

CANADIAN ROCKIES

THE ABSOLUTE ADVENTURE



Relax and absorb the beauty of Banff National Park. (© Travel Alberta)

Journey into the heart of Canada's Rocky Mountains and witness the pristine beauty of snow-capped mountains, the stillness of crystal blue lakes, and marvel at the depth of the gorges and canyons — this is Canada's unspoiled wonderland!

Travel back in time along the twisting canyons, known as the Drumheller Badlands, to the domain of the dinosaur. View ancient treasures at the world famous Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. Experience the vibrant dancing, drumming and singing of Native American culture at an Aboriginal PowWow and rodeo. Enjoy a taste of the back-country on our overnight horseback (or 4x4) excursion while keeping an eye out for elk, big horn sheep, bears and coyote. Relax by a campfire under the stars — Western Canada awaits you!



A helicopter flight takes us over spectacular glaciers, waterfalls and alpine lakes to the starting point of our



FACT FILE

- 13 land days
- Maximum 16 travelers
- Start and finish in Calgary
- All meals included

HIGHLIGHTS

- Heli-hiking
- Aboriginal PowWow & Rodeo
- Visit historic towns of Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper
- Trail ride, overnight excursion
- Royal Tyrrell Museum
- Badlands & Drumheller
- Columbia Icefields, Athabasca Falls

DEPARTURE DATES

Jul 13 – 25, 2006

July 12 – 24, 2007

PRICE: \$3995 USD
\$4795 CAD

Plus 7% GST
(Goods and Services Tax)

ACTIVITY LEVEL: 3

COMFORT LEVEL

Some roads may be rough.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels/lodges with 8 nights at Rafter Six Lodge, western style rooms with private washrooms. 1 night in a rustic lodge, with shared accommodation and shared outdoor toilet facilities.



Turquoise-blue Lake Louise.

mountain hike. Expert guides show us the way, pointing out unique flora and fauna as we explore the Rockies from high above. Avid hikers will have the opportunity for an additional optional heli-hiking excursion later in the trip.

Our journey stops in the historic mountain towns of Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper, each situated within the boundaries of two of Canada's most picturesque national parks — Banff and Jasper. Nestled between the rolling foothills of Calgary and Banff and surrounded by spectacular landscape and an abundance of wildlife, Rafter Six Lodge provides the perfect home base for our Western Canada adventure.

Our adventure ends in Calgary, but those wishing to continue their journey westward can board the Rocky Mountaineer, a uniquely designed train that only travels in daylight hours.

Combines with...

Rocky Mountaineer extension.

SMALL GROUP ADVENTURE TRAVEL

DAY 1

CALGARY – RAFTER SIX GUEST RANCH RESORT

Met on arrival at Calgary airport and transfer across Alberta's rolling countryside to Rafter Six Guest Ranch Resort, where we will spend eight nights while enjoying our western adventure. Rafter Six Ranch is



Calgary.

located conveniently between Calgary and Banff. In the 1880's the Northwest Mounted Police were barely ten years old and were in constant need of horses well suited to the rigors of the Alberta weather — and that's how this world class horse ranch started. Standing three stories high, this beautifully crafted log structure is one of the largest in the world. For your peace of mind, the rooms have no televisions or phones. Bears, deer, coyotes, elk and other wildlife are frequently seen in and around this area. Pass the time before dinner settling in, taking a trail ride in the area, relaxing on the deck, or taking a hike in this wilderness wonderland. Then it's time to enjoy the very best of western hospitality, including our welcome dinner, before spending a restful night in this western hideaway.

DAY 2

RAFTER SIX GUEST RANCH — DRUMHELLER

After a wholesome western breakfast, we head out across rich, rolling farmlands that suddenly break away to reveal an astonishing, twisting, turning canyon, walled with multi-colored layers of sandstone, mudstone and coal alternating with shale sequences. The rock layers date back to the late Cretaceous Period, just before the demise



Badlands — once the domain of dinosaurs.



Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology.

of the dinosaurs. We are now in the Drumheller Badlands, one of the few areas in the world where sedimentary layers from earlier time periods have been scraped off by natural processes, exposing a rich cache of fossils and even complete dinosaur skeletons. The exposed rock of Alberta's Badlands creates a mysterious moon-like landscape that reveals more than 70 million years of geological history. Gouged out of the prairie by ancient rivers and ice, this



Dinosaur dig.



