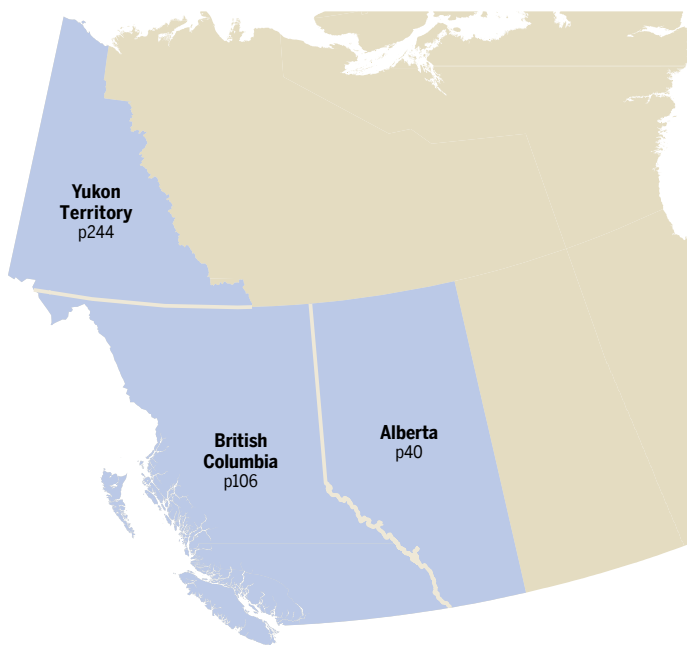


British Columbia & the Canadian Rockies

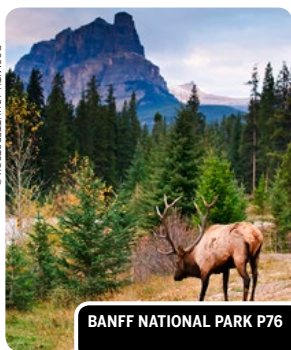


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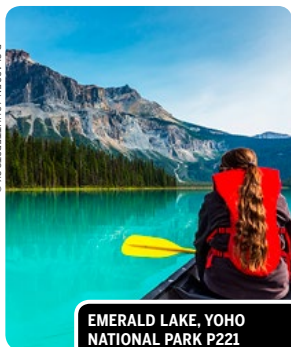
John Lee, Korina Miller, Ryan Ver Berkmoes

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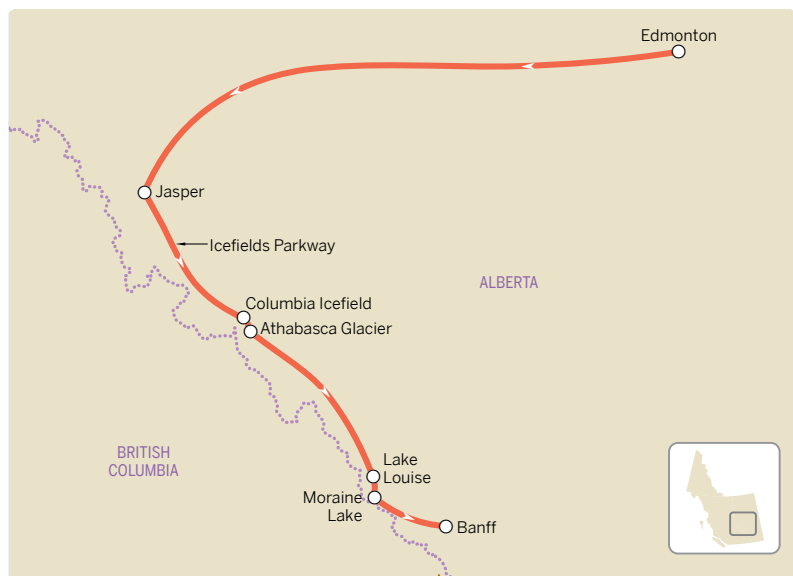
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Itineraries

**10
DAYS**

Epic Rockies Roll

The Rockies are a must-see for any visitor to Canada. You can cover all the jaw-dropping highlights on this grand tour.

Start in gateway city **Edmonton**, spending a couple of days shopping, perusing museums and putting around the Old Strathcona neighborhood. Then hit Hwy 16 westward for your first big drive: a half-day weave to **Jasper**. Check in for three nights, grab a beer at the Jasper Brewing Co and plan your wildlife-watching around the region's lakes and mountains. Next it's time to move on southwards via the **Icefields Parkway**, Canada's most scenic drive. It's shadowed by looming crags and studded with inquisitive bighorn sheep that peer at you from the clifftops. Stop en route at the **Columbia Icefield** and take a hike or truck tour on the **Athabasca Glacier**. After lunch at the nearby Columbia Icefield Discovery Centre, continue southwards to **Lake Louise**: take photos and wander the shoreline, saving time for a visit to the equally dazzling **Moraine Lake** a short drive away. Back in the car, you'll soon be in **Banff**. Treat yourself to a fancy hotel sleepover and spend the rest of your visit hiking flower-covered alpine trails and marveling at the epic Unesco-listed landscapes.



