free, even outdoor dining areas. Nearly all restaurants will accept credit cards and Canadian cash, although some will take American dollars at their own discretion. The exchange rate is never in your favour, though. A service gratuity of 10 to 15 percent is expected for good service and is not included in the bill.

Joey Crowfoot — \$\$\$

Italian

Joey's offers a uniquely Calgary take on Italian/Asian fusion, with a selection of pizzas, pastas, steaks, and burgers. Its location is superb and makes for easy access. The atmosphere is always bustling, with both indoor seating and an outdoor patio. Joey's is open Sunday to Thursday from 11am to midnight, and Friday and Saturday from 11am to 1am.

50 Crowfoot Way NW, Calgary
Calgary, Canada

www.joeyrestaurants.com

1886 Buffalo Café — \$\$

Calgary's 1886 Buffalo Cafe specialises in one thing: breakfast. Locals know it as the place to go for hearty meals to start the day, including the hashbrowns, vegetarian chilli omelette, and breakfast burrito. It's housed in the former site of the Eau Claire and Bow River Lumber Company's offices, built in 1911, overlooking the trendy Eau Claire downtown district. 1886 is open weekdays from 6am to 3pm, and weekends from 7am to 3pm.

187 Barclay Parade SW
Calgary, Canada

www.1886buffalocafe.com

Vin Room — \$\$\$\$

The elegant and upmarket Vin Room is a restaurant where everything is designed to complement the wine, from the decor to the menu. The food is predominantly tapas, with fusion options ranging from meat and cheese platters to bison short ribs, fish tacos, and oysters.

Lunch entrees include choices like salads, pasta and steak. They have a number of interesting wines available, with small tasting options before you commit to a glass or bottle. The tables are close together and it gets crowded, so it's always a good idea to call ahead.

Vin Room is located in the chic Mission District. It is open Sunday through Wednesday from 3pm to 10pm, Thursday from 3pm to midnight and Friday and Saturday from 3pm to 1am.

2310 4th Street SW
Calgary, Canada

www.vinroom.com

Shopping in Calgary

Shopping in Calgary reflects the moneyed population that has grown wealthy with oil booms and big business. You'll find all the major luxury brands represented alongside most western franchises and chain stores at the numerous shopping centres and outlet malls.

The most popular Calgary souvenirs are cowboy hats and other Wild West paraphernalia, easily found at most shopping centres. You'll find more one of a kind items at the Eau Claire Festival Market on Barclay Parade, including fresh produce, independent boutiques, art galleries, and a variety of entertainment options like restaurants, movie theatres, and an arcade.

The Mission District also has eclectic and interesting boutiques and vintage stores, and is the best place to go for Calgary fashion. Nearly every shop in Calgary will accept major credit cards and Canadian money. Most stores will also accept US dollars, but at exorbitant exchange rates.

Climate in Calgary

Calgary experiences a humid continental climate, warm summers and cold winters, with temperatures often dropping below freezing. The mountains cause Calgary's climate to be rather dry, the little rainfall that does occur falls in summer (June to August).

Winters (December to February) are long and cold and occasionally relieved by a warm wind called a Chinook. Average daily temperatures in Calgary are 62°F (17°C) in summer and 20°F (-7°C) in winter. The weather in Calgary is highly changeable and daily predictions are often off the mark.

Sightseeing in Calgary

The bustling metropolis and vibrant culture is a treat, but sightseeing in Calgary is dominated by the natural wonders that surround the city. Calgary is the gateway to Alberta's many impressive landscapes, which include mountain lakes, rolling prairies, and icy glaciers.

If you do find yourself exploring the city, there are many museums and cultural sites in Calgary worth visiting, all located within easy distance of the city centre. The Glenbow Museum is Alberta's largest history museum, with nearly 30,000 artefacts from Canada's history. It has archives onsite, along with a cafe, shop, and library.

The Tsuu T'ina Museum looks more specifically at the history of the Sarcee tribe, complete with antique headdresses and a model tepee. The Heritage Park Historic Village takes a living look at Canada's history, with an antique midway, old-fashioned bakery and candy store, and authentic steam train among the attractions. Fort Calgary is another place to explore frontier life, with 40 acres of land set up to resemble life in 1875.

Prince's Island Park brings nature into the heart of the city, with fishing sites and a network of hiking and biking trails. The park also features the Eau Claire Market, with its array of funky boutiques, restaurants, theatres, and art galleries. The Olympic Park is also a popular spot for lovers of sports. Whatever visitors enjoy, there is something for everyone in Calgary.

