

Biking the Kettle Valley Rail Trail in Myra Canyon



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TRIP IDEAS

THOMPSON OKANAGAN FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Skateboard, bike, climb, swim, get up close with desert creatures and spawning sockeye: family activities in the Thompson Okanagan region feature one outdoor adventure after another, whether riverside, mountainside, lakeside or cliffside. Grab the family, pack a picnic and start exploring. Here is a sample of some of the many family friendly spots on offer, along with places to eat and stay.

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Kettle Valley Steam Railway (Summerland) and Spirit of Kamloops Rail Tours

Climb aboard a 100-year-old steam locomotive with open-air cars for a 90-minute journey into the past. Interact with costumed staff and listen to musicians as the Kettle Valley Steam Railway showcases the mountains, wineries and orchards of rural Summerland.

Ride the "Spirit of Kamloops," part of the Kamloops Heritage Railway, and learn about the age of steam. Highlights of the tour include crossing the South Thompson River on a steel trestle bridge and watching masked cowboys on horseback re-enact the famous Bill Miner train robbery.

Silver Star Bike Park (Vernon) and Kettle Valley Rail Trail (Kelowna)

When the snow melts, cyclists come out to play at Silver Star Mountain Resort's mountain bike park. A chairlift delivers riders to the top and then gravity takes over and delivers riders all the way down to the resort village. There are trails here for every level of biker. Want to learn more mountain biking tips? Silver Star offers a variety of bike camps for beginner to advanced riders.

Families who enjoy biking at a slower pace can head just south of Kelowna to ride the Myra Canyon section of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail. This relatively flat section of the trail features 18 gorge-spanning trestles for cyclists to ride across.

Wells Gray Provincial Park (Clearwater)

Wells Gray Provincial Park is a sprawling wilderness in the rugged Cariboo Mountains. Outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to the park's extensive hiking trails, ranging from a few minutes to a few days in duration, as well as to a wide variety of wildlife. Explore thick forests, lush meadows and spectacular waterfalls, and take to the water in one of several lakes.

Secwepemc Museum & Heritage Park (Kamloops), Adams River Spawning Channel (near Kamloops) and Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (Osoyoos)

Visit the Adams River spawning channel in Roderick Haig-Brown Provincial Park in early October on a dominant year (every four years, with 2014 being the next big one), and be amazed as millions of sockeye fight their way up-river past some easily accessible view points. An awesome sight that draws visitors from all over the world.

While in the area, don't miss the Secwepemc Museum & Heritage Park to see the archaeological remains of a 2000-year-old

Aboriginal village. Check out the on-site ethnobotanical gardens and learn about the healing properties of plants indigenous to the Secwepemc territory.

On the slopes above Osoyoos Lake, the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (pronounced in-ka-meep) portrays history and culture through interactive displays, tours and programs. Learn about the land, legends and Aboriginal peoples who have called the South Okanagan home for thousands of years. A feature attraction is the rattlesnake exhibit, where western rattlers and their lookalike cousins, gopher snakes, are coaxed from their underground burrows by savvy handlers. Get close to these reptiles – the brave can even pat them.

Family-Friendly Restaurants

- Storms On The River in Kamloops overlooks the South Thompson River. Order from the sundeck then play on the lawn until the meal arrives
- Nothing says fun like chicken fingers and a cheese pita pizza at Theo's in Penticton, a restored grand villa with a Greek Islands ambience. Fresh fruit drinks (in the summer) offer an Okanagan signature flavour.

- Sugarcoat a day trip around Kelowna with an organic fruit gelato at family run Carmelis Goat Cheese Artisan Inc. Carmelis is located at the foot of Okanagan Mountain; pop in before or after a dip in the nearby lake.

Family-Friendly Accommodations

- Riverland Inn & Suites in Kamloops features an indoor pool, and some rooms feature kitchenettes. Request a river-facing room to take advantage of the motel's spacious lawn, perfect for tossing a Frisbee.
- Manteo Resort Waterfront Hotel & Villas on Okanagan Lake in Kelowna will keep the kids amused for hours with a Kids Klub, outdoor pool, waterslide and children's splash area.
- Spray the heat away in the open-air water park at Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa in Osoyoos. Shop at local produce stands and then cook up a meal in a fully equipped gourmet kitchen, standard in each suite.

Thompson Okanagan Transportation

One international airport in Kelowna and two local airports in Kamloops and Penticton service the region. The iconic, national rail tour called "The Canadian" stops in Kamloops. Commercial bus lines run to nearly all cities and towns, while highways flow into the region from all directions.



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