BC's Grand Circle Tour

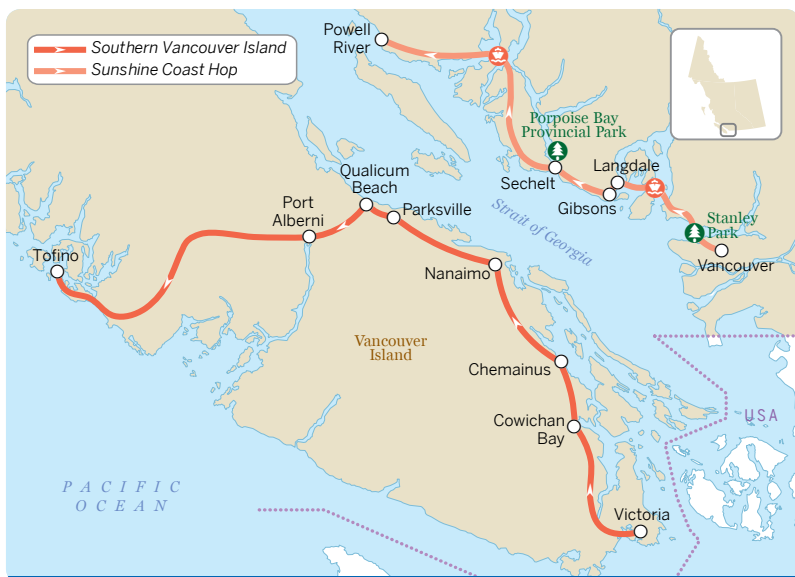
There's much more to BC than its cities; take your time and head off the beaten path via this trip-of-a-lifetime circle odyssey.

Start your journey of discovery in **Vancouver**. Catch the BC Ferries vessel from West Vancouver's Horseshoe Bay for the short ride to **Nanaimo**, where you can sink into 'island time' and start to enjoy Vancouver Island's laid-back culture – it's distinctly more independent and small-town than the mainland. After spending the night, head north on Hwy 19, taking an eastward detour to waterfront **Telegraph Cove**. Take a whale- or bear-watching tour here and check in for a night in one of the restored cottage buildings (book ahead in summer).

Continue north on Hwy 16 the next morning and check in to **Port Hardy** for the night: if it's still daylight, consider an oceanfront hike. You'll have an early start to catch the **Discovery Coast Connector Ferry** the next morning (summer only) but it's well worth it: a languid all-day odyssey of coastline gazing with the ever-present promise of spotting eagles, whales, seals and more from the sun-dappled deck.

Arriving in tiny **Bella Coola**, which sits at the end of a long fjord, find yourself a rustic retreat for a few nights in the **Bella Coola Valley**. Spend your days exploring trails alongside huge old cedars and make the hike to pounding **Odegaard Falls**. Go for a river float and lose count of the grizzlies wandering the shores. When you leave, tackle The Hill, a thrill-ride for drivers, and head east through the lonely **Chilcotin** area. Stop at the alpine waters of the little lakes along the way or just take any little tributary road and lose civilization – what little there is – altogether. At **Williams Lake** say yee-ha to cowboy country.

Turn south on the Cariboo Hwy (Hwy 97), otherwise known as the Gold Rush Trail. The road follows the route of the first pioneers and gold seekers who settled in BC's unforgiving interior. From **Lytton**, head out white-water rafting on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. After these chilly waters, warm up with a soak in **Harrison Hot Springs**. From here, it's an easy drive back to Vancouver on Hwy 1.

1
WEEK

Southern Vancouver Island

The BC capital is the perfect gateway for exploring the charms of Vancouver Island on a winding weave that links several inviting communities. Start with two nights in capital city **Victoria**, giving yourself plenty of time to explore museums, galleries and historic streets before departing northwards on day three via Hwy 1. Take your time weaving through the Malahat Mountain region but allow time for a long lunch in the idyllic waterfront community of **Cowichan Bay**. It'll be hard to tear yourself away (there are B&Bs in the area if you can't manage it) but worthwhile to continue north to **Chemainus**, a former logging town now adorned with dozens of murals. It's not far to your sleepover in **Nanaimo**, the island's second city, where there are some decent restaurants and a popular museum. Next morning, you'll be off to check out the friendly oceanfront communities of **Parksville** and **Qualicum Beach** – ideal for beachcombing fans – before veering inland via Hwy 4 towards the dramatic west coast. **Port Alberni** is a handy lunch stop, but you'll likely be eager to thread through the winding mountain roads to **Tofino**. Spend several nights here soaking up BC's wild Pacific Ocean coastline.

