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Destination BC/Kari Medig

Canoeers exploring Whitton Lake

**EXPLORING
BC'S BACKYARD**

Follow the road wherever it takes you,
or choose one of these routes.

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WHERE THE WILDLIFE ROAM

The sheer abundance and diversity of
wildlife make for one of the greatest
outdoor shows on earth.

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CALL OF THE WILD

Our outdoor adventures are as limitless
as the sunsets, untouched wilderness
and vast blue skies.

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**MAP
36**

**ARTISTIC
EXPLORATIONS**

Come to our region,
where the arts and culture,
agritourism
and culinary delights thrive.

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THE LOCALS

People define our region with a rich
ancestral history and resilient ways.

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**THE GREAT BEAR
RAINFOREST**

This special place is home to
the world's largest contiguous tract of
unspoiled rainforest.

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SNOW DAYS

Here, rolling hills, backcountry lakes,
brilliant sunshine and deep-powder
snow beckon.

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Cover Photo: Nimpo Lake
Photo Credit: Michael Bednar
Design & Layout: Jill Schick

For local travel information, contact Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association:
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WELCOME TO OUR STORIES

Welcome to the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast. Over these pages, we proudly present stories that define our diverse region. Follow us on the road less travelled to our rugged routes, wild waterways, ancient rainforests and mountain trails.

In “BC’s Backyard” (p. 7), we provide an insider’s guide to some of BC’s most scenic routes, whether you’re travelling with the latest high-tech tenting gear, a luxury RV with all the comforts of home or by motorcycle.

In “Where the Wildlife Roam” (p. 19), we share the sheer abundance and diversity of the wildlife of our region. From zodiac tours of wild Pacific estuaries to 4x4 forays into a land of mountain goats, with bears, moose, elk, Orcas and countless other creatures, this region is like one big wildlife preserve, minus the fence.

“Call of the Wild” (p. 25) will acquaint you with the thrills and chills of the myriad outdoor adventures our region has to offer. Mountain biking, hiking, rafting, fishing, hunting, canoeing – you name it, it’s here for you to experience.

Turn to “Artistic Explorations” (p. 39) to learn about the culture of our region. Arts, cuisine and agritourism thrive here and are generously shared by those who are inspired by our landscapes.

“The Locals” (p. 45) introduces you to the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of our region, as well as the pioneers, explorers, gold hunters and ranchers who shape the history and stories of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast.

“The Great Bear Rainforest” (p. 53) narrates the story of this vast pristine wilderness, roughly the size of Ireland, where the mystical Spirit (Kermode) bear roams.

Finally, get outside with “Snow Days” (p. 59). Our snow is dry and deep, our skies clear and blue, and the activities are limitless. Choose from heli-skiing, snowshoeing, skiing and ice fishing, as well as countless other outdoor experiences.

We hope this guide inspires stories of your own. Our home. Yours to explore.



EXPLORING BC'S BACKYARD

**Follow the road wherever it takes you,
or choose one of these routes.**

Whether you prefer the latest high-tech tenting gear, a luxury RV with all the comforts of home or the freeing, breezy feel of a motorcycle, this region offers some of BC's most scenic and ecologically unique landscapes. Wherever you wander, you're sure to find experiences you'll remember for a lifetime.

Gold Rush Trail

For the explorer wanting to retrace history, there's no better route to take than the Gold Rush Trail. This historic route follows the path of gold seekers looking to find their fortune in the wilds of British Columbia. The trail begins in New Westminster, near Vancouver, and follows the mighty Fraser River through the Fraser Valley.

Before you head up the Fraser Canyon you will enter the small town of Hope. Hope's place at the confluence of the Fraser and Coquihalla rivers has made it a natural stopping point and meeting place for the Stó:lō (*STOH-lo*) First Nation for 10,000 years. While here, be sure to check out the 80-plus chainsaw carvings



Fraser River below Alexandra Bridge

Michael Bednar

downtown, visit the Christ Church National Historic Site or take in the historic Othello tunnels.

Continuing up the mighty Fraser Canyon, the next stop is the small town of Yale, which grew to an estimated 30,000 people during the 1858 gold rush. At that time, Yale was the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago. History buffs can explore the Yale Historic Site, which preserves local historic treasures and celebrates gold rush history in the area. Pan for gold at one of the few panning areas on the Fraser River, visit the Pioneer Cemetery or the Spirit Caves Trail, plan a day or multi-day rafting trip on the Fraser and, if you have time, stay the night at an original 1880s family home.

GOOD TO KNOW:

It's not a typo! Locals use the old-time spelling of the famous Cariboo Waggon Road.

After your arrival at Alexandra Bridge Provincial Park in the Fraser Canyon, take a short walk to the spectacular Fraser River. Originally constructed in 1863, the bridge you'll see here was part of the Cariboo Waggon Road that connected Fort Yale and the south to the Cariboo Gold Fields.

Next along the route is a visit to Hell's Gate — the deepest, most dangerous and fastest-moving section of the Fraser River. Simon Fraser, the first European to explore the region, described the gorge as “the gates of hell” after he and his men inched their way along its cliffs in 1808 using rope ladders made by their Indigenous guides. Today, Hell's Gate allows visitors to experience the exhilaration of crossing the Fraser Canyon in an airtram. Once you are on the other side, you can explore the stores, eat lunch, have an ice cream, learn about local history and marvel at the power of the mighty Fraser River.

From Hell's Gate, travel north along Highway 1 for about 10 minutes and you will arrive in Boston Bar. This town got its name from the large number of gold-seeking Americans from Boston, who local Indigenous people called the “Boston Men.” Directly across the Fraser River from Boston Bar is North Bend, which only became accessible by road in 1986 when a bridge was built to replace the aerial ferry. Boston Bar is the gateway to the Nahatlatch River Valley, Skuzzy Creek, Anderson Creek and North Bend. Here travellers can take West Side Road to explore the pastoral Nahatlatch River Valley, which features one of British Columbia's most exciting stretches of whitewater rafting. Don't miss out on experiencing Nlaka'pamux (*Ing-la-kap-ma*) culture at Tuckkwiowhum (*Tuck-we-ohm*) Heritage Site, located 5 km (3 mi) south of Boston Bar.



Tyler Cave

Floatplane on Spout Lake

Located at the confluence of the Fraser River and its largest tributary, the Thompson River, Lytton has a dry climate with sagebrush growing in the hills and grand mountain and river vistas. This area was originally known as “Kumsheen” or “Camchin” in the local Nlaka’pamux language, meaning “where the rivers meet,” and has been inhabited by the Nlaka’pamux people since time immemorial. Today Lytton is known as the “Whitewater Rafting Capital of Canada,” with several first-class rafting companies plying the local rapids.

Those seeking slower-paced activities opt for camping, fishing, geocaching and hiking closer to town. Stop in for a coffee and browse the beautiful, locally made handicrafts, check out the Chinese History Museum with the largest collection of historical Chinese artifacts in Canada then stop in at the Lytton Museum & Archives to learn all about the area’s gold rush history.

Goldpan Provincial Park, on the Thompson River, offers a tranquil stop to swim or fish, or if you’re feeling more adventurous, hike in to Murray Falls near Spences Bridge. The Indigenous people living in this part of Nlaka’pamux (Thompson) territory relied on the bounty in the Thompson River to sustain their communities. This area’s agricultural heritage continues to flourish with locally grown vegetables and fruits sold at stalls beside the highway, in town and at wayside shops.

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The quaint, historic town of Ashcroft is located in the stunning sagebrush-covered Thompson River Valley. If you are a history buff, visit the Ashcroft Museum, housed in the town's 1917 post office. Don't miss the Ashcroft Manor, a popular stopover for travellers heading north to the goldfields in the 1800s and later the district's first courthouse; it's now a teahouse, museum and art gallery.

Set in a dramatic desert landscape at the junction of Highways 1 and 97, Cache Creek is an ideal base for some of the best rock hounding, as well as canoeing, horseback riding, fishing and hiking through dry grasslands. Dip your toes in the Thompson River at Juniper Beach Provincial Park, then learn how prospectors and pioneers lived with a visit to nearby Historic Hat Creek. Try geocaching with

the Gold Country GeoTourism program or spend a sunny afternoon at a farm market. Indulge in fresh-baked goodies, try a quick meal of a sandwich from the bakery and buy locally grown produce.

While in Clinton, visit the local museum, built in 1892 from hand-made bricks, or browse the many antique stores. Chasm Provincial Park (commonly referred to as the "mini-Grand Canyon") is located just north of Clinton. Rich shades of red, brown, yellow and purple are on display along the canyon walls, a result of successive lava flows over the past 10 million years. There are also wildlife viewing opportunities here — bighorn sheep, moose and mule deer are often spotted.

You'll find plenty of places to camp along the way. Excellent facilities are available at Green Lake, northeast of 70 Mile House, where crystal-clear waters are perfect for swimming and water sports. Stay in 100 Mile House and explore the 8-ha (19-ac) 100 Mile Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary to view gulls, swans, ducks and blackbirds or see an original Barnard Express BX Stage Coach. Stroll through Centennial Park, visit Bridge Creek Falls or view the Cariboo Mountains from the Mount Begbie Lookout Tower, 20 minutes south of town. Then stop by the 100 Mile House Visitor Centre to see the world's largest pair of cross-country skis.

INSIDER TIP:

You can also head north from Lytton on Hwy 12 to Lillooet, Mile "0" of the historic Cariboo Waggon Road. Have your photo taken at the Mile "0" cairn on Main Street, then pause at the Miyazaki Heritage House, built by one of Lillooet's first settlers. From here, take Highway 99 towards Clinton and visit Marble Canyon Provincial Park. This beautiful canyon features spectacular limestone cliffs.

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Michael Bednar

108 Mile Heritage Site

Next up is 108 Mile Ranch. This unique attraction consists of 12 historic buildings, including an original 1908 Clydesdale barn (the largest of its kind remaining in Canada), the 105 Mile roadhouse, the 108 Mile telegraph office, a hotel and a store. Tour the buildings and see how pioneers lived during the gold rush. For an added thrill (or chill?), take the nighttime ghost tour and explore the paranormal; tours take place after dark, but only a few times per month, so be sure to check in advance.

Lac La Hache is often referred to as the “Longest Town in the Cariboo,” reflecting how its resorts, ranches, restaurants and vacation homes are scattered along the lake’s 19-km (12-mi) shoreline. Little wonder it is one of the most popular lakes along Highway 97, particularly with water skiers, anglers and power boaters.

INSIDER TIP:

From Williams Lake, head northeast to Horsefly, where outdoor adventurers flock to enjoy the myriad activities of the area and then to Likely to see the largest man-made bullion pit in North America. Or stop at the nearby Quesnelle Forks Restoration Site and Ghost Town to explore a historic graveyard and the remains of Canada’s oldest Chinese tong house.

Continuing north you will enter Williams Lake, the hub of the Central Cariboo, where there’s plenty to see and do. Stop in at the Williams Lake Visitor Centre to view an amazing compilation of artifacts; hike the popular River Valley Trail that leads from town to a quiet forest; or visit the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin for a history of ranching and rodeo in the area. Williams Lake is also the home of BC’s Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Drive north along Highway 97 to Quesnel, the “Gold Pan City,” and home of the world’s largest gold pan. Visit the Quesnel and District Museum and Archives to check out Mandy, the famous haunted doll, or stroll through the Antique Machinery Park.

Head east on Highway 26 to Wells, where architectural landmarks sport rainbow colours in a nod to the town’s vibrant arts scene. Island Mountain Arts, a celebrated art school, offers classes in the visual, literary and musical performing arts while the popular ArtsWells Festival of All Things Art (held the first weekend in August) features more than 100 musical and dance performances.

Further along Highway 26 is Barkerville Historic Town & Park, the final destination on the Cariboo Wagon Road. Barkerville is the largest historic site in BC, home to more





Destination BC/Walter Norman/istock

Bella Coola Harbour

INSIDER TIP:

Check out Bowron Lakes Provincial Park, located east of Barkerville. Situated on the western slopes of the Cariboo Mountain Range, these lakes are world-renowned for their canoe circuit – a chain of lakes, waterways and connecting portages covering 116 km (72 mi).