Calgary Attractions

Glenbow Museum

Opening time: Tuesday to Saturday 9am-5pm; Sunday 12pm-5pm. Closed Monday.

Admission: \$16 adults, \$11 children, other concessions available. Free every first Thursday of the month between 5pm and 9pm.

The Glenbow Museum is Canada's largest museum, with more than 93,000 square feet (8,640 sq metres) of exhibition space, spread over three floors. It houses more than a million objects that fill up its 20 galleries and showcase the colourful history of Canada's West, with exhibits focusing on its First Nations to the arrival of European settlers. A special feature is the Blackfoot Gallery, which tells the story of the Nitsitapi people through interactive displays, artefacts and a circular narrative path.

There are also some 28,000 artworks dating from the 19th century to the present on display in the museum. Glenbow's library is a treasure trove of reference materials on western Canada, with the Glenbow Archives serving as a major research centre for historians, writers, students and the media.

Address: 130 9th Avenue SE

Telephone: (403) 268 4101

Website: www.glenbow.org

Calgary Zoo

Opening time: Daily 9am-5pm

Admission: \$34.95 adults, \$24.95 children, other concessions available.

Canada's second largest zoo is home to more than 1,000 animals from all over the world, as well as a variety of fish and insects in natural habitat enclosures. It also features a prehistoric park with 19 life-size animatronic dinosaurs on display. The botanical gardens include a 20,000 square foot (1,858 sq m) conservatory, butterfly garden and a special Rocky Mountains exhibit featuring many indigenous Alberta animals, including the endangered Whooping Crane. The zoo is situated close to the downtown area, on St George's Island, and is a wonderful treat for the whole family.

Address: 210 St. George's Drive North East

Telephone: (403) 232 9300

Website: www.calgaryzoo.com

Fort Calgary

Opening time: Daily 9am-5pm

Admission: \$12 adults, \$7 children, other concessions available.

This historical site chronicles Calgary's history between 1875 and the 1940s, allowing visitors to step back in time and explore the early days of the city through interactive exhibits, costumed interpreters, hands-on activities, guided tours and an entertaining audio-visual presentation. Fort Calgary is situated on the site of an original North West Mounted Police Fort and is designed to preserve the history of the founding, development and growth of the city. The 40-acre riverside park includes the reconstructed 1875 fort, 1888 barracks, the interpretive centre, and Deane House Historic Site and Restaurant.

Address: 750 - 9th Avenue SE

Telephone: (403) 290 1875

Website: www.fortcalgary.com

Columbia Icefields

Consisting of eight major glaciers, this massive field of ancient ice is situated near the town of Jasper in the middle of Jasper National Park. The icefield covers 125 square miles (325 sq km) and is estimated to be 1,270ft (385m) deep in places. The icefield feeds four of North America's major river systems: the Columbia, Fraser, Mackenzie and Saskatchewan Rivers, and its meltwaters flow into all three oceans. Tours of the glacier are offered on snowcoaches between April and October each year, and ice-walk tours are also offered by the Jasper Adventure Centre. The icefields are one of Alberta's natural marvels and a must-see for outdoor enthusiasts visiting the region.

Address: Jasper National Park

Website: www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/index.aspx

Moraine Lake

Located within Banff National Park and close to the popular resort towns of Lake Louise and Banff, Moraine is a spectacular glacially-fed lake. Its waters are a vivid turquoise colour due to rock flour, which are tiny particles of suspended sediment. On a clear day, the lake reflects the surrounding mountains in its mirror-smooth azure surface.

There's plenty to see and do in the snow-capped and pine-strewn Valley of the Ten Peaks, including an assortment of scenic hiking trails, kayaking facilities at the Lodge, and an onsite café serving wonderful food and refreshments.

Although not impossible, getting to Moraine can be difficult without a car. Visitors can take a bus to Banff station, and from there either walk the nine miles (14km) to the lake; rent a bicycle; take a taxi; or make use of the Park-run Vista shuttle service, which departs every 30 minutes from the Lake Louise campsite.

Address: 9 miles (about 14km) from Lake Louise, located within Banff National Park

Website: www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/banff/index.aspx

Heritage Park Historical Village

Opening time: Monday to Friday 10am-5pm, Closed Saturday and Sunday.

Admission: Varies according to season. \$26.50 for general admission. Other concessions available.