Drumheller — downtown area.

intriguing area was once the domain of the dinosaur. Today, we will see ancient treasures yielded by the earth at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. Some of the most stunning reconstructed dinosaur skeletons on earth stalk the exhibit space. There are ten signature galleries and feature exhibitions that celebrate the spectacular history and diversity of life on Earth. Visitors can join in a dinosaur dig or watch the experts release skeletons from their tombs of stone. At the end of our visit to Drumheller, it's back to Rafter Six for dinner and another restful night.

DAY 3

OVERNIGHT HORSEBACK PACK TRIP

After breakfast, we meet at the stables to get acquainted with our wranglers and horses. We then transfer by road to the departure point of our horseback riding adventure. We ride through pristine wilderness in the Rocky Mountain backcountry for about an hour and a half before stopping for lunch on the trail.

After a picnic lunch, we then saddle up again for another hour and a half ride to Meadow Creek. We ride along the pack trail, through meadows, along cliffs and up and

down slopes. Our horses are very familiar with the trails and this a wonderful opportunity to relax and enjoy the spectacular scenery as we mosey along.

For those who prefer not to ride the horses, a 4 x 4 vehicle is available. Upon arrival, we can relax or take a short hike before gathering for dinner. After dinner, we spend some time around a cozy campfire underneath the big mountain sky. Our accommodation this evening is in simple log cabins, which are co-ed and sleep 4 people. The toilet facilities are a shared outhouse.

DAY 4

PACK TRIP — RAFTER SIX GUEST RANCH

The fresh mountain air will surely have left us with an appetite for our pack camp breakfast, after which we enjoy the trail ride homeward, with a stop along the way for another of those flavorful picnic style trail lunches. We wrap up the day with memories of our journey shared over a hearty dinner at Rafter Six before settling in for the night. Overnight Rafter Six.



Lake Louise.



Lake Louise with Victoria Glacier in the background.



Columbia Icefields Parkway.

DAY 5

RAFTER SIX GUEST RANCH & AREA

Today's post breakfast activities feature a choice. You can choose between a "Gentle Float" morning canoe trip, or an optional heli-hiking experience. The float canoes travel the Bow River, down stream of Canmore, winding their way through the Front Ranges of the Canadian Rockies. This scenic float trip employs historic style canoes to safely and comfortably transport groups — depending on the group size; we will travel in one or two of these large canoes.

The canoe trip provides wonderful photographic opportunities and wildlife viewing. You travel approximately 9 km along the river and the round trip time is about 2 1/2 hours. If you select the optional heli-hiking journey, you start with a 25-minute sight seeing tour which takes you along the Goat and Sundance ranges where you will see mountain peaks, alpine meadows and pristine lakes before you are delivered to Mount Charles Stewart, where adventure awaits. The hike, led by qualified guides who are chosen for their local knowledge and particularly for their ability to communicate effectively with their guests, explores scenic alpine ridges and meadows.

The difficulty of the hike depends entirely on the ability of the group and will last 3 to 4

hours. The afternoon is free to pass your time as you wish; be that taking a trail ride in this mountain paradise, experiencing the adventure of going white water rafting, relaxing in the sun on the deck of Rafter Six, or exploring a new hiking trail in this wilderness wonderland. Overnight at Rafter Six.

DAY 6

RAFTER SIX — CLINE RIVER, ICEFIELDS PARKWAY — JASPER

Today we travel through the majestic Canadian Rockies on a route that is considered one of the most scenic mountain routes on Earth. The trip begins at Rafter Six, travels past Banff and Lake Louise and then north along the snow-capped Icefields Parkway to Jasper National Park.

Countless lakes and over 100 glaciers line the route. And, at 2,068 m (6,785 ft.) above sea level, Bow Summit is the highest point on the Parkway and offers one of the best mountain panoramas in the world at Peyto Lake viewpoint. On the way to Jasper we join a scenic 20-minute helicopter flight which explores the 6 glaciers of Mount Resolute, Mount Cline and the Whitegoat Peaks. We will also see a 900-foot waterfall, spectacular aqua-green high alpine lakes and cross a 9,000-foot mountain pass.



Jasper National Park.

Then we are set down in a mountain meadow where our guide will take us on a 3 to 3 1/2 hour tour during which they will interpret all that is seen including flora, fauna, and geology. After our heli-hike we continue our journey along the Icefields Parkway. Look for bighorn sheep and goats as we view the picturesque glaciers and valleys along the remainder of the Parkway to Jasper. This is a mountain retreat with all the modern amenities of a city surrounded by breathtaking scenery and an abundance of wildlife.



Our experienced guides will introduce you to Alberta's flora and fauna.