Campsites here offer dramatic views of the Cariboo Mountains, and canoe and kayak rentals are available to tackle the canoe circuits. Year-round floatplane fly-in adventures are also offered, as are guided winter backcountry experiences on the Bowron's frozen lakes.

communities, old-fashioned general stores and panoramic vistas, the road stretches 456 km (283 mi) without a single traffic light.

A wide array of wildlife call this beautiful, remote area home. Watch for populations of rare white pelicans, trumpeter swans, long-billed curlews, bears, lynx, moose, caribou, wolves, Canada's largest numbers of bighorn sheep and rare herds of wild horses.

Begin this spectacular route in Williams Lake, ascending via a series of steep switchbacks to the Chilcotin Plateau. Here thousands of cattle roam in dry native grasslands and glaciers descend to azure blue lakes. The rolling hills and terraces of the Chilcotin grasslands have supported livestock grazing for more than 130 years. They are also home to an estimated 40% of BC's at-risk wildlife, rare plant species and ecologically significant, threatened habitats. Towering over these ice-carved plateaus and valleys is Mount Waddington at 4,016 m (13,176 ft), the highest peak to lie entirely within British Columbia. Three major river systems, the Homathko, Klinaklini and Dean, run westward through the rugged Coast Mountains to the ocean.

than 125 heritage buildings. Tour the town in a stagecoach, witness authentic gold rush theatre or try your hand at panning for gold. Don't miss this unique living history site.

The Chilcotin Highway

Scenic Highway 20 cuts a lonely line through big-sky country, from Williams Lake across the Chilcotin Plateau all the way to Bella Coola on the West Coast. Dotted with small

Many communities along Highway 20 were initially supply centres, including Nimpo Lake, Anahim Lake, Tatla Lake and Alexis Creek. Nimpo and Anahim Lakes in the West Chilcotin are filled with rainbow trout and offer flight-seeing tours to stunning Hunlen Falls, the Monarch Icefields and the Rainbow Mountains. The Puntzi Lake area offers great camping and fishing for kokanee.

Gravel roads, some well maintained and others a bit rough, intermittently intersect the highway and lead to spectacular backcountry areas. The Tatlayoko Road, just east of Tatla Lake is definitely worth exploring. This 80-km (50-mi) route to the Potato Mountain Range passes the northern end of Chilko Lake Provincial Park and its numerous high elevation lakes. Here, ice caves and fossils offer evidence of an ancient seabed and great hiking trails crisscross the countryside.

West of Anahim Lake, at the heart of Nuxalk and Carrier First Nation territories, is Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, a rugged, vast, preserve boasting four vegetation zones, two vehicle access sites, and remote wilderness camping. Tweedsmuir is home to one of North America's highest waterfalls, Hunlen Falls, plunging 253 m (850 ft) over a sheer rock face. There is no road to Hunlen Falls, but flight-seeing tours can be arranged from Nimpo Lake. Tweedsmuir is also the home of the Rainbow Range, a volcano range where the unique

minerals give the soil its array of colours and make it a photographer's dream come true.

Now the road becomes even more exciting (some may consider it hair-raising!). This section, known as the "Freedom Highway," was named for the determined locals who built the road from Anahim Lake to Bella Coola on the Pacific coast. (Note: This road is mostly paved, but there is also a well-maintained gravel section, which is suitable for all vehicles.) This part of the highway offers exhilarating hairpin turns and steep descents, as you drop from the plateau's elevation of 1,524 m (5,000 ft) to sea level.

Along the Great Bear Rainforest's 15,000 km (9,320 mi) of pristine shoreline, ecological preserves and conservancies encompass no less than six marine parks. At Hagensborg, in the Bella Coola Valley, a nature-conservancy trail is maintained for RV guests, ensuring that the valley's terrain is accessible to explorers of all ages and physical abilities.

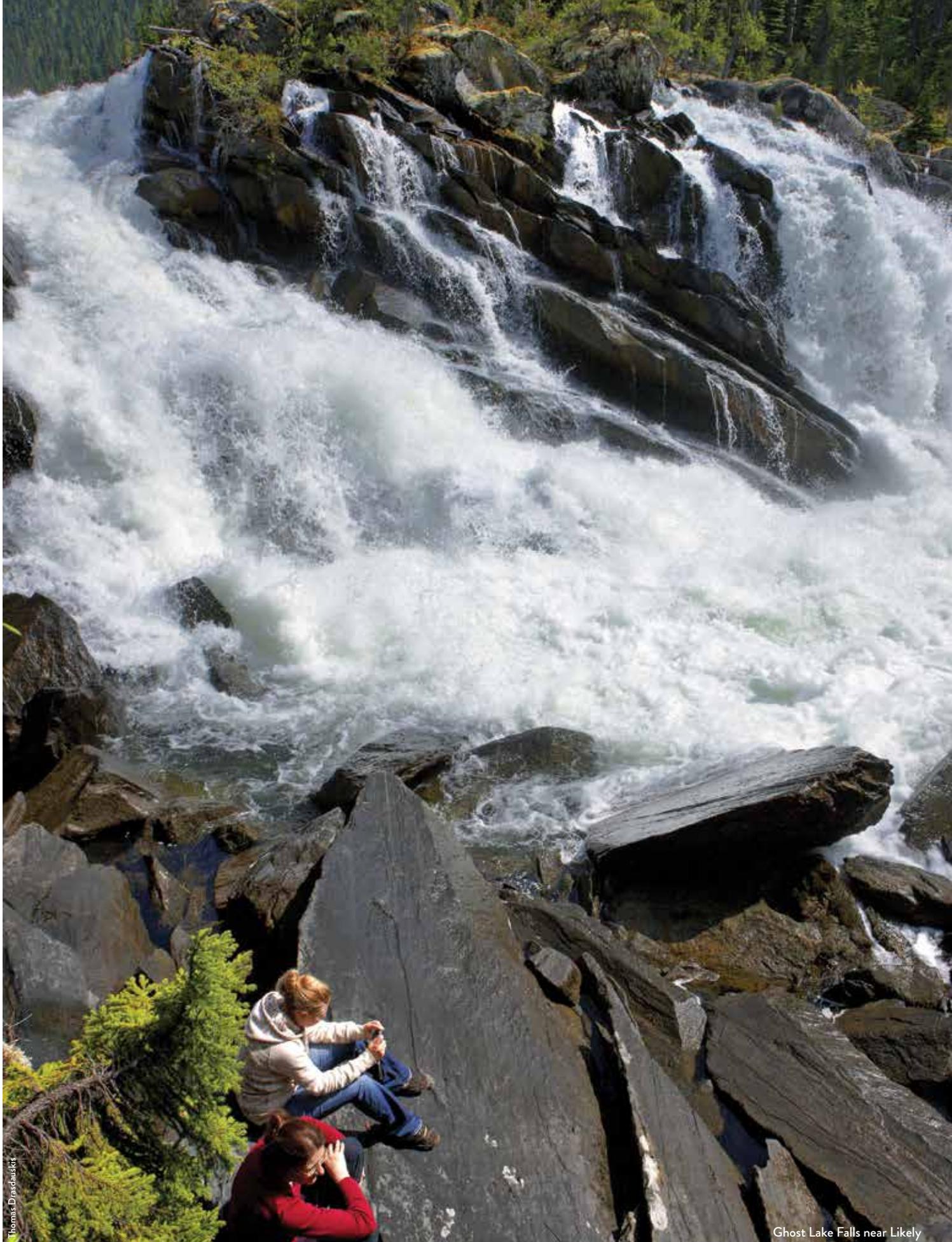
Complete your journey on BC Ferries' new Northern Sea Wolf from Bella Coola to Port Hardy. As you ferry south, keep on the lookout to see whales blowing up spray or sea lions sunning themselves on the small islets and along the rocky shorelines. Reservations are always required on this route; contact BC Ferries.

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Thomas D'Agostino

Ghost Lake Falls near Likely

Two-Wheel Touring

There is simply no better way to enjoy the endless vistas of the region than from a touring motorcycle. The sights and scents of the road, the exhilarating feel of the wind and the clarity of the sky are so much more immediate as you motor through the countryside. The views are awe-inspiring, and as an added bonus, many roads offer pullouts where you can pause and take it all in.

Dramatic scenery takes centre stage on Highway 1, where the cliff-hugging road twists through the Fraser Canyon, past sheer rock walls, and along perilous ledges winding above the Fraser River. Highway 24 (the "Fishing Highway") bisects a rustic tableau of old homesteads, meadows and wooden fences. This roadway provides access to more than 100 superb fishing lakes and a host of guest ranches and lakeside resorts, where you can relax after a long day on the blacktop. Highway 26 in the North Cariboo runs a tight-turning course to Barkerville as it winds past a restored gold rush roadhouse and the historical curiosities of Mexican Hill, Robbers' Roost, Blessing's Grave and Devil's Canyon.

Bikers will also revel in this region's quiet roads. Once off the main arteries, the lanes empty out and there are few RVs or trucks to slow you down. Even sweeter, the roads curl as they cut through the wilderness. In fact, in many places you are more likely to see wildlife – bears, deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, caribou – than vehicles.

Dual sport enthusiasts also delight in the extensive network of backcountry gravel roads that lead to remote lakes, glistening waterfalls and brooding mountain peaks. There is little vehicle traffic on these rib-rattling roads, but plenty of hairpin turns, scenic climbs, and time for peaceful reverie. Wherever you choose to ride you will experience unusual sights and sounds, such as sharing a river crossing with cowboys and nickering horses on the Big Bar reaction ferry.



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Take a sweet DS (dual sport) ride.** The gravel surface “Hurley River Road” connects Gold Bridge in the Bridge River Valley to Pemberton. Usually open seasonally, from June to October, it’s a dual sport ride through the wild you will never forget. Complete this circle tour along the gravel surfaced Highway 40 to Lillooet.
- **Stop and smell the sage.** Highway 12 is a twisty, asphalt treasure. This low-traffic route connects the Trans-Canada Highway 1 at Lytton with Lillooet and Highway 99. Warm air and the scent of sage accent this semi-arid desert ride.
- **Cool down at Lac la Hache,** which offers provincial and private campsites in a superb setting. Perfect for swimming and boating – and for walking an interpretive trail featuring a section of the historic Cariboo Waggon Road.
- **Park yourself on the shores of Anahim Lake** in the Chilcotin, and then unpack your fishing rods . The local trout answer any call.



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Imagine this: zodiac tours of wild Pacific estuaries, birding in a rare grassland ecosystem, snorkeling with salmon, 4x4 tours in a land of mountain goats plus backcountry pack-horse treks and canoe safaris. Then realize that this is just scratching the surface of what's available here. From Cariboo mountain goats to Orcas, Chilcotin caribou to Fraser Canyon bighorn sheep, our region is like a wildlife preserve without fences.

BC is rated one of the planet's top three grizzly viewing destinations, with significant grizzly populations native to the Central Coast, the Chilcotin Mountains and the northeastern Cariboo plateau. Certified bear experts lead tours up rugged fjords and inlets and through grassy estuaries and riverbanks, the natural habitat of grizzly (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) and black bears (*Ursus americanus*), while detailing the bears' social hierarchy and body language. Viewing options range from roadside sightings and alpine excursions to fully guided single- and multi-day river drift trips in the Bella Coola valley to spy on grizzlies dining on salmon.

Moose browsing near Wells



Michael Bednar

Fox soaking up the sun near Deka Lake

The Great Bear Rainforest, located on BC's central coast, is a vast area of pristine wilderness about the size of Ireland. Encompassing a quarter of the world's coastal temperate rainforest, it is home to a diverse collection of wildlife, including salmon, multiple bird varieties, black-tailed deer, grey wolf, grizzly bear and black bear. It is also the only place in the world where the legendary white Kermode (*Ursus americanus kermodei*), or Spirit bear, can be found. Stay at an Indigenous-owned and operated lodge for exclusive access to viewing areas and cultural sites.

Our region's eco-tour guides, outfitters and naturalists ensure that all of our visitors have a memorable experience, with minimal risk to humans, wildlife or habitat. These highly experienced, certified guides also provide expertise on where and when to find specific species, as well as guidance on a broad range of accommodation and guiding options.