Heritage Park is a village of living history, comprising more than 180 exhibitions that attempt to show what life was like in Alberta in the 19th and 20th centuries. Set on 127 beautiful acres of parkland and located just 15 minutes from Calgary's central business district, Heritage Park makes for a worthwhile day trip, especially if you have kids in tow. Highlights include steam train rides and an impressive collection of vintage automobiles. Thousands of genuine historical artefacts have been used in the creation of the park, while other buildings and scenes have been faithfully recreated. Costumed interpreters educate and entertain visitors, bringing history to life.

Address: 1900 Heritage Drive Southwest

Telephone: (403) 268 8500

Website: www.heritagepark.ca

Canada Olympic Park

Canada Olympic Park was a major venue during the 1988 Winter Olympic Games and now hosts skiing and snowboarding programmes every winter. It also houses the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame and Museum, and is frequently used as a venue for festivals and events in Calgary. Known to locals as COP, it remains a chief tourist attraction for casual visitors and winter sports enthusiasts alike. The park is operated by WinSport Canada and is used throughout the year. During summer, it is used for sports such as mountain biking, and its obstacle courses and zip lines are also highly popular.

Address: 88 Canada Olympic Road Southwest

Telephone: (403) 247 5452

Website: www.winsportcanada.ca/cop

Calgary Tower

Opening time: Daily 9am-9pm

Admission: \$18 adults, \$9 children, other concessions available.

The city's most recognisable structure looming 626 feet (191m) above the city, Calgary Tower is a must-visit landmark. The glass-floored observation deck offers spectacular 360 degree views of the city below, and there's a revolving restaurant too. Tours of the city are offered by guides on the Observation Deck, allowing visitors to take in many of the city's major attractions from their vantage point in the sky. Calgary's Tourist Information Centre is located at the base of the tower, a useful stop for all visitors, and there are also gift shops selling Calgary souvenirs and the like.

Address: 101 9th Avenue Southwest

Telephone: (403) 266 7171

Website: www.calgarytower.com

Email Address: info@calgarytower.com

Calaway Park

Admission: \$40 general admission, other concessions apply

The kids will love visiting Calaway Park, western Canada's largest outdoor amusement park. It's the ideal destination for a fun-filled family outing, with thrilling rides and various other entertainment. The outdoor park has been in operation for more than three decades and is greatly enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. It closes during the frosty Alberta winters, but is open seven days a week during the warmer months. Check the calendar on the official website listed below for exact opening times and dates.

Address: 245033 Range Road 33

Telephone: (403) 240 3822

Website: www.calawaypark.com

Email Address: calaway@calawaypark.com

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump

Opening time: Daily 10am-5pm

Admission: \$15 adults, \$10 children. other concessions available

A buffalo jump is a ledge or cliff traditionally used to lure stampeding buffalo to their deaths. Head-Smashed-In is one of the oldest, largest and best preserved in the world and was used by the native people for about 6,000 years. Head-Smashed-In not only has a wonderfully felicitous name, but was also declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It proudly displays exhibitions detailing the life and history of the Blackfoot people, the original inhabitants of the Great Plains region of southern Alberta. It is now a remarkable archaeological site and well worth a visit for any traveller interested in Canadian history.

Address: 92 Township Road, Willow Creek

Telephone: (403) 553 2731

Website: www.head-smashed-in.com

Events in Calgary

Calgary Stampede

Friday July 03, 2020 to Sunday July 12, 2020 (3 - 12 July 2020)

Where:

For 10 exciting days each July, the Wild West is celebrated in Calgary when the city comes alive with a celebration of true western hospitality and rousing fun. The Calgary Stampede centres around a myriad of rodeo events that see top professional cowboys compete in bull riding, roping, bareback riding and steer wrestling. Meanwhile, the gathered crowds join in the festivities with pancake breakfasts, square dancing and cheering on a two-hour parade, along with ground-shaking chuckwagon races and a spectacular Grandstand Show extravaganza. The celebration is complemented by other attractions such as an authentic Indian village, recreated frontier town, gambling hall and dazzling fireworks display.

calgariystampede.com

Morningside Music Bridge International Music Festival

Monday July 06, 2020 to Friday July 31, 2020 (6 - 31 July 2020)

Where: Mount Royal University's Lincoln Park Campus, and other Calgary venues

Morningside Music Bridge is a month-long summer classical music programme, established in 1997 to promote interaction between talented Chinese and Canadian music students, and it now attracts students from all over the world. The students earn places in the scholarship programme through a competitive auditioning process, which culminates in concerts featuring both students and faculty that take place throughout July and early August in venues all over Calgary. Classical music enthusiasts will be delighted by the amount of quality recitals on offer.