Tonight's accommodation, Jasper House Bungalows, is located on the banks of the Athabasca River and features cozy cabins in a Pinewood forest setting. The cabins provide quiet, comfortable, fully modern secluded accommodation with the river just outside your door.

DAY 7

JASPER

After breakfast we start off our day of adventure with a visit to Maligne Canyon. The Maligne Valley is riddled by the most extensive "karst" system in the world. A karst system is a geological formation of



Snow-capped peaks of Rocky Mountains.



Athabasca Falls.

© Travel Alberta



Bow Lake.

caves above and below ground level. In the case of the Maligne Valley, no one knows just where water from Maligne Lake goes.

This is one of the most spectacular gorges in the Canadian Rockies, sheer limestone walls plunge to depths of over 50 m (165 ft.). An interpretive trail winds its way from the picnic area across six bridges where you can catch the spray from the thundering Maligne River, or peer into the mossy depths.

Nearby, between the Fifth and Sixth bridges, are the Rock Gardens and the Boulder Gardens, Jasper's foremost climbing areas. Most people stop at the "Third Bridge" where the most easily seen waterfalls is located. However, the trail offers several more wonderful views between here and the "Forth Bridge". From the "Forth Bridge" to the "Fifth Bridge" the canyon settles down in terms of depth but not beauty. To enjoy a real Rocky Mountain experience, our guide will turn back at the "Forth Bridge" and drive



down the Maligne Road to the "Fifth Bridge" parking lot. This will allow us to hike the full length of the Maligne Canyon on the downhill grade. And this is only the first half of our day in Jasper!

We then head off to the renowned Jasper Tramway. The experience of riding Canada's longest and highest aerial tramway tour into Jasper National Park's alpine tundra is captivating. Discover views unsurpassed in the Canadian Rockies. Gaze over six mountain ranges, glacial-fed lakes, meandering rivers and the scenic Jasper Townsite.

Witness the snow-capped splendor of Mt. Robson, the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies. At 3,954 metres (over 12,970 feet) above sea level, we are truly expanding our horizons. We wind down the day visiting the friendly, picturesque community of Jasper. Overnight at Jasper House Bungalows.



Start your hiking day with a helicopter ride.





DAY 8

ICEFIELDS PARKWAY, ATHABASCA FALLS, COLUMBIA ICEFIELDS, LAKE LOUISE, RAFTER SIX

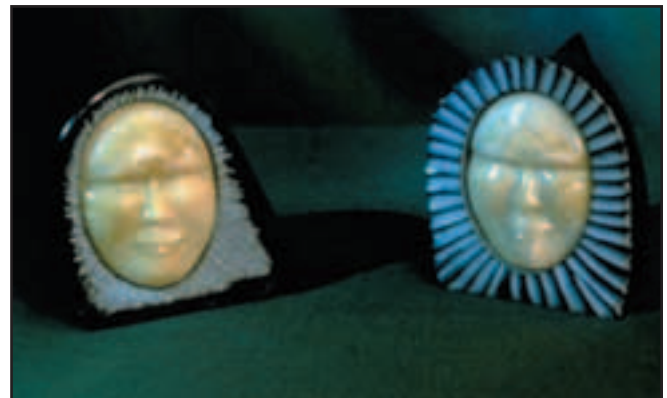
Our first stop for today will be where the breathtaking Athabasca Falls thunder through a narrow gorge, shaping the rocks with the relentless force of rushing water. Broad shouldered Mount Kerkeslin provides a scenic background for this popular view of the falls.

Among the most breathtaking and powerful falls in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, the Athabasca River thunders through a narrow gorge where the walls have been smoothed and potholed by the sheer force of the rushing waters that carry sand and rocks. A bridge and a platform give us views of the thundering falls.

From here we continue down the Parkway to the Columbia Icefields, an area of glacial ice covering some 390 sq. km with a maximum depth of 365 m (1210 ft). Bigger

than the City of Vancouver, the continuous accumulation of snow feeds eight major glaciers and its meltwater feeds streams and rivers that pour into the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific oceans. We take a tour of the icy slopes in a specially designed Snocoach that goes to the middle of the glacier on a 5-kilometer round trip journey. Our driver/guide will explain how glaciers are formed and point out interesting geological features as we travel in safety and comfort.

At the icefall below the glacier headwall, we will have the option of stepping out onto ice formed from snow falling as long as



Stone carvings made by native American artists.



Young farmer.