Along the coast of the Great Bear Rainforest, wildlife safaris feature luxurious waterfront lodges, where one can spot eagles, wolves, dolphins and whales. Local biologists lead eco-raft adventures on the Bella Coola and Atnarko rivers, where songbirds congregate and otter, mink, fox and deer forage. Mule trekking is another popular low-impact option for exploring the vast alpine game trails blazed by caribou, mountain goats and wolves.

In the Chilcotin, the wild and remote Yohetta Wilderness area not only shelters mountain goats, bighorn sheep, bobcats and wolverines but also one of the last remaining

wild horse herds in Canada. The southern Cariboo around Lillooet is desert country. Etched by the wind, scorched by the sun, this is a land of rattlesnakes and prairie dogs, where eagles soar in search of elusive prey.

Birdwatching

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region is also the perfect spot to take your binoculars and go in search of incredible birds, many rare. At Bowron Lake Provincial Park, you can view more than 20 species of waterfowl between late April and mid-September. The park is also notable for its large songbird population, including the western wood-pewee, Hammond's flycatcher and Eastern kingbird.

The wetlands near 100 Mile House are also a birdwatcher's paradise. Visitors can expect to catch a glimpse of yellow-headed and red-winged blackbirds, as well as sandpipers, swallows, grebes and ducks. Williams Lake is a fantastic spot for wildlife viewing, and there's no better place to see flora and fauna than the Scout Island Nature Centre. The centre, which encompasses 2.5 km (1.5 mi) of trails along a lake and marsh, promises the opportunity to spot foxes, beavers and turtles. Hundreds of species of birds, including osprey, riparian songbirds, and American white pelicans. Scout Island, an easy walk from downtown, is dog and wheelchair friendly and offers community programs year-round, though birdwatching is at its best during spring and fall.

Over 250 species of birds make their home in the Cariboo Mountains. Take a deep dive into birding with a customized



Kent Bernadet

Kayakers spying a black bear in Bute Inlet



Thomas Drasdauskis

A grouse strutting his stuff near Wells

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Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is also a top-notch place to view birds, including spruce grouse, rainforest birds and white-tailed ptarmigans. And Anahim Lake, near Nimpo Lake, offers opportunities to sight white pelicans, trumpeter swans, waterfowl, ruffed grouse, flickers, western tanager and bald eagles.

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David Jacobson

Momma grizzly and her two cubs on Chilko Lake

HIGHLIGHTS

- Operators offer an array of experiences in search of the rare white Kermode, or Spirit bear, including immersive eco-tours with comfortable lodge accommodations.
- The Itcha-Ilgachuz mountain caribou in the west Chilcotin are the most southern herd in North America. Residing in the peaks north of Anahim Lake, this unique herd is said to trace their genetics back to the caribou of the glacier retreats.
- Kayak the Hakai Luxvbalis Conservancy, BC's largest marine park, and a 123,000-hectare (304,000-acre) expanse of lagoons and reversing tidal rapids that is teeming with marine life.
- More interested in birding? Break out the binoculars at the Bella Coola Estuary and the Chilcotin's Chilanko Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

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CALL OF THE WILD

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Nature makes herself accessible to all who visit our region. Adventure seekers will find adrenaline-pumping activities galore, like mountain biking, whitewater rafting, ice climbing, heli-skiing and climbing. But simpler pursuits, from hiking, canoeing and fishing to hunting, camping and kayaking, also beckon visitors into our beautiful natural world.

Hiking

Our region is a delight for hikers and ramblers. Lillooet is home base for many scenic hiking trails that feature historic connections to the gold rush era, and Lytton's Stein Valley is an iconic destination for day, weekend or week-long treks. Amateur geologists use topographic quadrangle maps in the Marble Range near Clinton, an area noted for limestone karsts, wooded groves and alpine ridges. Trails from 108 Mile Ranch meander past bays and lagoons filled with waterfowl. Canim Lake offers three majestic waterfalls, and Whale Lake boasts good fishing at the end of a 4-km (2.5-mi) hiking trail.

Family-friendly hikes include Quesnel's delightful Riverfront Trail. The Mount Agnes Trail network near Barkerville follows the original Cariboo Waggon Road to

wildflower-strewn alpine meadows below Summit Rock. In the Chilcotin, the 12-km (7.5-mi) Tchaikazan-Yohetta Trail connects the Tchaikazan and Yohetta valleys via Spectrum Pass and picture-perfect Dorothy Lake. And Williams Lake's Esler Bluffs boasts 44 routes, offering hikes for any ability and fitness level.

Popular heli-assisted hikes and climbs can also be arranged by local operators. Mountaineers come from around the world to tackle the 3,000-m (9,842-ft) peaks of the Coast Range, including 4,016-m (13,176-ft) Mount Waddington, BC's highest peak.

No fewer than 18 wheelchair-accessible trails form the Cariboo's Low Mobility Trail Network. The Stanley Cemetery Low Mobility trail provides access to the historic graveyard which is the final resting spot of many pioneers and Chinese immigrants from the gold rush era. The Interlakes Pioneer Heritage Accessible Trail ventures past wetlands and through forest, while the 2.2-km (1.4-mi) Horsefly Accessible Trail meanders along the Horsefly river, offering views of the salmon spawning channel and the beautiful landscape.

Mountain Biking

Many members of the global mountain biking community consider this region the unofficial mountain biking capital

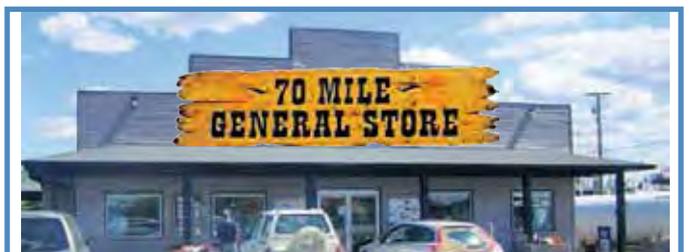
of Canada, with unlimited riding for both leisure bikers and adventure-seeking free riders. For example, Red Bull's 2012 feature film, *Where the Trail Ends*, which showcases the world's top free-rides, includes the canyon walls of the Fraser and Chilcotin rivers. The terrain and quality trail systems offer distinct experiences in river valleys, rugged canyons, mountain peaks, logging roads, steeps, ramps and single-track ridges. With such a vast variety of rides from which to choose, it's possible to spend an entire summer here without setting a wheel in the same place twice.

Quesnel biking buffs call Pins route a "flowy" ride, with amazing views of Baker Creek and the hoodoos that dot the valley floor. Quesnel Adventure Skills Bike Park includes a freestyle section, pump track, kid's area and features that challenge riders of all skill levels. The Wells-Barkerville area also offers some of the most extraordinary trails in BC, from gentle boardwalk trails through quiet wetlands to day-long mountain expeditions in stunning alpine terrain.

Bike magazine labelled Williams Lake North America's "Shangri-La of mountain biking." More than 200 tracks and trails around the city offer riders their choice of technical loops; don't miss Aflo, one of the most popular trails due to its awesome, banked turns. The city's downtown Boitano Bike Park covers more than four ha (10 ac) and is the largest



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of its kind in BC's Interior, with six major jump lines, flow trails, log work, a pump track and drop zone.

The 100 Mile House area has hundreds of kilometres of marked and unmarked backcountry trails crisscrossing the plateau, with trails accessible around 108 Mile Ranch and downtown. On the 99 Mile trail network, riders need not stray from the trails (also not recommended!) for amazing rides. This area has challenges that appeal to all skill levels and age groups.

In the South Chilcotin, Spruce Lake offers epic grassland riding through alpine and sub-alpine meadows, skirting spectacular freshwater lakes. The classic 26-km (16-mi) single-track Gun Creek route gains elevation through a conifer forest mixed with aspen and cottonwood. Also popular are the South Tyaughton Lake's 28-km (1-mi) Taylor-Pearson loop and the 44-km (27-mi) High Trail Loop into Windy Pass. Adventurous backcountry mountain-bikers can also opt for float plane and helicopter entries or packhorse-assisted and guided tours.

In the Great Bear Rainforest along the central coast the Snooka Trail System sports leisurely riding through lush rainforest. Awesome alpine views reward those who reach

the network's Purgatory Lookout. A series of trails between Bella Coola and Hagensborg offer various levels of difficulty. The East Loop Trail is an easy-grade circle route of 5.5 km (3 mi), with only a 50-m (164-ft) elevation gain; the West Trail is more challenging, with an elevation gain of 500 m (1,640 ft) over this 3.8-km (2.4-mi) one-way trek. This system of trails also links to other wilderness routes that lead deeper into the Bella Coola Valley backcountry.

Climbers

Esler Bluffs, near William's Lake, is generating serious excitement with the rope-and-rack set thanks to its heart-pumping routes, bouldering and single-pitch climbs ranging in difficulty from "no sweat" (5.7) to "sweat and nothing but" (5.11). Bella Coola boasts such classics as the nine-pitch Airport Wall (5.9-10+).

Ice climbers seek out the frozen Crown Lake Falls at Marble Canyon Provincial Park, where popular routes include Car Wrecker Gully and the spectacular five-pitch Tokkum Pole. Ice climbing adventures are also common west of Lillooet along the D'Arcy-Anderson Lake Road, which stretches 33 km (21 mi) along the west side of Anderson Lake from Seton Portage. All this to say, no need to put away the cleats when winter comes.



Michael Bednar

Fly-fishing near Likely

Fishing and Hunting

Fishing and hunting are more than occasional experiences here. They are a way of life and an important part of our culture. Imagine fishing a new lake or a new spot along the central coast every day for the rest of your life. Here you can: the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast boasts more than 8,000 lakes and 17,000 km (10,563 mi) of rivers and streams famous for rod-bending rainbow trout, cunning cutthroat and steel-hearted steelhead.

The nutrient-rich waters of the rugged Pacific coast yield succulent salmon, enormous halibut, prawns, buckets of fresh-and-lively Dungeness crab and several varieties of shrimp. Whether staying at a remote resort, a boutique property or a luxury offshore ocean floating camp, travellers are just a few minutes away from exceptional angling waters.

The Cariboo's unlimited expanse of rivers and lakes also includes a stretch of road from Little Fort, at the junction of Highways 24 and 5, to 93 Mile House, at the western end of Highway 24, a route enthusiastically referred to in angling circles as "The Fishing Highway." Spring-fed Sheridan Lake is stocked and is famous for its rainbow trout. Bridge Lake is close by, with bays and islands and crystal-clear waters teeming with rainbow and lake trout (char), kokanee and burbot. With 100-plus lakes typically within an hour's drive, the Interlakes area really is a fishing paradise.

Meanwhile, fly-fishing enthusiasts head to jewel-like Dragon Lake near Quesnel, where cattails and bulrushes line the banks of the lake filled with trophy sized trout. In the Chilcotin, Charlotte Lake, at the foothills of the spectacular Coast Mountains, is renowned for its trophy rainbow trout. Fly fishing is king at nearby Nimpo Lake, where charter air services offer many fly-in options to lodges and remote fishing camps.

Then there's the legendary Blackwater River, renowned for its gentle, canoe-friendly grade and numerous insect hatches feeding populations of trout, whitefish and squawfish. Rainbow trout and Dolly Varden churn up the cerulean-blue waters of the Chilko River where it leads out of massive Chilko Lake; it is as pretty as it is productive. Locals know to concentrate on the creek mouths where trout gather for their evening meal. Puntzi Lake is also a popular, easily accessible lake that provides fishing for the whole family.

The Coast region is crisscrossed by lakes and streams, though it is the saltwater that brings travellers and nature lovers to this ecologically diverse part of the world. Here, the salmon rules, and numerous lodges and camps, from budget to luxury high-end, cater to an international clientele of fly-in customers dreaming of catching "the big one." These fishing expeditions often begin in the town of Bella Coola or Bella Bella and venture out to the many inlets and islands.



Chris Harris

Pack trip in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

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It's in our nature

Though it may look like an obscure stretch of shoreline on a map of BC, the Great Bear Rainforest boasts names that fishing enthusiasts from around the world speak of with reverence: Rivers Inlet and Hakai Pass, where millions of salmon make first landfall after battling northern Pacific currents in search of their natal streams. Along the way, these salmon pass some of the most famous fishing holes on the coast, including Odlum Point, the Gap and Barney Point, where gentle back eddies provide rest and feeding areas for salmon and outstanding fishing opportunities for anglers and Orcas alike.

