



TRIP IDEAS

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES IN THE KOOTENAY ROCKIES

The Kootenay Rockies region, home to four national parks and glacier-draped mountain ranges, is one big outdoor adventure playground. Ride the rapids on the Kicking Horse River, explore Rossland's famous mountain bike trails, or hike to an ancient fossil bed in Yoho National Park. After all the outdoor activities, relax in a natural hot spring or artsy mountain town.

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Explore Nelson

At artsy, historic Nelson on the edge of Kootenay Lake, settle into the Prestige Inn or the Prestige Lakeside Resort. With Nelson as a homebase, hike in lakeside Kokanee Creek Provincial Park or tackle the backcountry trails in high-altitude, lake-rich Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. Prefer to paddle? Launch a canoe to explore Kootenay Lake's beaches and waterfalls.

Back in town, browse ArtWalk, where downtown shops and restaurants morph into galleries for the summer. Grab a coffee at Oso Negro or pick up some organic picnic treats at the Kootenay Bakery. Come evening, tuck into locally sourced bistro fare at All Seasons Café, or fresh gnocchi at BiBo, then head to Gyro Park for an evening at the Bard in the Bush Shakespeare Festival.

Mountain Biking

Mountain bike movies are made in Nelson for a reason. Ride any of the five trail systems near town, or head an hour southwest to Rossland. Rossland boasts the epic Seven Summits Trail, one of the few trails in Canada to achieve "epic trail" status by the International Mountain Bike Association, along with scenic and challenging old wagon roads, pack trails and rail beds.

At Panorama Mountain Village near Invermere, check out the lift-accessed mountain bike park. Choose from close to 20 trails and cruise down the 380m/1,246ft of vertical. Try the easy Let it Ride trail or the expert-rated Crazytrain. Cross-country options are also available.

Hot Springs and Fishing

Immerse yourself in the revitalizing mineral waters of the Ainsworth Hot Springs. Wander through a distinctive cave where hot mineral water surfaces from the earth and stalagmites form in abundance. To cool down, take a plunge in the stream-fed cold pool. More hot springs? Continue north along Highway 93 and 95; it's part of BC's Hot Springs Circle Route. Join the locals at the rustic Lussier Hot Springs in Whiteswan Lake Provincial Park, or check out the lavish spa and pool complex at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.

Another way to take to the water is on a fly-fishing trip to the crystal-clear waters of Silver Spring Lakes. Hike in with your gear to these remote, scenic lakes, either on your own or with a local guide.

National Parks

Take the scenic route from Radium Hot Springs to Golden and enjoy the Rocky

Mountain splendour of Yoho and Kootenay national parks. In Kootenay National Park, trek the classic multi-day Rockwall Trail or hike to the Paint Pots, where iron-rich springs have turned the earth a brilliant orange. At CrossRiver Wilderness Centre just southeast, choose from heritage cabins or teepees, and mix hiking and rafting with a wilderness skills workshop or an inter-cultural sharing experience with a First Nations elder. Learn and challenge yourself with a knowledgeable guide, or relax and share stories around the campfire or hot tub.

Yoho National Park boasts such iconic photo ops as turquoise-green Emerald Lake, Takakkaw Falls (one of Canada's highest waterfalls) and the Burgess Shale, an ancient fossil bed and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Create a base camp at Emerald Lake Lodge or the cabins of Cathedral Mountain Lodge in Yoho National Park.

Heading west to Revelstoke, the Trans-Canada Highway passes through Glacier National Park (with more than 400 glaciers, it's earned the name) and Mount Revelstoke National Park, where the Meadows-in-the-Sky Parkway leads to far-reaching mountain views. Overnight at timber-framed Heather Mountain Lodge at the gateway to Glacier National Park.

Explore Golden

From Golden, raft through deep canyons and the furious rapids of the Kicking Horse River, one of the wildest river runs in Canada. Ride the lifts at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort to hike, bike or just soak up the views. Walk among wolves at the Northern Lights Wildlife Wolf Centre, or spot great blue herons, ospreys and eagles in the Columbia River Wetlands, a rich birdlife and wildlife habitat south of town. A bit further south, take a once-in-a-lifetime heli-hiking trip to the rugged Bugaboo Mountains. For dinner, take Kicking Horse Mountain's Golden Eagle Express gondola to the Eagle's Eye restaurant; at 2,350m/7,710ft, it's the highest eatery in Canada.

Kootenay Rockies Transportation

The Canadian Rockies International Airport in Cranbrook has direct flights of about 90 minutes from Vancouver, 50 minutes from Calgary and 80 minutes from Edmonton. Nelson and Golden are each a 9- to 10-hour scenic drive from Vancouver or about three hours from Cranbrook.