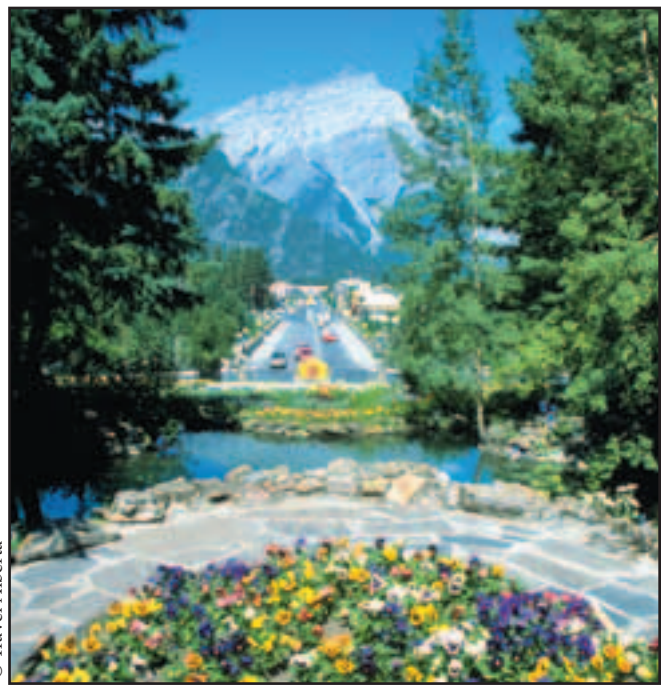
400 years ago. Then we journey along the Icefields Parkway to the Num-Ti-Jah Lodge where we stop for coffee and to stretch our legs.

When Jimmy Simpson, founder of Num-Ti-Jah Lodge, first came upon Bow Lake in 1898, he described it as the most beautiful thing he'd seen in Canada. Num-Ti-Jah Lodge overlooks one of the most dramatic scenes in the Canadian Rockies.

Out of Bow Lake the mountains rise steep and rugged. The blue ice of Crowfoot Glacier hangs suspended over the turquoise water. To the west, the craggy peaks of the Great Divide tower over Bow Glacier. It's now a short trip to our first view of the imposing Victoria Glacier nestled behind beautiful



Sulphur Mountain Gondola in Banff.



View of Banff Avenue from Cascade Gardens in Banff.

Lake Louise. We will be left with no doubt as to why this is known as the "Jewel of the Rockies". Lake Louise, with its blue-green water set against the stark backdrop of Victoria Glacier, is probably the most beloved and most photographed scene in the Canadian Rockies. If you like, you can also stroll along the gentle pathway that takes you half way around the lake to the base of the glacier field. Then it's back to Rafter Six for our overnight.

DAY 9

RAFTER SIX – KANANASKIS VALLEY HIKING

After a hearty breakfast, the morning is at leisure. This afternoon we will spend some time exploring the hiking trails of the Kananaskis Valley.

The Valley is surrounded by the towering Canadian Rockies, grassy meadows, and brisk moving waters. Towering mountains, pristine lakes, evergreen valleys and glacial streams... Kananaskis Country is an area of striking contrasts where you can re-establish



Calgary.

your links with the wilderness. This is one of Alberta's largest outdoor recreation areas and it has been developed to offer outdoor recreational opportunities in a mountain setting.

At the park's visitor center we will find entertaining displays dealing with the natural and cultural history of the area. The Park's trails offer a variety of hiking experiences, ranging from barrier-free trails to high alpine backcountry adventures. Overnight at Rafter Six.

DAY 10

RAFTER SIX — RODEO/POWWOW

Get up early for a satisfying breakfast, then get ready to head off to a Native American PowWow & Rodeo. For those who are not familiar with the Native American

culture, powwows are celebrations, social gatherings and friendly competitions of traditional dancing, drumming, singing, ceremonies and feasting, and the bringing of many nations of people together. Everyone is welcome regardless of race, creed, religion, or color.

At the rodeo, we will experience the adrenaline rush of the competitors' eternal battle to overcome the raw power of the untamed animals of the west. We will spend the day enjoying the exhilaration and excitement of bucking broncos, bull riders, steer wrestlers, calf ropers and barrel racers.

Don't forget that your tour guides are also professional photographers and they are always available and willing to help you with your photography questions. In addition, there is often the opportunity to meet some of the rodeo competitors for conversation and photographs. Overnight at Rafter Six.

DAY 11

RAFTER SIX — KANANASKIS COUNTRY, COWBOY TRAIL, BAR U RANCH

Today's travels begin with a trip through Kananaskis Country. This is an unspoiled paradise of towering mountains, pristine lakes, evergreen valleys and glacial streams. The name Kananaskis is rich with history.