Steelhead hunters are well rewarded by a pilgrimage to the Dean River, better known as “steelhead central.” Fishing is too tame a word to describe the landing of these pugnacious sea-run fish. Some outfitters on the river provide a base camp for exciting expeditions, known to be gloriously full of this protected fish (and mercifully free of bugs). Both anglers and recreationists will also find that Big Stick, Clearwater and One Eye lakes offer excellent, pristine wilderness canoeing and fishing.

During hunting seasons, trek into the wilderness with the aid of experienced guides to harvest mule deer, moose, California bighorn sheep, mountain goat, black bear, cougar, lynx, bobcat, wolf or coyote. Here, certified guides and

outfitters are as knowledgeable about wildlife habitats and conservation as they are about big game tracking and bear-attack prevention. Some local guides are Indigenous, and all have an intimate relationship with the landscape and its wildlife. Wilderness skills and knowledge of local species and habitat are based on an understanding of the natural world and represent a special opportunity for visitors to experience the region and its wildlife in profound ways. Throughout the region, services and accommodations range from full service, luxury four-season lodges, to rough-and-ready backcountry camps that cater to outdoor adventurers yearning for genuine wilderness hunting and fishing experiences.

Outfitters in the region provide a range of hunting excursions, depending on the game species, terrain and season. Catering to the abilities of every level, outfitters offer a variety of accommodation packages and limit group sizes. Many family operations are also multi-generational, providing rare insights not only about the wildlife but also about pioneers, history, ranching, culture, cuisine and more. Hearty meals cooked in camp kitchens or over the open fire offer warm comfort at days end.

No matter your choice, this land without limits offers the landscape, wildlife and expertise for unforgettable fishing and hunting experiences.

pp. Mark Gribbon

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Michael Bednar

Thrilling whitewater rafting in the Fraser Canyon

Whitewater Rafting

Rafting on the Fraser River and its tributaries (the Thompson, Chilcotin, Cariboo and Nahatlatch) is a rite of passage for our residents and visitors. Experience the continuous rapids of the jade-green Nahatlatch, which descends via a chain of lakes into the Fraser River north of Boston Bar, with 37 Class 3, 4 and 4+ rapids over a 12-km (7.5-mi) stretch. Cool off between rapids on the crystal-clear Thompson River in the 36-km (22-mi) stretch between Spences Bridge and Lytton, where you'll encounter 18 major rapids of all classes, or hold on while descending through Hell's Gate on the mighty Fraser. Situated at the confluence of the Fraser and Thompson rivers, Lytton has truly earned the title of "Whitewater Rafting Capital of Canada."

Adventurer-seekers flock to the Chilcotin to tackle one of the most challenging whitewater river systems in North America – the Chilcotin and its tributary, the Chilko, which boasts the longest continuous stretch of Class 3 whitewater on the continent.

Canoeing

Soak in the peace and quiet of our wilderness, explore a myriad of pristine lakes, or challenge yourself with a multi-day canoeing exploration of the Bowron Lakes circuit. No

other canoe circuit boasts the same combination of mountain scenery and wildlife, including osprey, eagles, moose, mink, beavers and bears. The provincial park's most unusual physical feature is the key to its popularity: a rectangular-shaped water system and wildlife sanctuary that forms a 116-km (72-mi) canoe circuit. Where else can one paddle for 10 days without backtracking and end where one began? The former home of the southern Carrier, Athabaskan and Dene First Nations, who built *kekulis* (*kik-will-ees*) or pit houses, is now an international attraction. The circuit is so popular that canoers must reserve their "paddle slots" well in advance (contact BC Parks to reserve your trip).

The many waterways within the Interlakes District also beckon canoers. Highway 24, running west to east between 100 Mile House and Little Fort, provides access to 100-plus lakes. Here, paddles can be dipped to the heart's content, and with restaurants, cafes, shops, resorts and guest ranches along the way, comfort is also close at hand.

The tiny settlement of Kleena Kleene, just 31 km (19 mi) west of Tatla Lake on Highway 20 and mere minutes from Clearwater Lake, is a departure point for float-plane excursions to remote fishing lakes and rivers and the region's celebrated alpine wilderness. Local guest ranches and lodges,



some with canoe-to-your-door chalets, also offer boat touring, photography treks and working ranch holidays. There are also excellent horseback riding excursions, from guided day trips to multi-day camping trail rides, in the Charlotte Alplands Alpine Wilderness Area, with its 75 lakes, numerous alpine ecosystems and the headwaters of one of BC's purest and most important salmon river systems.



Tyler Cave

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HIGHLIGHTS

- With the bonus add-on of a flightseeing adventure over the Chilcotin Plateau, a float-plane insertion to the **Turner Lake chain** for some paddling, hiking and camping is a remote experience for the bucket list.
- The epic 420-km (261-mi) **Nuxalk Carrier Grease Trail** (also known as the **Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail**) in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park attracts hiking enthusiasts from around the world. Once used by the Nuxalk and Carrier First Nations to transport goods, most notably Eulachon grease, the trail can take about 18–24 days to tackle.
- **Dean River Canoe Races** paddlers race from Nimpo Lake to Anahim Lake, followed by a dinner and dance. Mid-May (or after the ice has thawed).
- **Puntzi Lake Fishing Derby** has been a family tradition since 1984. The derby takes place in the heart of summer - this year on July 5-7.

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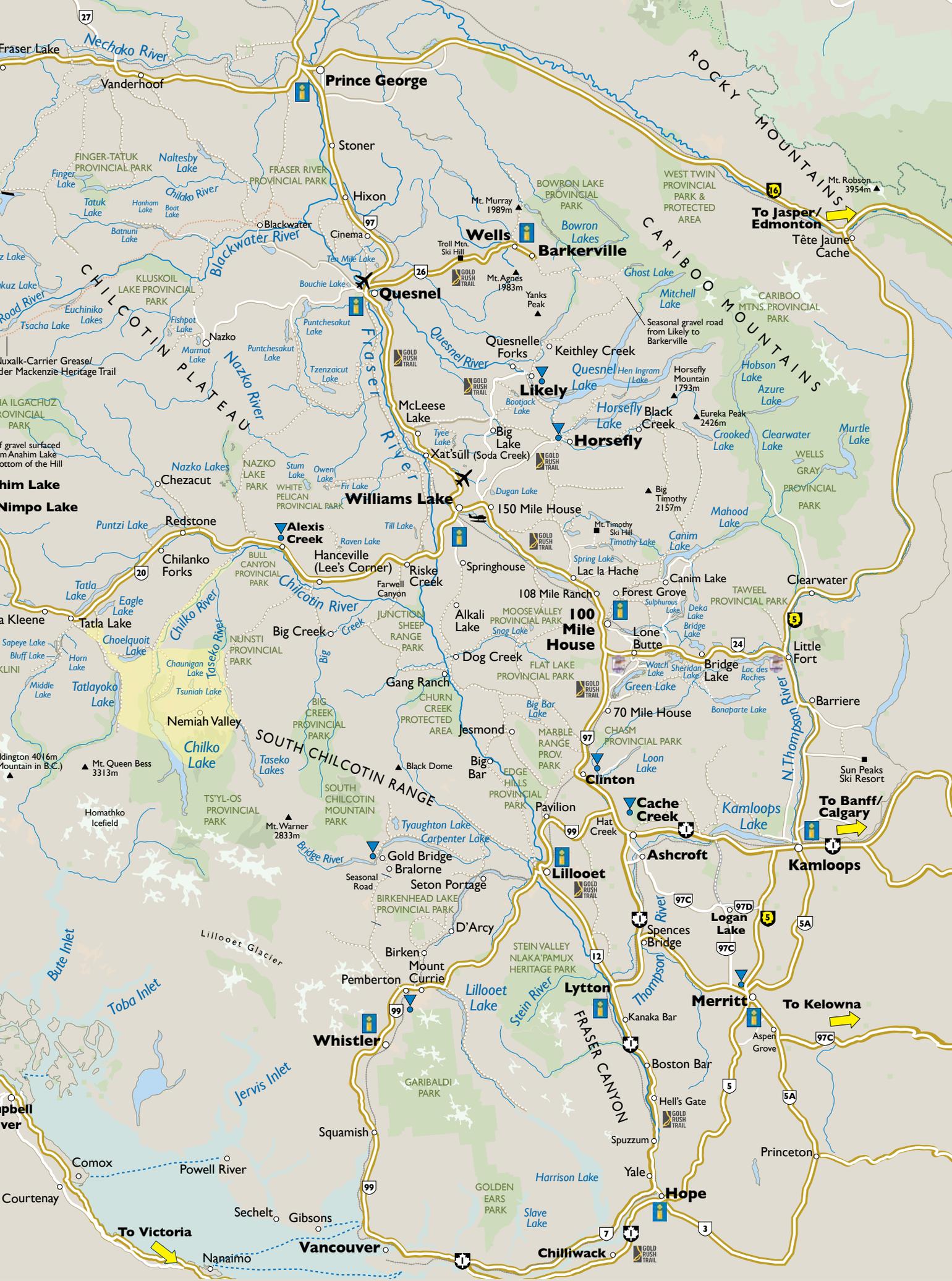




Taking in the view at Canim Falls



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Prince George

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Williams Lake

Whistler

Vancouver

Wells

100 Mile House

Lillooet

Lytton

Chilliwack

Barkerville

100 Mile House

Lillooet

Lytton

Chilliwack

Horsefly

Clinton

Merritt

Hope

To Jasper/Edmonton

To Banff/Calgary

To Kelowna

ROCKY MOUNTAINS
CARIBOO MOUNTAINS

CHILCOTIN PLATEAU
Naslesby Lake
Chilko River
Blackwater River
Nazko River
Fraser River

SOUTH CHILCOTIN RANGE
Chilko Lake
Taseko Lakes
Chilko River

FRASER CANYON
Lillooet Lake
Stein River
Thompson River

To Victoria

Nanaimo

Courtenay

Comox

Spuzzum

Yale

Harrison Lake

Slave Lake

Golden Ears Park

Garibaldi Park

Mount Currie

Birkenhead Lake Provincial Park

Seton Portage

Bralorne

Gold Bridge

Carpenter Lake

Tyaughton Lake

Black Dome

Jesmond

Big Bar

Edge Hills Provincial Park

Marble Range Provincial Park

70 Mile House

Loon Lake

Chasm Provincial Park

Bonaparte Lake

Watch Lake

Sheridan Lake

Green Lake

Flat Lake Provincial Park

Snag Lake

Moose Valley Provincial Park

Alkali Lake

Springhouse

Riske Creek

Farwell Canyon

Hanceville (Lee's Corner)

Raven Lake

150 Mile House

Dugan Lake

Big Lake

Quesnel Forks

Keithley Creek

Hen Ingram Lake

Mitchell Lake

Ghost Lake

Bowron Lakes

West Twin Provincial Park & Protected Area

Fraser Lake

Nechako River

Vanderhoof

Stoner

Hixon

Blackwater

Cinema

Ten Mile Lake

Bouchie Lake

Quesnel River

Likely Lake

Bootjack Lake

McLeese Lake

Big Lake

Xat'sull (Soda Creek)

Spring Lake

Lac la Hache

Canim Lake

Timothy Lake

Spring Lake

Lac des Roches

Bridge Lake

Deke Lake

Sulphurous Lake

Forest Grove

108 Mile Ranch

Alkali Lake

Dog Creek

Gang Ranch

Churn Creek Protected Area

Big Creek

Big Creek Provincial Park

South Chilcotin Mountain Park

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Spring Lake

Lac la Hache

Canim Lake

Timothy Lake

Spring Lake

Lac des Roches

Bridge Lake

Deke Lake

Sulphurous Lake

Forest Grove

108 Mile Ranch

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ARTISTIC EXPLORATIONS

Come to our region, where the arts and culture, agritourism and culinary delights thrive.

The themes of exploration and discovery course through this region, as the earliest settlers discovered so long ago. Today, as current-day explorers experience our ruggedly beautiful scenery, they will also uncover many hidden gems. Arts, cuisine and agritourism thrive here and are generously shared by those who are inspired by our landscapes.