<http://mmb.international/>

Calgary Folk Music Festival

Sunday July 25, 2021 to Wednesday July 28, 2021 (TBC 2021)

Where: Prince's Island Park

A well-respected music festival, the Calgary Folk Fest attracts about 50,000 music fans every year to Prince's Island Park. Featuring more than 60 local and international acts and spread across seven stages, the Calgary Folk Music Festival is considered to be a bit of a purist's festival, known for attentive and appreciative audiences.

<http://www.calgaryfolkfest.com>

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Parking: All parking lots are within walking distance of the terminal.

Edmonton

Alberta's bustling little capital is often overlooked in favour of its flashier neighbour, Calgary. Despite its million-plus inhabitants, Edmonton retains a somewhat small-town feel. Ironically for a city set in such stunning natural surroundings, Edmonton is perhaps best known for the West Edmonton Mall: the largest shopping centre in North America.

That said, Edmonton has other attractions such as the Alberta Railway Museum, the Telus World of Science, the Alberta Aviation Museum and the Royal Alberta Museum. It also contains Fort Edmonton Park, Canada's largest living history museum.

The city has a rich cultural scene, with the Francis Winspear Centre for Music hosting the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. The Old Strathcona is home to a number of theatre groups, while the Edmonton International Fringe Festival is an incredible celebration of the arts. The city is home to a number of other festivals, including K-Days, the Edmonton Folk Music Festival and the Canadian Finals Rodeo.

Although not the biggest, Edmonton still packs a hefty bunch. It's perfect for those who are partial to both a bit of nature and a bit of cultural delight.

Getting around in Edmonton

Getting around in Edmonton occasionally requires strategic planning. While the various neighbourhoods are relatively compact, getting from one to the other can be a time-consuming process. Public transportation is very good, with the Edmonton Transit System and the Edmonton Light Rail Transit servicing most of the city. Taxis are also available.

Climate in Edmonton

Edmonton has a fairly dry climate, with the hot summers and cold winters typical of Canada. Winter temperatures (December to February) average between 5°F (-15°C) and 21°F (-6°C) in January. Spring begins to warm up in late March, with rapid temperature increases into April. The summers (June to August) are warm and sunny, with average temperatures between 50°F (10°C) and 73°F (23°C), with rainstorms in July. Autumn is between September and November, with noticeably cooler temperatures.

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Getting to the city: Edmonton Skyshuttle provides convenient connections to major hotels and other destinations across the city. Edmonton Transit Service's Route 747 bus service connects passengers to the city's bus and LRT network. Numerous taxi and limousine service companies serve the airport. Other taxi companies may drop-off or pick-up passengers in the commercial taxi area if prior arrangements have been made.

Car rental: Car rental companies represented at the airport include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National.

Airport Taxis: Numerous taxi and limousine service companies serve the airport. Other taxi companies may drop-off or pick-up passengers in the commercial taxi area if prior arrangements have been made. Ride-share apps such as Uber are also available.

Facilities: Airport facilities include ATMs, currency exchange, a bank, shopping (including a duty-free shop), an information booth, child entertainment facilities, baggage storage, a chapel, WiFi, workstations, a bar, cafes, and restaurants.

Parking: Parking is available at the airport. There are free pick-up and drop-off zones. Parking options include valet parking, executive parking, easy parkade, and value parking.

Canadian Rocky Mountains

The Rocky Mountains of western North America stretch more than 3,000 miles (4,828km) from Mexico, through the United States and into Canada and Alaska. Dividing the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, the peaks of the Canadian Rockies tower over the plains, rising to an astonishing 11,975ft (3,650m).

The alpine towns sprinkled along the Rockies in the southwest of Alberta serve as unspoilt mountain playgrounds, where each season has its own unique beauty and selection of activities. National parks abound in this area, offering ample opportunities for a slew of mountain adventures.

The Rocky Mountains' main national parks in Alberta are Banff National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park and Jasper National Park. The Willmore Wilderness Park, just north of Jasper National Park, is also a glorious wilderness area. These beautiful, protected areas are home to some rare and endangered animals, such as woodland caribou, grizzly bears, wolverines and great grey owls.

The towns in the area, such as Banff and Jasper, also offer a vast number of tourist attractions to entertain and entrance visitors year round, with outdoor activities of all kinds designed to complement the natural attractions.