4
DAYS

Sunshine Coast Hop

It's hard to get lost on this easy escape from Vancouver; the area's only highway links all the main communities in a linear fashion. Drive on and enjoy a laid-back, island-like ambience. Head north from **Vancouver** on Hwy 99 through **Stanley Park** and make for West Van's Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal. Take the Sunshine Coast vessel to **Langdale** and roll off onto Hwy 101, the region's main artery. After a few minutes you'll be in artist-studded **Gibsons**, an ideal lunch stop – waterfront dining recommended. Check into a local B&B, then take an early-evening kayak tour on the glassy ocean. Rejoining Hwy 101 the next morning, continue on to **Sechelt** and consider a shoreline forest hike in **Porpoise Bay Provincial Park**. If you're lucky, you'll also catch the summertime Farmers & Artisans Market, a great way to meet the locals. Stay in a waterfront B&B here, then hit the road early the next morning. You'll have a short ferry hop before arriving in **Powell River**. The area's top town, it combines old-school heritage and a funky young population. Stick around for a day or two of hiking and mountain biking, and be sure to toast your trip at Townsite Brewing.

6
DAYS

Due North

Southern BC lures the lion's share of visitors but the north will always be calling your name; dive in with this scenic weave. From downtown **Vancouver**, drive through Stanley Park on Hwy 1 then join Hwy 99 northwards to **Whistler**. Spend the afternoon hiking or mountain biking the summer trails and check into one of the resort's grand hotels. Next morning, continue north via Pemberton; keep your eyes peeled for towering Mt Currie. You're now in the heart of cowboy country but it's probably too late to swap your car for a horse. After a five-hour drive, stop for two nights in a **Williams Lake** motel. Time your visit for the rodeo and you'll have a blast, or book a local white-water rafting tour. Next, hit Hwy 97 towards Prince George; the heart of northern BC's logging country is about three hours away but stop off – via Hwy 26 – at **Barkerville**, an evocative re-creation of an old pioneer town. After a **Prince George** layover, start early on the four-hour Yellowhead Hwy drive to **Smithers**, an arsty little town with cool sleeper options. Your final four-hour drive the next day delivers you eastward to **Prince Rupert**, northern BC's loveliest town.

2
WEEKS

Yukon Bound

The best way to experience the north is to hop in a car and immerse yourself in some rugged Yukon-flavored wilderness. Spend two days exploring **Prince Rupert** – the Museum of Northern BC and North Pacific Cannery are must-sees – before rolling onto an Alaska Marine Highway ferry to Haines, AK. It's a two-day odyssey that cruise ships charge a comparative arm and leg for. Back on dry land, spend a night in **Haines, AK**. From here, you'll be (almost) on the doorstep of one of the world's largest protected wildernesses. Accessed 249km away via the BC town of **Haines Junction**, **Kluane National Park & Reserve** is a vast Unesco-recognized realm of glaciers and mountains. Weave through the park and cross over again into Alaska briefly to access the **Top of the World Hwy**. Continue on your merry way to **Dawson City**, Yukon's coolest old-school town and center of gold-rush heritage. Stick around for two nights to enjoy the historic ambience, then head south on the Klondike Hwy for 538km to **Whitehorse**, the territory's capital. There are enough museums and galleries here to keep you occupied for another Yukon night.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



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British Columbia, Plan, Understand, Survival Guide Originally from the UK, John moved to British Columbia to study at the University of Victoria in the 1990s. Eventually staying and moving to Vancouver, he started a freelance travel-writing career in 1999. Since then, he's been covering the region and beyond for Lonely Planet plus magazines, newspapers and online outlets around the world. Winner of numerous writing awards, he's very active on Twitter and a weekly columnist for Canada's the *Globe* and *Mail* national newspaper; catch up with him at www.johnleewriter.com.



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Alberta Korina grew up on Vancouver Island and has been exploring the globe independently since she was 16, visiting or living in 36 countries and picking up a degree in Communications and Canadian Studies, an MA in Migration Studies and a diploma in Visual Arts en route. As a writer and editor, Korina has worked on nearly 60 titles for Lonely Planet and has also worked with LP.com, BBC, The *Independent*, The *Guardian*, BBC5 and CBC, as well as many independent magazines, covering travel, art and culture. She has currently set up camp back in Victoria, soaking up the mountain views and the pounding surf.



Ryan Ver Berkmoes

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