Arts and Culture

The topography of this vast region is often reflected in the culture and works of the talented artists who visit and live here. “It is a land of striking contrasts ... a land that drew me like a magnet into its soul,” wrote Richmond P. Hobson in the first installment of his classic 1978 trilogy, *Grass Beyond the Mountains*.

Indigenous compositions have been performed around campfires for thousands of years and soaring totem poles, intricate beadwork and other arts reflect this region’s powerful sense of place. In 1904, Emily Carr roamed the region by “cowpony” and was inspired to paint landscapes in this place she loved. Touring the region in 1914, the Group of Seven’s A.Y. Jackson was equally enthralled.

Funking it out at the ArtsWells Festival



Geoff Moore

Delicious pies cooling near Tatlayoko

He returned in the 1940s to produce works that are now displayed in galleries around the world.

Painter Mark Hobson is also inspired by the Chilcotin landscape and many locations in the Great Bear Rainforest such as Calvert Island, which he painted recently to raise awareness about preserving the coastline for future generations. To this end, he and more than 50 of Canada's most celebrated artists, including painters, poets and writers, published a book titled *Canada's Raincoast at Risk: Art for an Oil-Free Coast*.

Art and nature lovers will want to experience the region's many galleries, including the Quesnel Art Gallery, one of central BC's hidden gems, and the city's ARtrium, which features the work of regional artists. Some galleries are works of art themselves, such as the Central Cariboo Arts Centre, which houses a number of artisan groups in a decommissioned fire hall, and the Williams Lake Station House Gallery, a restored 1920s railway station showcasing pottery, weaving and other visual arts.

Siska Art Gallery, south of Lytton, features local Indigenous art, crafts, jams and teas, while Boston Bar's The Zoo Art gallery is housed in an unusual white-washed concrete building constructed with recycled materials and upcycled stained-glass windows. 100 Mile House is a culture-seeker's delight with many galleries to explore, including the Parkside

Art Gallery; its exterior a work of art itself. Check out the murals depicting historical figures and pioneer life, displayed on the buildings here. And nearby, at 108 Mile House, drop by the Chris Harris Studio Gallery, a straw-bale structure featuring photography of the region by the award-winning photographer (open by chance, or call ahead).

The town of Wells is another arts and culture highlight. This artist retreat offers studios and galleries housed in colourfully painted heritage buildings and a celebrated art school, where vacationers can enroll in folk art and music classes. The town's restored Sunset Theatre hosts professional music, film and theatre retreats.

In Barkerville Historic Town & Park, live theatre spills onto a unique streetscape of more than 125 heritage buildings, period displays, satellite museums, restaurants and shops. The costumed interpreters here are so convincing, they create the illusion of travelling back to the 1860s. The Studio Theatre Society in Williams Lake, meanwhile, has staged diverse seasonal theatre productions for the past 60 years. Horsefly's Arts on the Fly festival presents music, dance, food and fun in equal measure, while Clinton's War Medieval Days is a weeklong costume pageant dedicated to re-creating the Middle Ages "as they ought to have been." And Ashcroft's Winding Rivers Arts and Performance Society showcases creative talents in annual music concerts, festivals, art displays and workshops.

The Cariboo is also home to “Camel” Dave Howell, who performs at festivals throughout the West, as does Frank Gleeson, the “Fastest Cowboy Poet in the West” and official cowboy poet of Williams Lake.

Culinary Discoveries

The cultural and historical diversity of this region is also proudly showcased in the area’s many culinary experiences. From traditional Indigenous and cowboy campfire cuisine to tastes of the Orient, the culinary offerings of these small communities remain somewhat undiscovered. Fueled by a strong agricultural community focused on sustainable growing and heirloom varietals, exciting new flavours are always on offer.

The fresh culinary perspective gained by exploring regional flavours can be further honed by visits to agricultural fairs and festivals. At Quesnel’s Fall Fair, the ambience is rambunctious (chili and beer-can chicken competitions are fierce), while the South Cariboo Garlic Festival in Lac la Hache features a Master Garlic Chef Cook-Off. Lillooet’s popular Apricot Tsaqwen (*cho-com*) Festival gives a nod to the local Indigenous culture.

Local restaurants and eateries are diverse, from popular food chains along Gold Rush Trail routes to sophisticated restaurants scattered throughout the region that offer fresh seasonal ingredients. Fort Berens Estate Winery’s gourmet meals are prepared from local ingredients and paired with award-winning wines while KiNiKiNiK Restaurant on Highway 20 in the Chilcotin features pasture-to-plate locally produced beef and certified organic products.

Coastal cuisine is nothing short of decadent: think succulent Dungeness crab, enormous spot prawns, fresh halibut and other fish. If you aren’t headed west on this trip, drop in at Big H’s Fish and Chips in Wells for a taste of the sea, gold rush style. Discover bakeries with secret family recipes, home-style cafés and eateries in historic buildings, each



Tyler Cave

Spinning at Historic Hat Creek

with its own tale to tell. Talented outfitters can even prepare gourmet grub on a mountain top. TripAdvisor reviews begin with openers like, “What an amazing surprise” and “Unbelievable meals and superb, friendly service.”

Indigenous rodeos and pow wows offer visitors a chance to munch on fresh, hot bannock and slurp *hooshum*, a traditional dessert made from whipped Soopolallie (also known as Soapberry) berries. Indigenous heritage sites at Tuckkwiowhum (*tuck-we-ohm*), Xat’sull (*hat-sull*), and Xwisten (*hoyshten*) all offer traditional culinary experiences (be sure to book in advance).

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Farmers, ranchers and specialty producers here share the art, science, and dedication involved in raising livestock and growing crops, including efforts to maintain sustainable farm and ranch ecosystems with healthy soils and free-range pasture lands. They are increasingly aware that local, sustainably grown foods are vital to health and well-being and that reducing the environmental impact of long-distance shipping and the need for food stabilizers and other preservatives are the key to sustainability.

In the north Cariboo, organic producers create birch syrup, tapped fresh from the tree, which they also use to make barbeque sauce. The central Cariboo features such delicacies as the Marguerite and Soda Creek area's sweet corn.

Though the wine industry is relatively young in the Fraser Canyon, the BC Grapegrowers' Association has test vineyards in the Lytton and Lillooet area. The vines at Fort Berens Estate Winery in Lillooet are planted in soil enriched by 150 years of bountiful melon, tomato and alfalfa production, one possible reason why the winery continues to make headlines. Since 2012, Fort Berens has won many medals at international competitions, including

the prestigious Los Angeles International Wine and Spirits Competition.

Lillooet has also evolved into a hotbed for hops growers who are helping fuel BC's burgeoning craft-beer industry. In 2013, the organic hops grown by Lillooet's Bitterbine Hop Company were used by Vancouver's Powell Street Craft Brewery to produce the Canadian Brewing Awards Beer of the Year. The presence of local hop farms also enables BC brewers to craft new, trend-setting products such as fresh-hopped beer, made by adding hops to brews within 24 hours of their harvest. Barkerville Brewing Co. in Quesnel blends local hops with gold rush stories, paying homage to this region with its award-winning beers.

In the Fraser Canyon, there is a saying: "Add water to this sun-drenched land and you can grow anything." For more than 150 years, produce grown here in this land of abundant orchards, farms and ranches has been winning awards, from Widow Smith apples in Spences Bridge to giant potatoes and tasty tomatoes from Ashcroft. The community of Lytton has become a destination for organic and heirloom growers with several farms growing fruits and vegetables, including onions, garlic, squash, melons, peppers, tomatoes,

carrots, beets and more than 50 varieties of apples. Other ranches produce heritage poultry breeds and heirloom open pollinated seeds to ensure food diversity. Visit Siska Traditions to learn about wild and traditional Indigenous food harvests, including wild herbs, teas, Saskatoon berries, huckleberries and nodding onions as well as pine, porcini, morel and other wild mushrooms.

Many communities host weekly farmers' markets, often with local arts and crafts on offer. At the Bella Coola market, travellers can stock up on fresh produce and sample regional specialties such as honey, giant prawns, Dungeness crab and salmon. Gourmands can keep their eyes peeled for farm-gate offerings of sweet Walla Walla onions, Russian red garlic and sun loving Kentucky wonder yellow beans. Other operators in the region open their barn doors so visitors can appreciate the fine art of "farming with the season" while sampling and purchasing local delicacies.

Country fairs also provide a window into local life. They showcase 4-H competitions, where youth raise livestock and grow crops while acquiring life skills. Mentored by local ranchers and farm producers, children between the ages of 9 and 19 years "Learn to do by doing" with cattle, horses, lambs, hogs, sewing, mechanics, photography, bees, gardening and more.

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FESTIVALS & EVENTS

- April 26-29, Ashcroft: **Ashcroft Art Show.** Displaying over 100 pieces of art by local artists.
- July 6-7, Lytton: **'Q'emcin 2 Rivers Remix.** Two-day feast of contemporary Indigenous music and culture.
- July 12-13, Horsefly: **Arts on the Fly Festival.** Catch top performers in jazz, indie, folk, rock and other musical genres.
- July 18-21, Quesnel: **Billy Barker Days.** BC's largest free family festival celebrates the Cariboo Gold Rush with a rodeo, parade and more.
- July 19-21, Hagensborg: **Bella Coola Music Festival.** Take in performances in rock, roots, blues, world, folk and other genres at this family-friendly, multicultural event – plus crafts, workshops, food and children's events.
- August 2-5, Wells: **ArtsWells Festival.** Don't miss BC's funkier event, showcasing 300-plus musicians, artists, film screenings, workshops and more.
- August 16-18, McLeese Lake: **BC Metis Music Jamboree.** Groove to an old-fashioned bluegrass-style festival featuring country music, Metis fiddling and non-stop dancing.
- August 24-25, Lac la Hache: **South Cariboo Garlic Festival.** Watch Garlina and other mascots strut alongside food vendors and musicians, and cheer on your favourite culinary master at the annual battle for the title of Master Garlic Chef.
- Late August, Lillooet: **Salmon in the Canyon.** Help celebrate the world's greatest salmon-spawning river and the Fraser Canyon's diverse ecosystem with a wild Salmon BBQ, musicians and family fun.
- Early September, Tatla Lake: **Tatla Lake Fall Fair.** Have fun with clowns, balloons, horse-and-buggy rides, a petting zoo and a farmers' market.





THE LOCALS

People define our region with a rich ancestral history and resilient ways.

Indigenous people were the first locals in our region, and their influence lives on today in a very powerful, meaningful way. Later, European settlers braved our rivers, mapping trading routes and settling this remote land. Ranchers settled here, too, and continue to raise cattle on their rangelands near the Fraser River. Come, meet our locals.

Indigenous Peoples

For thousands of years, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast has been the home of Indigenous peoples. First Nations of the region include the Tsilhqot'in (*tseelh-coht-een*), whose traditional territory is the high-altitude plateau of the Chilcotin (*chil-ko-tin*), the St'át'imc (*stat-lee-um*), from southwest of the Fraser; Nlaka'pamux (*ing-khla-kap-muh*) of the southern Fraser Canyon; the Carrier, who occupied the sub-boreal northern area of the Cariboo Chilcotin and the Secwepemc (*shihuep-muh-k*), whose historical lands lie east of the Fraser River. On the Pacific coast, the major Indigenous nations are the Nuxalk (*nu-halk*) of the Bella Coala Valley, the Tsimshian (*sim-she-an*) and the Gitga'at (*git-gat*) of the outer coast, the Wuikinuxv (*whee-kin-au*) of Rivers Inlet and the Heiltsuk (*hel-sic*) of the coastal area near Bella Bella.



Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Village



Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Village



Xats'ull Heritage Village

The region's Indigenous people played an essential role in the province's development, providing canoes, food, guides, translators and information to explorers and European settlers in the 1700s and 1800s. Explorer Alexander Mackenzie could not have completed his historic 1793 trek if Indigenous peoples had not directed him along the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail, from the northern Cariboo to the shores of the Pacific near Bella Coola. The route was used for centuries by coastal people to trade valuable eulachon oil with interior populations. Distilled from the small, herring-like eulachon fish, the oil was transported in cedar boxes. The trail earned its name from the oil that dripped from the boxes en route.