Climate in Canadian Rocky Mountains

The Canadian Rockies experience a highland climate, characterised by warm summer days with long hours of sunshine, and cold, crisp winters when snow covers the ground from November to March. The coldest months are December and January when temperatures can plummet to well below freezing, exacerbated by the wind chill factor. Hikers in the summer months should note that May and June are the wettest time of year, and that even in summer weather conditions can be changeable and unpredictable.

Sightseeing in Canadian Rocky Mountains

Tourism in southwestern Alberta revolves primarily around the national parks which showcase the glorious Rocky Mountains. Calgary is the gateway to the Rockies in Alberta, and generally the starting point for holidaymakers heading into the mountainous national parks. In fact, for many visitors, the first view of the mountains is earned by climbing to the Observation Deck of the Calgary Tower.

The most frequented wilderness areas are enclosed within Banff National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park, and Jasper National Park. Jasper National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, deep in the Rockies, where the main attraction is the Columbia Icefields, consisting of eight giant glaciers.

Lake Louise, a surreally turquoise lake trickling out of an ancient glacier in Banff National Park, is one of the must-see sights in the Rockies. There are even some natural hot springs in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, near Banff, which make a great excursion on a freezing winter's day. Waterton Lakes National Park combines with Montana's Glacier National Park to form UNESCO-listed Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, offering spectacular landscapes.

Popular activities in the Canadian Rockies include hiking, skiing, cross-country skiing, ice and rock climbing, dog-sledding, horse riding, paddling, and more. Visitors should note that the national parks have stringent rules about sports which damage the environment, and some activities are only allowed outside park boundaries.

Canadian Rocky Mountains Attractions

Jasper

Affectionately known as 'the little town in the big park', Jasper lies in the middle of Canada's largest mountain park, the Jasper National Park, and makes a delightful base from which to explore the surrounding lakes and mountains.

The town of just over 4,000 people lies 233 miles (373km) from Edmonton and is surrounded by pristine wilderness, including a necklace of green lakes and majestic waterfalls. There are also a few notable attractions in the town itself, including the Jasper-Yellowhead Historical Society Museum, which features displays of early Canadian explorers; the 165 foot (55m) deep Maligne River Canyon; the longest and highest reversible tramway in Canada that transports passengers up Whistlers Mountain; and the Den Wildlife Museum that houses more than 100 animal specimens displayed in their natural habitat.

Driving to Jasper is relatively simple. However, harsh winter weather can sometimes make the roads impassable so check the weather reports before you go. In the surrounding areas, there are many natural wonders to explore.

Using Jasper as a base gives you the opportunity to try dog sledding, snowmobiling, cat-skiing, cross-country skiing and ice climbing in the winter. Summer activities include white water rafting, hiking, horseback riding, camping, rock climbing, mountain biking and wildlife spotting.

Banff

The small resort town of Banff is a holiday destination situated in the spectacular and unspoilt Banff National Park, Canada's first national park and most popular tourist attraction. About an hour and a half's drive west of Calgary, the national park offers 2,564 square miles (6,641 sq km) of unparalleled mountain scenery in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, including glaciers, ice fields, jagged peaks, crystal clear lakes and raging rivers.

Holiday attractions in the town itself include the Banff Park Museum on Buffalo Street, which is the oldest natural history museum in western Canada and features a fantastic assortment of wildlife specimens, minerals and other artefacts. Not far away is the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, dedicated to the rich cultural history of the area with four art galleries, a heritage gallery and a research library.

The Cave and Basin National Historic Site, on Cave Avenue, tells the story of the discovery of the hot springs that led to the establishment of Canada's first national reserve in 1885. Visitors can also take a gondola ride to the top of Sulphur Mountain to enjoy the spectacular views from the observation deck, or soak in the hot mineral waters at the Upper Hot Springs on Mountain Avenue.

Winter is low season in Banff National Park, but the low temperatures hardly deter brave skiers and snowboarders who delight in the fresh powder. From steep couloirs to gentle cruising, the slopes have something for everyone, and the snow is some of the coldest, driest and most reliable anywhere in the world. And there's a lot of it, particularly in the Sunshine Village ski area. Lake Louise is the most extensive and popular ski resort in the Banff region. See our separate Lake Louise ski resort guide.

The staggering scenery and mountain wildlife, along with the warm and welcoming locals make Banff highly popular, regardless of the season.

Lake Louise

Canadian Rocky Mountains

Lake Louise is Canada's largest holiday ski resort area, covering the slopes of four mountain faces that surrounds it. Set in the heart of the magnificent Banff National Park on the Trans-Canada Highway, 35 miles (57km) west of Banff itself.