Captain John Palliser, an early explorer of the valley, identified the area by taking the name of a local Indian. Palliser wrote that he had heard of an Indian named Kananaskis, "giving an account of a most wonderful recovery from the blow of an axe to the head — which stunned, but failed to kill him".

This picturesque route delivers us to the Cowboy Trail. Along the foothills of Alberta's Rocky Mountains is a narrow band of mixed forests and grasslands known for its moderate climate, a wide variety of wildlife species and broad ecological diversity. Alberta's ranching families first settled the territory in the 1880's and transformed the rolling grasslands into cattle country.

Today, communities along this corridor are linked together by The Cowboy Trail, a ribbon of pavement extending from Cardston to Mayerthorpe. The Old West is still evident in the art, history, food, hospitality and culture of the foothills residents. Along the way, we are likely to see cowboys out herding cattle, sometimes right along the highway and families out for a horseback ride.

Just past Longview, on Highway 22, we will stop for a visit at the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site. Nestled in the foothills of southern Alberta with the majestic Rocky Mountains as the backdrop, the Bar U is one of the jewels in Parks Canada's crown. This 367-acre ranch, consisting of 35 historic structures and Visitor Orientation Centre is situated along Pekisko Creek.

The Bar U Ranch was one of a small group of very large corporate ranches in western Canada. Established in 1882, it was one of the foremost ranching operations in Canada. The

Bar U achieved international repute as a centre of breeding excellence for cattle and purebred Percheron horses. The Site preserves a spirit of time and place by presenting a vibrant, living historic ranch with daily activities and group educational tours.

DAY 12

RAFTER SIX, BANFF, CALGARY

After another wonderful breakfast, we're off to the town of Banff. Once there, we will take an eight-minute ride in a glass enclosed gondola to the 2288 m (7500 ft) summit of Sulphur Mountain, where three levels of outdoor observation decks offer a panoramic 360-degree view of Banff and the surrounding area.

We will see the majestic Banff Springs Hotel. A unique blend of opulence and seclusion, it has been a symbol of Rocky Mountain magnificence for more than a century. Styled after a Scottish baronial castle, the Banff Springs offers stunning vistas, timeless beauty and luxurious comfort in a pristine wilderness.

Then we will stop at the hot springs. All the amenities of a modern facility are featured in this splendid, historic spa and bathhouse — against a backdrop of



Bull Elk.



Fabulous scenery in Banff surrounding area.

spectacular alpine scenery. We can luxuriate in the comfort of soothing hot springs, where travelers have come to “take the waters” for more than a century. Average temperature is 39°C (103°F) year-round. Take the time to relax in the hot pool, enjoy the scenery, or visit the gift shop!

Then it’s on to the Banff townsite, where we can tour the many fine museums and natural history centres, in addition to sampling the extensive and unique shopping opportunities.

This afternoon we head for Calgary. Our farewell dinner is at Ranchman’s Restaurant. Often referred to as Canada’s Greatest Honky Tonk and Country Night

Club, Ranchman’s is the Official Hospitality Location of the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association. Ranchman’s proudly displays over sixty championship trophy saddles of Canadian and World champions. The walls spring alive with daring and danger-packed action photos of legendary showdowns between man and beast. Overnight in Calgary.

DAY 13

CALGARY DEPARTURE

Transfer to Calgary airport for your departure flight today.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. How big are the groups?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. What is included in the tour price?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day; all internal transportation; airport transfers on Day 1 and Day 13; all day trips as outlined in the itinerary; and the services of an experienced guide. Horseback riding lessons, trail rides and white water rafting at Rafter Six are optional extras.

3. Are these “educational” tours?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit many natural and cultural sites and have talks and discussions on many aspects of natural history and native culture.

4. How do we travel during the tour?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by bus, by helicopter, by canoe, horseback, snocoach and on foot (heli-hiking).

5. What are our accommodations like?

We spend 8 nights at Rafter Six Lodge, western style rooms with private washrooms. In Jasper/Calgary, comfortable, well-located hotels with private washrooms. 1 night in rustic log cabin that sleeps 4 and is co-ed. The toilet facilities for this night is a shared out-house.

6. What about the weather?

Our trips to the Rocky Mountains take place during the summer months, when the weather is generally warm, however cooler temperatures may occur. As with all travel to British Columbia and Alberta, in general, one must be fully prepared for both sun and rain.

7. When is payment due?

A non-refundable deposit of \$400 (plus insurance if you require) is due at the time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full tour cost is due 90 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

8. What should I take on the tour?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

9. What meals are included?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day.

10. Can you arrange my flights?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

11. What if I would like more information?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