Indigenous people were also involved in the early days of the region's key industries, particularly ranching in the Chilcotin and southern Cariboo, where horsemanship and wilderness survival skills were highly prized. Many Indigenous families in the region continue to work in ranching and remain key participants on the local rodeo circuit, particularly at the Anahim Lake Stampede and Bella Coola and Redstone rodeos.

There are many opportunities for immersive experiences with the Indigenous culture throughout the region. The award-winning Xats'ull (*hat-sull*) Heritage Village is located just north of Williams Lake on a grassy bench above the Fraser River. Here, members of the Secwepemc, sometimes known as Shuswap, First Nation, offer storytelling by village elders, educational wilderness walks and salmon lunches. (Contact Xats'ull in advance for reservations.)

Also near Williams Lake, jet boat tours journey over rapids and past hoodoos to explore ancient village sites, 8,000 to 10,000-year-old pictographs and petroglyphs, traditional fishing spots and abandoned mining sites. Indigenous guides share traditional knowledge involving medicinal plants, flora, fauna and local lore. And in the Chilcotin on the last weekend of July, the Nemiah Pow Wow features colourful displays of regalia and dancing. It is just one of several pow wows throughout the year. The Xeni Gwet'in (*honey-ko-teen*) also host an annual summer gathering where elders and youth come together to pass on traditional games, stories and hunting and gathering skills.

At the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre in Bella Bella, delve into the research and preservation of the language and culture of the Heiltsuk. Along with other coastal people such as the Kitasoo (*kit-ah-soo*) and Xai'xais (*hay-hace*), the Heiltsuk grew wealthy and powerful on the bounty of the sea. In the Thorsen Creek Valley near Bella Coola, ancient petroglyphs honouring the power and mystery of nature are still visible on rock faces near waterfalls and caves, with guided tours offered by Copper Sun Journeys. As well, Bella Coola's Acwsalcta (*ex-sals-ta*) grade school is a showcase for a magnificent totem pole carved by students and teachers. Erected in 2002, it is the first Nuxalk totem pole to be raised here in 38 years.

If Indigenous art interests you, Copper Sun Gallery in Bella Coola is an excellent place to view and purchase authentic handcrafted Nuxalk art, which is known for its vibrant blues. The gallery was founded to provide a venue for local Indigenous artists to sell their works. It hosts a constantly changing array of carvings, including masks and paddles, paintings, jewellery, weaving and handmade crafts. In summer months, you can interact with artists on site and arrange for interpretive tours.

Spirit Bear Lodge, operated by the Kitasoo and Xai'xais, is located some 100 km (62 mi) northwest of Bella Coola, in the wilds of the Great Bear Rainforest. Here, guests are provided with a unique cultural and historic perspective as part of their all-inclusive bear-viewing packages, complete with comfortable accommodations.

In the northern Chilcotin, the Nazko lands are known for celebrated Carrier First Nation artists working in leather, buckskin and moose hide, beadwork, watercolour, wood, stained glass and intricate cross-stitch. In the southern Chilcotin, no fewer than 11 different communities make up the St'at'imc First Nation, whose traditional territories are located in and around an ancient gathering place now known as Lillooet. Today, Xwisten Experience Tours offers award-winning guided excursions along the banks of Fraser to view "fishing rocks," the traditional wind-dried method of preserving salmon, and guided explorations of Xwisten (*hoyshten*) archaeological site's 80 pit houses, dating back thousands of years. As well, the neighbouring Sekw'el'was/Cayoose Creek Band offers interpretive walks of the beautifully restored Lower Seton spawning channel.

Five minutes from downtown Lillooet is the site of a traditional s7istken (*shesh-ken*), or pit house, built by the T'it'q'et (*tle-ti-cut*) community. Constructed with only earth and timber, such structures once housed up to 20 people and featured two entrances, one on ground level and one in the roof, which also released smoke from cooking fires.

Don't miss the Seton Lake Band's Kaoham Shuttle: a travelling window into the past and a convenient way to view local wildlife. The train runs Fridays, with a scheduled double-run, skirting the shores of Seton Lake past numerous historical sites, including an Indigenous cemetery precariously located between the tracks and the lake's crystalline banks.

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all topped off with a cowboy's unique brand of humour. The description may sound more like that of a mythical figure than real-life flesh and blood, but there is no doubt that the romantic icon of a North American cowboy is woven into the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Fraser Canyon's colourful history and culture.

The first European settlers spread across the region in the 1860s, when cowboys worked as "drovers," driving herds of cattle north from the US to supply beef to miners in the goldfields around Barkerville. Some of these hardy souls quickly realized it made more sense to raise cattle closer to market and established great sprawling ranches on the grassy rangelands near the Fraser River, where more than one third of BC's beef cattle are raised today.

Travellers can completely immerse themselves in this wild and rugged way of life, with a whole range of options and experiences. One such example is a 10-day horse-supported exploration of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park and the magnificent Rainbow Mountains. Other treks include guiding herds from winter feedlots to summer pastures, or back again in the fall, and days spent riding the Tchaikazan-Yohetta Valley Loop. Trek the Chilcotin's Potato Range with its lakeside trails, then pitch your tent in a secluded meadow and enjoy a fat trout you've reeled in for supper. Or bunk at

a working ranch and experience hands-on riding and roping, branding and herding.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast is also home to more than half of the province's guest ranches, ranging from full glamping (glamorous camping) experiences with gourmet restaurants, swimming pools, hot tubs and full-service spas to those offering experiences that are the stuff of cowboy dreams. Think guitars, cowboy songs and tall tales around a campfire, bunking down in an old-fashioned log cabin or sleeping under the stars in a snug bedroll and waking at dawn to the aroma of coffee and bacon cooking over an open flame. Relax with a massage after a long day's ride or catch a rodeo and witness the skills and courage of both riders and animals.

No matter what you choose, the region's ranch hands are experts at matching horse to rider and ensuring both novices and experts are fitted with the right "in the saddle" getaway, from family friendly, low-impact trail rides through aspen and jack-pine forests to multi-hour saddle treks through arid, sagebrush-covered hills.

For those keen to learn more about cowboy history, a visit to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin in Williams Lake is another must. Exhibits are dedicated to preserving and honouring BC cowboys and cowgirls, past and present. The

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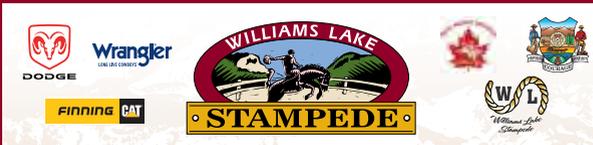

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Destination BC/Michael Bednar

Rounding up cattle at Watch Lake

museum also houses the BC Cowboy Hall of Fame and its annual Hall of Fame inauguration, held in April, is an opportunity to meet BC's ranching and rodeo pioneers. For a more current look at cowboy culture, the Williams Lake Stampede in July is a sanctioned Pro Rodeo (Canadian Professional Rodeo Association) event with bareback, saddle-bronc and bull riding, team roping, steer wrestling and barrel racing events that draw contestants from across Canada and the US – and spectators from around the world.

BC Rodeo Association-sponsored events can also be found throughout the region, including local rodeos held in Clinton, Bella Coola, Williams Lake, Anahim Lake, Alkali Lake, Interlakes, Redstone and Quesnel, with each rodeo reflecting the spirit of that community and offering its own special twist on the traditional rodeo format.

The communities of Anahim Lake, Nemiah and Redstone champion a series of First Nation rodeo events. Children are the stars of spring's Little Britches Rodeo in 100 Mile House, featuring mutton busting, goat tying and dummy roping. Clinton's May extravaganza features a full-on

Western Heritage Week, with cowboy poetry readings, western musical performances and an old-time ball.

The rodeo season kicks off in Williams Lake in April and wraps up in September as Quesnel hosts the year-end BC Rodeo Association finals. BC high school students compete in regional rodeo events between September and June with at least one event each year in Williams Lake. All season long, rodeo dances happen throughout the region, showcasing traditional western music and those famous cowboy manners. Rest assured the fun doesn't end when the sun finally goes down.

The Spirit of Discovery: Then and Now

The Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl became famous for his expeditions in and across the South Pacific in 1947. However, well before this fame, he explored BC's central coast extensively, researching the lifestyles and origins of the Indigenous people who live here. As a result of his investigation, he was later able to theorize about similarities among the Indigenous peoples of the central coast and those who lived on far-removed Pacific islands. That gave rise to his



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theories – and later explorations – about Indigenous peoples around the Pacific having related roots.

Of course, Heyerdahl wasn't the first non-native person to explore these shores. In 1793, an intrepid 29-year old Scotsman named Alexander Mackenzie – accompanied by seven French Canadian voyageurs and two Indigenous porters – paddled into the Dean Channel near present-day Bella Coola. That event completed the first crossing of North America to the Pacific. Before returning east, the explorer scrawled an inscription on a rock using a reddish mixture of bear grease and vermilion: "Alex Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, 22nd July, 1793." That rock still bears his words, permanently inscribed by surveyors who followed.

The highway through the Bella Coola Valley parallels the ancient trading route known as the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail, taken by Alexander Mackenzie on his way to the sea in 1793. Long before Mackenzie's arrival, the Nuxalk (nu-

POW WOWS & RODEOS

- June 15-16, Tatla Lake: **Tatla Lake Gymkhana.** Horses and riders test their equine skills at this family event held annually over the Father's Day weekend.
- June 27–July 1, Williams Lake: **Williams Lake Stampede.** Professional rodeo events and scads of family fun, including a parade and street party.
- June 29-30, Bella Coola: **34th Annual Bella Coola Rodeo.** Competitors from far and wide compete in popular rodeo events, plus the infamous cow-patty bingo (if the cow drops a patty on your square, you win).
- July 6, Anahim Lake: **Anahim Lake Stampede.** Old-fashioned rodeo, staged since 1938, that includes barrel racing, bronco riding, barbecue and beer garden.
- July 27-28, Nemiah: **Nemiah Pow Wow.** This traditional pow wow offers colourful celebrations and dancing.
- August 17-18, Alexis Creek: **Redstone Rodeo.** Professional rodeo action, plus a cowboy breakfast and good ol' fashioned barn dance.

halk) people thrived here alongside the salmon-filled rivers. The valley was part of a trade corridor between coastal and interior native groups, where furs and leather were exchanged for salmon and eulachon (*oo-lick-an*) oil. The oil was obtained from the rendered fat of the small herring-like fish that was valued for its calories and vitamin content. It was then transported along the so-called “grease” trails.

Current-day history hikers can traverse this trail: three weeks are required to navigate the entire route, but various sections can be accessed for shorter jaunts: the scenic 80-km (50-mi) portion across Tweedsmuir Provincial Park takes less than a week.

Nothing reflects the spirit of the Chilcotin region more than the completion of Highway 20, at one time known as the Freedom Highway because its completion freed up access to the central coast. Until 1953, the road ended at Anahim Lake, 137 km (85 mi) short of Bella Coola on the coast because the provincial government refused to extend it – claiming the mountainous terrain was too difficult. So, local volunteers working from opposite ends with two bulldozers and supplies purchased on credit finished the job. The rustic road was not really considered a highway when first completed, but it was enough to convince the government to take over maintenance and improvements in 1955.

Those who settled this isolated region had to be tough. In 1887, Nellie Hance became the first white woman to travel into the Chilcotin by journeying 485 km (301 mi) riding side saddle on horseback to reach her husband Tom’s trading post near Lee’s Corner (also known as Hanceville).

Others were not only tough but perhaps a little crazy. Rancher Norman Lee, after whom Lee’s Corner was named, set out from his spread in May 1898 with 200 head of cattle on a 2,500-km (1,553-mi) trek to the Klondike goldfields. None of his cattle survived the journey, but Lee did, arriving in Vancouver five months later with a roll of blankets, a dog and one dollar. Borrowing enough money for the train to Ashcroft and a horse to ride home, Lee was soon ranching again and by 1902 was well on the way back to prosperity. His descendants are still ranching in the Chilcotin today. The resilient nature of others who choose to make this region their home also lives on to this day. The most recent challenge involved the devastating forest fires of 2017-18.