With plentiful natural snow and an extensive snowmaking system, skiing is guaranteed at Lake Louise from mid-November to mid-May, and it has the reputation of offering some of the best powder skiing in the world.

The pretty village nestling in the Rockies provides every amenity required by visitors, and a wide choice of cosy accommodation and dining options. Shuttle buses and an efficient system of interconnecting lifts provide easy access to the slopes.

Putting all this together with the spectacular scenery and pristine terrain, you have the recipe for a snowy wonderland. It's not surprising that Lake Louise has been dubbed a diamond in the wilderness and remains such a popular resort destination.

Alberta Attractions

Overview

Alberta is a treasure trove for outdoors enthusiasts, sports fanatics, and nature lovers, as well as a fascinating destination for those wanting to learn more about Native American culture. The cities of Calgary and Edmonton are modern, picturesque, and conveniently located for exploration of many of the stunning national parks which are Alberta's prime attractions.

Top Alberta attractions are the UNESCO-listed Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, a buffalo trap used by the Blackfoot people for thousands of years; Writing-on-Stone National Park, home to remarkable ancient rock art; and Lake Louise which is situated within Banff National Park, one of the most photogenic spots in Canada.

Favourites also include the town of Drumheller, northeast of Calgary, which is set in the evocative Alberta Badlands, and Dinosaur Provincial Park, also UNESCO-listed, that boasts a wealth of dinosaur fossils certain to excite adults and children alike.

For even more historical sites and natural beauty, the giant glaciers of the Columbia Icefields in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Jasper Provincial Park are a must. With so much to see and do in Alberta, visitors will not leave disappointed and will definitely want to return for more.

Glenbow Museum

Opening time: Tuesday to Saturday 9am-5pm; Sunday 12pm-5pm. Closed Monday.

Admission: \$16 adults, \$11 children, other concessions available. Free every first Thursday of the month between 5pm and 9pm.

The Glenbow Museum is Canada's largest museum, with more than 93,000 square feet (8,640 sq metres) of exhibition space, spread over three floors. It houses more than a million objects that fill up its 20 galleries and showcase the colourful history of Canada's West, with exhibits focusing on its First Nations to the arrival of European settlers. A special feature is the Blackfoot Gallery, which tells the story of the Nitsitapi people through interactive displays, artefacts and a circular narrative path.

There are also some 28,000 artworks dating from the 19th century to the present on display in the museum. Glenbow's library is a treasure trove of reference materials on western Canada, with the Glenbow Archives serving as a major research centre for historians, writers, students and the media.

Address: 130 9th Avenue SE

Telephone: (403) 268 4101

Website: www.glenbow.org

Calgary Zoo

Opening time: Daily 9am-5pm

Admission: \$34.95 adults, \$24.95 children, other concessions available.

Canada's second largest zoo is home to more than 1,000 animals from all over the world, as well as a variety of fish and insects in natural habitat enclosures. It also features a prehistoric park with 19 life-size animatronic dinosaurs on display. The botanical gardens include a 20,000 square foot (1,858 sq m) conservatory, butterfly garden and a special Rocky Mountains exhibit featuring many indigenous Alberta animals, including the endangered Whooping Crane. The zoo is situated close to the downtown area, on St George's Island, and is a wonderful treat for the whole family.

Address: 210 St. George's Drive North East

Telephone: (403) 232 9300

Website: www.calgaryzoo.com

Fort Calgary

Opening time: Daily 9am-5pm

Admission: \$12 adults, \$7 children, other concessions available.

This historical site chronicles Calgary's history between 1875 and the 1940s, allowing visitors to step back in time and explore the early days of the city through interactive exhibits, costumed interpreters, hands-on activities, guided tours and an entertaining audio-visual presentation. Fort Calgary is situated on the site of an original North West Mounted Police Fort and is designed to preserve the history of the founding, development and growth of the city. The 40-acre riverside park includes the reconstructed 1875 fort, 1888 barracks, the interpretive centre, and Deane House Historic Site and Restaurant.

Address: 750 - 9th Avenue SE

Telephone: (403) 290 1875

Website: www.fortcalgary.com

Columbia Icefields

Consisting of eight major glaciers, this massive field of ancient ice is situated near the town of Jasper in the middle of Jasper National Park. The icefield covers 125 square miles (325 sq km) and is estimated to be 1,270ft (385m) deep in places. The icefield feeds four of North America's major river systems: the Columbia, Fraser, Mackenzie and Saskatchewan Rivers, and its meltwaters flow into all three oceans. Tours of the glacier are offered on snowcoaches between April and October each year, and ice-walk tours are also offered by the Jasper Adventure Centre. The icefields are one of Alberta's natural marvels and a must-see for outdoor enthusiasts visiting the region.