Explorers continue to be drawn to this part of the world, and it is not uncommon for friendly resort and tour operators to welcome their guests in German, Dutch, Swiss, Korean and many other international languages.



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A photograph of a man in a forest, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a dark vest over a t-shirt, playing a large, round drum. He is standing on a rocky outcrop, looking upwards. The background is a dense forest with tall trees and green foliage.

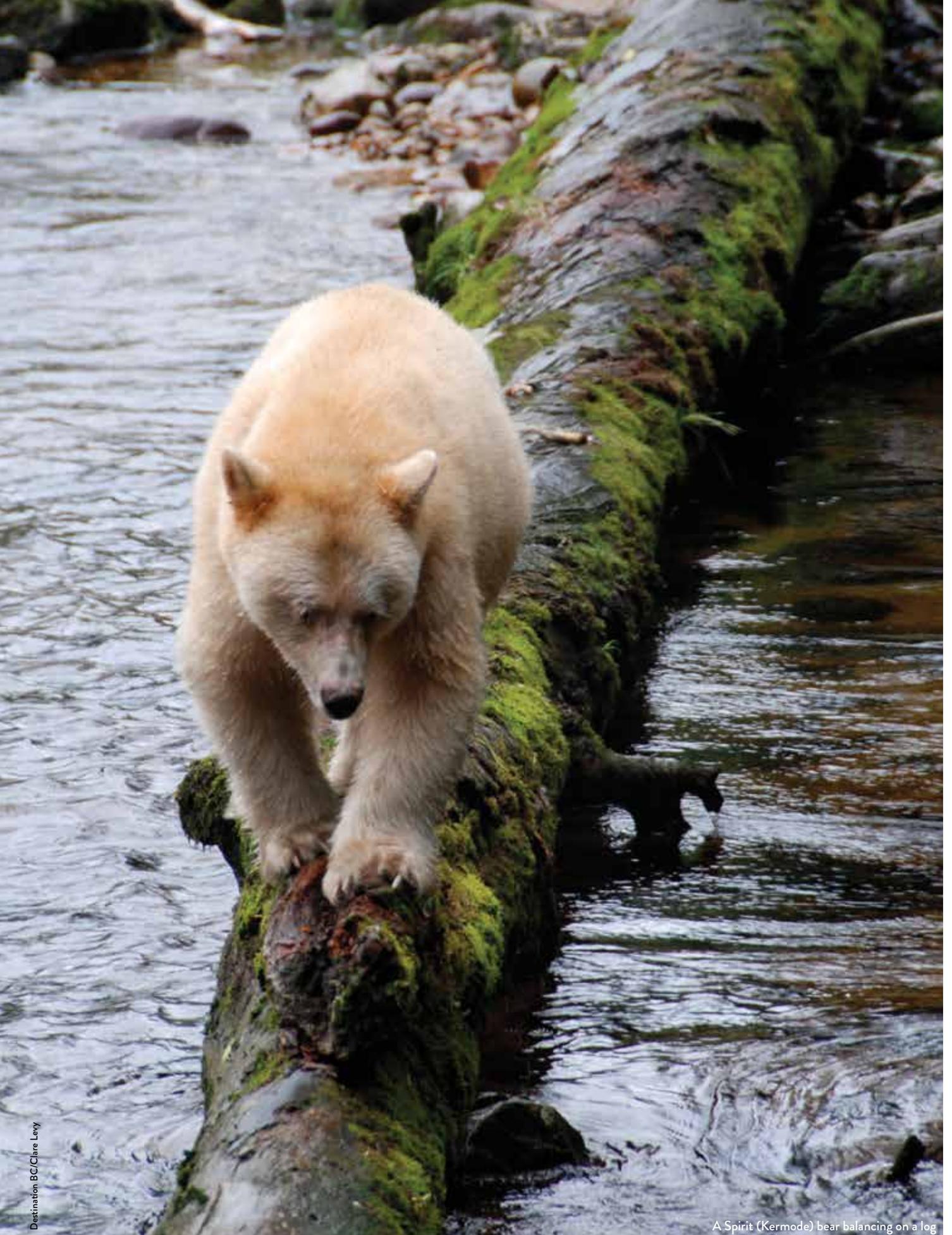
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Offshore, the ocean is alive with Orcas (killer whales), porpoises, humpback whales, seals, sea lions and dozens of seabird species, while the preserve's forests are filled with black-tailed deer, coastal wolves and grizzly, black and Kermode bears. The Kermode, or *Ursus americanus kermodei*, is a rare, white-coated sub-species of the black bear, also known as the Spirit bear, that is sacred to BC's Indigenous peoples. Indeed, the Kermode's main haunt, Princess Royal Island, is a primordial expanse of lush wilderness accessible only by boat or air that few humans have visited, aside from the Tsimshian (*sim-she-an*), who inhabited a coastal village here. Today, eco-sensitive interpretative tours led by bear experts and other naturalists offer unique

Nuxalk drummer near Thorsen Creek in the Great Bear Rainforest





tours for kayakers and boaters hoping to catch a rare glimpse of this majestic animal.

As boating gains popularity, opportunities to experience the Great Bear Rainforest by water are becoming more available. Operators offer a variety of services, from scientific missions to relaxing sailboat cruises, traversing the protected channels. Depending on the size of your boat or the package you book, this area will require more than a week to explore.

The Great Bear's Fiordland Conservancy, a provincial marine park set deep in the inner channels near Klemtu, is equally remote. Dotted with pristine beaches, including exceptionally picturesque stretches near Lady Douglas Island, the conservancy encompasses Kynoch and Mussel inlets (two glacier-gouged fjords where sheer granite cliffs rise more than 1,000 m (3,280 ft)) and Higgins Passage. The passage is an intricate waterway with Indigenous sites amidst a maze-like multitude of islands, sinuous passageways and cascading waterfalls.

Visit the myriad of inlets, tiny coves and narrow passageways around Bella Coola for unforgettable sea kayaking and wildlife viewing. To the south, just 10 km (6 mi) west of Namu, the 123,000-ha (303,940-ac) Hakai Luxvbalis (*looks-bal-ease*) Conservation Area offers some of the finest kayaking on the coast. Its twisting passages, island clusters and white sandy beaches are perfect for strolling, foraging, relaxing and camping.

Fishing enthusiasts, meanwhile, journey southwest of Hakai Luxvbalis to luxury lodges to land some of the largest chinook salmon in the world, along Rivers Inlet and Knight Inlet, two of BC's most renowned sport fishing destinations. From Rivers Inlet to Princess Royal Island, more places associated with iconic fishing include Hakai Pass, Milbanke Sound and Shearwater. Local coho, as well as chinook, pink, chum and sockeye salmon and giant halibut cruise the floors of each inlet, while ling cod are caught near the reefs.

For centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans in the mid-1700s, when fur traders entered the area to harvest sea otter pelts, and well before the first European cast a rod in the waters off the coast of the Great Bear Rainforest, the Indigenous people thrived along the central coast, living off the land and ocean and trading with people in the province's Interior. Approximately two-thirds of the Central Coast's residents today are Indigenous, and in Bella Coola, the Nuxalk (*nu-halk*) are well known for their carvings, masks and paintings, which are displayed throughout the Bella Coola Valley.

Fortunately for modern-day travellers it is much easier to explore the Great Bear Rainforest than when Mackenzie paddled into the Dean Channel or when Heyerdahl sailed the central coast for his anthropological research. BC Ferries' new Northern Sea Wolf provides direct sailings between Bella Coola and Port Hardy on northern Vancouver Island. (Reservations are required on this route; contact BC Ferries



Boomer Jerritt

A playful sea otter



Michael Wrigle

Fishing near Klemtu



Geoff Moore

A pair of Orcas near Shearwater

to reserve.) Travellers can then continue their Discovery Coast Circle Tour, driving inland from Bella Coola via Highway 20, up “The Hill,” an epic 30-km (19-mi) ascent with hairpin turns, switchbacks and grades of up to 18 per cent, and across the Chilcotin Plateau to the Cariboo and beyond.

The Bella Coola Valley boasts two main towns, located 17 km (10.5 mi) apart on Highway 20: Hagensborg, a community settled by Norwegian Lutherans from Minnesota, and Bella Coola, the area’s service hub. This stretch of the valley also features ancient petroglyphs, historic hiking trails, a salmon hatchery, galleries specializing in Indigenous art and tours and outdoor-adventure companies offering grizzly bear tours, eco-river drifts and flightseeing excursions. As well, the valley is the centre of a regional farming revival. An immensely popular seasonal Sunday farmers’ market runs June to September, where visitors and locals can purchase regional specialties such as heritage fruits and veggies, honey, homemade jams and jellies and outstanding arts and crafts. Local farms also welcome travellers for specialty tastings and educational tours, and food lovers can sample world-class spot prawns, Dungeness crab, halibut, Pacific cod, multiple species of salmon and other local seafoods.

JOURNEY ON THE NORTHERN SEA WOLF

The newest BC Ferries vessel is the Northern Sea Wolf. The 150-passenger, 35-vehicle ferry provides direct summer service between Port Hardy (on Vancouver Island) and Bella Coola (on the mainland) and weekly connector service between Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Shearwater and Ocean Falls. The 246-foot vessel carries commissioned Indigenous art inside and out.

The Sea Wolf is believed to be a manifestation of the Orca, symbolizing family and loyalty in Indigenous culture, and revered for dedication to their pack. It is said that the spirit of the Sea Wolf protects those travelling these waters.

Passengers can now immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the Great Bear Rainforest in great comfort aboard the freshly redecorated vessel. The route features dramatic scenery and glimpses of wildlife, and the vessel showcases commissioned Indigenous art.

Sailings depart from Port Hardy or Bella Coola five days per week during peak season, for the 10-hour long voyage. Reservations are required for this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

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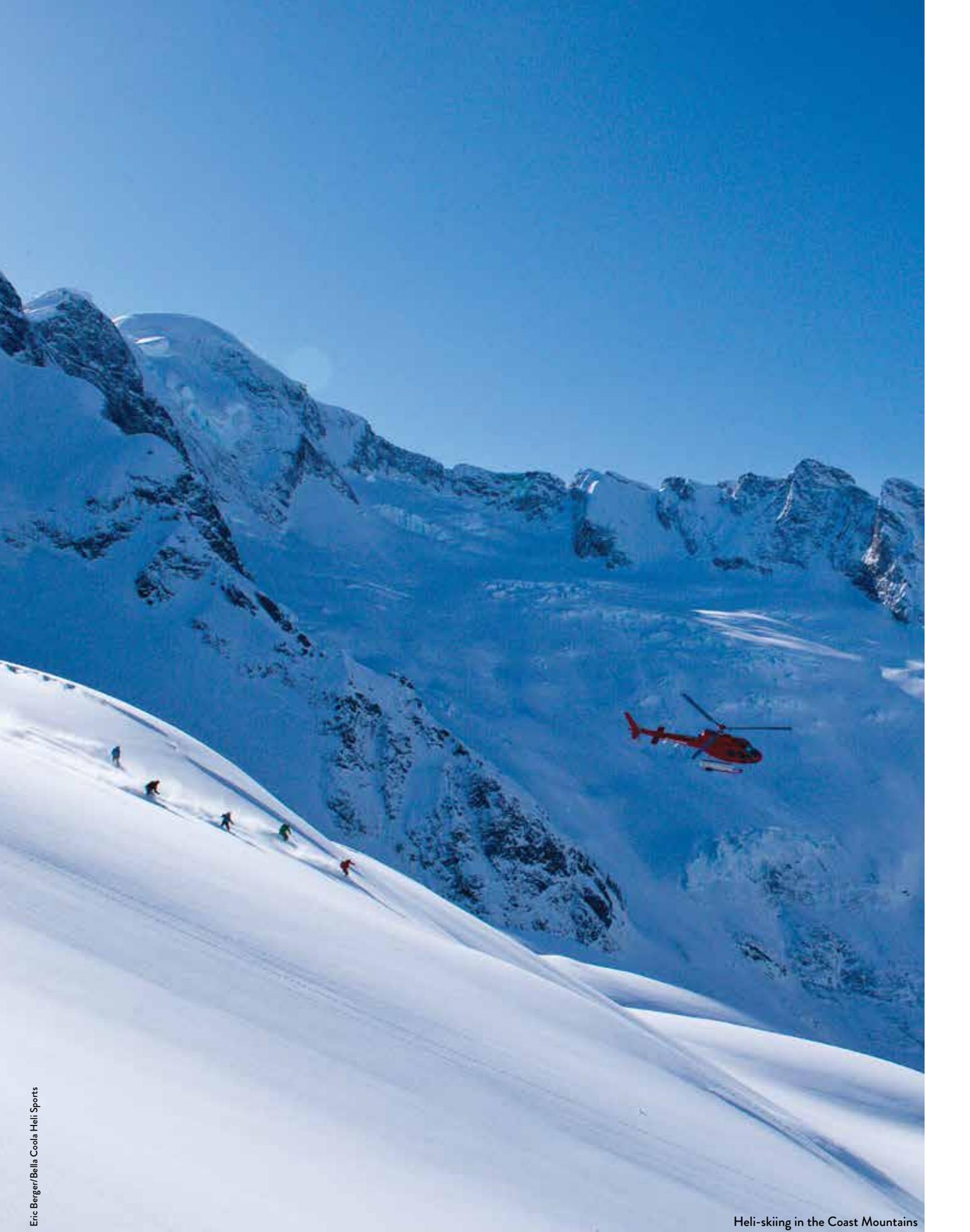
Here, rolling hills, backcountry lakes, brilliant sunshine and deep-powder snow beckon.

If you love winter, our region beckons. Heli-skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing are all in abundance here, as well as Nordic and downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, pond hockey, tobogganing, dogsledding and curling. In short, winter is the time to get outside and have fun.

Long ago, the only way to get around the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast in winter months was via dog sled. Today, this unique way of travel has been revived not only at the competitive level but as a truly memorable interactive experience for visitors. Both amateur and experienced mushers can now answer the call of the wild with a range of guided tours, one-on-one mushing workshops and multiday dogsledding adventures. Imagine being ensconced in a fur-covered dogsled, powered by a team of huskies, as you skate through the forest and over frozen lakes. Add in winter camping, kicking back in a snow-banked hot tub and swapping stories around a crackling fire at a cozy lodge, and it is easy to understand why this region attracts those who enjoy winter weather.

Love skiing? You'll have an embarrassment of riches to choose from: groomed Nordic trails and backcountry skiing options, family-focused downhill opportunities

Snowmobiling at sunset in the Cariboo Mountains



and some of the most amazing deep-powder heli-skiing in the world. Troll Mountain east of Quesnel is a popular family ski hill, and Mount Timothy, which has new owners, is set to re-open in the winter of 2019-20.

Nordic skiers and backcountry aficionados will find peace and tranquility in our region. As BC's Nordic Ski Society puts it, "Everything about this region, from the stable weather and ideal snow conditions to the vibrant culture and stunning natural environment, makes it ideal for its Nordic activities."

Meticulously groomed trails, maintained by resorts, clubs and communities, can be found in any direction a skier might choose to point their poles. Novice Nordic skiers can easily cover the 8-km (5-mi) route between Wells and Barkerville, for example, and well-maintained groomed trails can also be found around 100 Mile House and 108 Mile Ranch.

Mount Agnes, near Barkerville, features 23 km (14 mi) of trails leading through heavily forested countryside. Hallis Lake, outside Quesnel, is known for its vistas and viewpoints, while an hour south near Williams Lake, the 28 km (17.5 mi) of groomed trails at Bull Mountain are the main attraction – some of them lighted and dog-friendly.



A warming soak at Spring Lake

But it is the region's many mountains and soft, dry powder that draw heli-skiers from all over the world. In fact, the sport of heli-skiing was invented in the Cariboo Mountains by mountaineering legend Hans Gmoser, known as the "Father of Heli-skiing." The mountains beckon still. The region's world-renowned heli-skiing destinations boast 3,000-m (9,850-ft) peaks that receive as much as 15 m

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Thomas Dracauskis

Snowmobiling near Wells

(49 ft) of snow annually. Here, alpine daredevils inhabit a world of absolute stillness, a place of virgin beauty with thousands of vertical feet of the finest skiing on earth.

Local Cariboo outfitters keep skiers fit with multiday hut-to-hut tours of the Bowron Lake canoe circuit, where the lakes' frozen surfaces are broken only by the speckled tracks of foxes, hares and timber wolves. In the Chilcotin, Tatla Lake features 40 km (25 mi) of groomed trails and is home to an annual Tatla Lake Ski Challenge and Fun Day in January (with outdoor barbecue and enough good cheer to warm even the coldest winter day). Nearby, Nimpo Lake's wilderness lodges serve as perfect base camps for ski touring in the wilds of Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park.

For some winter lovers, snow exists simply for snowmobiling. Sledgers journey by trail across fluffy, white wilderness, including up and down mountainous terrain known for adrenaline-rush hill-climbing (following responsible sledding guidelines, of course). Meanwhile, Gold Bridge and Bralorne in the Bridge River Valley have long been popular snowmobile havens. The Mineshaft Pub is "sledder central" for many events. Favourite rides in this area include the Lone Goat Trail and Slim Creek, where the distance travelled is limited only by the amount of fuel carried.

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donna.barnett.mla@leg.bc.ca

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Gold Rush Trail Sled Dog Mail Run**, held every January, is popular with competitors and spectators alike. Participants are issued special hand-stamped envelopes of mail in Quesnel and swear an oath to deliver it to the town of Wells, 100 km (62 mi) away along a route that traces the historic Cariboo Waggon Road. The emphasis is on fun, but first prize still counts for bragging rights at the local pub.
- Excitement is also growing with the development of the **Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail**, a work in progress that, when completed, will offer 350 km (217 mi) of stunningly picturesque, well-signed touring from Clinton to Barkerville. Check first with local clubs and Visitor Centres for trail updates and amenities en route.
- Marble Canyon Provincial Park in the Pavilion Mountain Range between Lillooet and Cache Creek, is the place to **test your skills in ice climbing** on the roadside icefalls — some of the most thrilling and accessible in the west.



Michael Bednar

Winter scrimmage at Spring Lake



Thomas Drasdauskis

Skiing on Bowron Lake



Thomas Drasdauskis

Bowron Lake ice fisher



Thomas Drasdauskis

Dogsledding at Barkerville Historic Town & Park





The sun sets on a winter day on Bowron Lake



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Visitor Centres & Booths

BC Visitor Centres and Booths offer friendly, professionally trained staff with local knowledge of attractions, activities, events and current seasonal road travel to help you make informed travel plans. They can also assist with accommodation, transportation and sightseeing tour bookings. Please refer to the map in the centre of this guide for locations of BC Visitor Centres and info booths throughout the region.

International Visitors to Canada

Canadian law requires that all persons entering Canada carry both proof of citizenship and proof of identity. A valid US passport, passport card or NEXUS card satisfies these requirements for US citizens. Children under 16 need only present proof of US citizenship. Other international visitors to Canada must carry a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website cic.gc.ca for a complete listing of countries whose citizens require visas to enter Canada. All other visitors should contact their Canadian consulate or embassy to learn which documents are required. To learn more about Canadian customs regulations, visit the Canada Border Services Agency website cbsa.gc.ca.

Ferry Travel

BC Ferries' Northern Sea Wolf provides direct sailings between Bella Coola in the Great Bear Rainforest and Port Hardy on northern Vancouver Island. The region can also be accessed by Inside Passage-Mid Coast-Bella Coola route, onboard the Northern Expedition. Depending on your destination, you may change vessels along the way. Reservations should be made well in advance for travel on Inside Passage and the Discovery Coast Connector routes to Great Bear Rainforest communities. Check with BC Ferries for current schedules and to make reservations. bcferries.com/schedules.
1-888-223-3779

Rail Travel

The Rocky Mountaineer's Rainforest to Gold Rush route travels from Whistler to Jasper, Alberta, through the historic Cariboo gold rush region, with an overnight stop in Quesnel. Reservations are required.
rockymountaineer.com
1-877-460-3200

Air Travel

Pacific Coastal Airlines services Williams Lake, Anahim Lake, Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Klemtu and Ocean Falls.
pacificcoastal.com
1-800-663-2872
Central Mountain Air services Quesnel and Williams Lake.
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Firearms in Canada

For information regarding the importation of firearms to Canada, contact the Canadian Firearms Centre at 1-800-731-4000 from Canada, or from the US at 1-506-624-6626 from other locations rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/information/visit/index-eng.htm

Watercraft Regulations

Everyone who operates a power-driven boat in Canada needs proof of competency – something that shows they understand the rules of the road and how to safely operate a boat. The most common proof of competency is the Pleasure Craft Operator Card. For more information visit Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety online or call the safe boating line.
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1-800-267-6687

Recreational Vehicle Operation

Operators of recreational vehicles in BC are required to comply with provincial regulations. To ensure you are aware of current updates and requirements in your area, review websites regularly. Visit gov.bc.ca and search for off road vehicles.
1-250-356-7040

The following websites may provide helpful information for planning your visit to the region.

BC Driving Conditions

drivebc.ca or 1-800-550-4997

BC Wildfire Travel Advisories

bcwildfire.ca

Parks & Camping

env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks
sitesandtrailsbc.ca

Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife

Check current regulations and restrictions:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/hunting>
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fishing.gov.bc.ca



Paddle boarders on Bowron Lake

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Outdoor Safety

The wilderness areas of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region attract visitors from all over the world. As much of the region is true wilderness, communications can be spotty or non-existent. Anyone looking to enjoy the outdoors should be well prepared and leave a trip plan with a friend. AdventureSmart has a wealth of safety information to help you make the most of your trip.

adventuresmart.ca

Harmful human-wildlife conflict is extremely rare, but visitors should be prepared for the possibility of encountering wildlife. AdventureSmart and Wildsafe have helpful guidelines for dealing with wildlife encounters. Please report human-wildlife conflict to the conservation officer service; you can also help us keep our wilderness intact by reporting any suspected poaching or polluting.

1-877-952-7277 (Conservation Officer Service)
wildsafebc.com

British Columbia has a world-class system of volunteer-run Search and Rescue. If someone you know is lost, injured or overdue from a trip in the outdoors, please contact the local police. There is no charge for emergency search and rescue services.

Wildfire Safety

Wildfires play an important role in the lifecycle of the forests of British Columbia, returning nutrients to the soil and renewing the ecosystem. While spectacular, these events can be dangerous. British Columbia has a provincial service that handles wildfires and ensures public safety.

For information on current wildfire events, please contact the BC Wildfire service. If you encounter a wildfire, you can help keep people safe by reporting it.

1-800-663-5555
*5555 (Mobile Phones)

When the risk of fire is high, it is sometimes necessary to ban open fires, including campfires. This helps prevent wildfires and makes the outdoors safer for everyone. You can check the status of active bans at any time through the BC Wildfire Service. Please be aware that there are substantial fines in place for violating a fire ban.

gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/fire-bans-and-restrictions

Emergency Contacts

Police, Fire Ambulance, most of BC*	911
Bella Coola Police	250-799-5363
Bella Coola Ambulance	1-800-461-9911
Ambulance, from a satellite phone	250-374-5937
Ambulance, if 911 does not work*	0, ask for operator

*911 does not work in some areas, such as Bella Coola and backcountry areas

Emergency information

Emergency Info BC is the provincial source for information on ongoing emergency situations.

emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca
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The BC Wildfire Service provides up-to-date information on wildfire conditions.

2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status
 @BCGovFireInfo
 @BCForestFireInfo
1-888-336-7378 (information line)

DriveBC provides information on road conditions, closures and other useful information for travellers.

drivebc.ca
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Evacuation Alerts and Orders

When a hazard poses a risk to the public, the government may issue evacuation notices. These come in two different levels: alerts and orders. For more information on evacuation notices, contact EmergencyInfoBC or the local government.

Evacuation Alert: An evacuation alert is issued when there is a chance that a hazard may become a threat to the area. You do not have to leave an area under an evacuation alert and can travel in and out of these areas normally. However, you should be ready to leave if the alert is upgraded.

Evacuation Order: An order is issued when there is an immediate threat to an area. When an order is issued, all people in the area must leave immediately. Please leave the area as soon as possible along the announced evacuation route.



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