Address: Jasper National Park

Website: www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/index.aspx

Jasper

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The town of just over 4,000 people lies 233 miles (373km) from Edmonton and is surrounded by pristine wilderness, including a necklace of green lakes and majestic waterfalls. There are also a few notable attractions in the town itself, including the Jasper-Yellowhead Historical Society Museum, which features displays of early Canadian explorers; the 165 foot (55m) deep Maligne River Canyon; the longest and highest reversible tramway in Canada that transports passengers up Whistlers Mountain; and the Den Wildlife Museum that houses more than 100 animal specimens displayed in their natural habitat.

Driving to Jasper is relatively simple. However, harsh winter weather can sometimes make the roads impassable so check the weather reports before you go. In the surrounding areas, there are many natural wonders to explore.

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Moraine Lake

Located within Banff National Park and close to the popular resort towns of Lake Louise and Banff, Moraine is a spectacular glacially-fed lake. Its waters are a vivid turquoise colour due to rock flour, which are tiny particles of suspended sediment. On a clear day, the lake reflects the surrounding mountains in its mirror-smooth azure surface.

There's plenty to see and do in the snow-capped and pine-strewn Valley of the Ten Peaks, including an assortment of scenic hiking trails, kayaking facilities at the Lodge, and an onsite café serving wonderful food and refreshments.

Although not impossible, getting to Moraine can be difficult without a car. Visitors can take a bus to Banff station, and from there either walk the nine miles (14km) to the lake; rent a bicycle; take a taxi; or make use of the Park-run Vista shuttle service, which departs every 30 minutes from the Lake Louise campsite.

Address: 9 miles (about 14km) from Lake Louise, located within Banff National Park

Website: www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/banff/index.aspx

Banff

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Heritage Park Historical Village

Opening time: Monday to Friday 10am-5pm, Closed Saturday and Sunday.

Admission: Varies according to season. \$26.50 for general admission. Other concessions available.

Heritage Park is a village of living history, comprising more than 180 exhibitions that attempt to show what life was like in Alberta in the 19th and 20th centuries. Set on 127 beautiful acres of parkland and located just 15 minutes from Calgary's central business district, Heritage Park makes for a worthwhile day trip, especially if you have kids in tow. Highlights include steam train rides and an impressive collection of vintage automobiles. Thousands of genuine historical artefacts have been used in the creation of the park, while other buildings and scenes have been faithfully recreated. Costumed interpreters educate and entertain visitors, bringing history to life.

Address: 1900 Heritage Drive Southwest

Telephone: (403) 268 8500

Website: www.heritagepark.ca

Canada Olympic Park

Canada Olympic Park was a major venue during the 1988 Winter Olympic Games and now hosts skiing and snowboarding programmes every winter. It also houses the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame and Museum, and is frequently used as a venue for festivals and events in Calgary. Known to locals as COP, it remains a chief tourist attraction for casual visitors and winter sports enthusiasts alike. The park is operated by WinSport Canada and is used throughout the year. During summer, it is used for sports such as mountain biking, and its obstacle courses and zip lines are also highly popular.

Address: 88 Canada Olympic Road Southwest

Telephone: (403) 247 5452

Website: www.winsportcanada.ca/cop

Calgary Tower

Opening time: Daily 9am-9pm

Admission: \$18 adults, \$9 children, other concessions available.

The city's most recognisable structure looming 626 feet (191m) above the city, Calgary Tower is a must-visit landmark. The glass-floored observation deck offers spectacular 360 degree views of the city below, and there's a revolving restaurant too. Tours of the city are offered by guides on the Observation Deck, allowing visitors to take in many of the city's major attractions from their vantage point in the sky. Calgary's Tourist Information Centre is located at the base of the tower, a useful stop for all visitors, and there are also gift shops selling Calgary souvenirs and the like.

Address: 101 9th Avenue Southwest

Telephone: (403) 266 7171

Website: www.calgarytower.com

Email Address: info@calgarytower.com

Calaway Park

Admission: \$40 general admission, other concessions apply

The kids will love visiting Calaway Park, western Canada's largest outdoor amusement park. It's the ideal destination for a fun-filled family outing, with thrilling rides and various other entertainment. The outdoor park has been in operation for more than three decades and is greatly enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. It closes during the frosty Alberta winters, but is open seven days a week during the warmer months. Check the calendar on the official website listed below for exact opening times and dates.

Address: 245033 Range Road 33

Telephone: (403) 240 3822

Website: www.calawaypark.com

Email Address: calaway@calawaypark.com

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump

Opening time: Daily 10am-5pm

Admission: \$15 adults, \$10 children. other concessions available

A buffalo jump is a ledge or cliff traditionally used to lure stampeding buffalo to their deaths. Head-Smashed-In is one of the oldest, largest and best preserved in the world and was used by the native people for about 6,000 years. Head-Smashed-In not only has a wonderfully felicitous name, but was also declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It proudly displays exhibitions detailing the life and history of the Blackfoot people, the original inhabitants of the Great Plains region of southern Alberta. It is now a remarkable archaeological site and well worth a visit for any traveller interested in Canadian history.

Address: 92 Township Road, Willow Creek

Telephone: (403) 553 2731

Website: www.head-smashed-in.com

Currency

The currency used is the Canadian dollar (CAD). Banks and bureaux de change will change cash, as will some hotels. Major credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs are widespread. US dollars are widely accepted.

Exchange rate for 1 CAD - Canadian Dollar

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| 0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar | 0.68 EUR Euro | 0.73 USD U.S. Dollar | 0.58 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling | 111.95 JPY Japanese Yen | 0.66 CHF Swiss Franc |
| 1.11 AUD Australian Dollar | 28.83 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia | 324.82 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge | 68,104.49 LBP Lebanese Pound | 3.55 LYD Libyan Dinar | 5.02 BOB Bolivian Boliviano |
| 0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee | 0.00 OMR Omani Rial | 0.00 QAR Qatari Rial | 0.99 SGD Singapore Dollar | 7.92 SEK Swedish Krona | 0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar |
| 0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar | 42.52 DOP Dominican Peso | 0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna | 12.41 MXN Mexican Peso | 446.74 XOF West African CFA Franc | 0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina |
| 0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar | 0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar | 0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira | 97.95 DZD Algerian Dinar | 0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat | 0.00 BWP Botswana Pula |
| 2.72 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol | 686.67 CLP Chilean Peso | 283.06 AMD Armenia Dram | 17.04 CZK Czech Koruna | 12.90 MDL Moldova Lei | 102.36 ISK Icelandic Krona |
| 9,206.75 UZS Uzbekistan Sum | 2.72 ILS Israeli New Sheqel | 0.52 JOD Jordanian Dinar | 0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar | 27.92 UYU Uruguayan Peso | 0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee |
| 0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba | 7.96 NOK Norwegian Krone | 2.95 PLN Polish Zloty | 2.74 SAR Saudi Riyal | 0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee | 26.92 THB Thai Baht |
| 2.68 AED U.A.E Dirham | 3.73 BRL Brazilian Real | 3.39 RON Romanian New Leu | 5.72 HKD Hong Kong Dollar | 446.74 XAF Central African CFA Franc | 18,589.76 VND Vietnamese Dong |
| 642.71 ARS Argentine Peso | 0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar | 0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal | 7.36 MAD Moroccan Dirham | 0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar | 0.73 PAB Panamanian Balboa |
| 1.24 AZN Azerbaijan Manat | 2,868.33 COP Colombian Peso | 64.70 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som | 264.88 HUF Hungarian Forint | 7.97 TJS Tajikistan Ruble | 11,761.39 IDR Indonesian Rupiah |
| 35.09 EGP Egyptian Pound | 994.29 KRW South Korean Won | 5,456.06 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní | 3.47 MYR Malaysian Ringgit | 371.94 CRC Costa Rican Colón | 1.22 NZD New Zealand Dollar |
| 203.32 PKR Pakistani Rupee | 66.87 RUB Russian Rouble | 13.54 ZAR South African Rand | 2.29 TND Tunisian Dinar | 0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar | 1.33 BGN Bulgarian Lev |
| 23.66 TRY Turkish Lira | 41.92 PHP Philippine Peso | 23.64 TWD New Taiwan Dollar | 852.33 NGN Nigerian Naira | 0.00 XPF CFP Franc | 0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi |
| 0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar | 0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder | 0.00 BND Brunei Dollar | 79.69 RSD Serbian Dinar | 5.30 CNY Chinese Yuan | 5.08 DKK Danish Krone |
| 2.55 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat | 61.04 INR Indian Rupee | | | | |