



Alberta

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Why Go?

In Alberta first impressions often lie. Here, landlocked in central Canada's spectacular hinterland, the Wild West sidles up to the Middle East and blue-eyed sheiks in Stetsons break bread with eco-conscious snowboarders in second-hand Gortex. But, to get a true feel for Canada's most caustic and contradictory province you need to avert your gaze momentarily from its Saudi Arabian-sized oil deposits and take a look through a wider lens. Sitting awkwardly alongside Fort McMurray's tar sands lies the world's third-oldest national park (Banff), its second-largest protected area (Wood Buffalo), numerous Unesco World Heritage sites and enough dinosaur remains to warrant a *Jurassic Park* sequel.

Alberta's urban areas are of patchier interest. Get-rich-quick Calgary is a young, audacious and constantly evolving metropolis that still feels strangely soulless to some, while archrival Edmonton is a cultural dark horse with more annual festivals than any other Canadian city.

Best Places to Eat

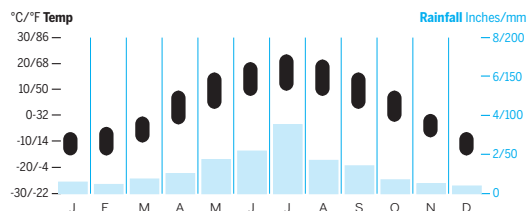
- » Da-De-O (p559)
- » Catch (p579)
- » Coyote's Deli & Grill (p597)
- » Last Chance Saloon (p612)

Best Places to Stay

- » Prince of Wales Hotel (p616)
- » Moraine Lake Lodge (p603)
- » Fairmont Banff Springs (p595)
- » Centro Motel (p577)

When to Go

Edmonton



July Prime time for festivals with Edmonton Street Performers and the Calgary Stampede

July-September Banff and Jasper trails are snow-free, making a full range of hikes available

December-February Winter sports season in the Rocky Mountains



Alberta Highlights

- 1** Explore the Jurassic remnants of **Drumheller** (p611) and call into the **Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology** (p612)
- 2** Get up early and make fresh tracks on a rugged cross-country skiing trail in chilly, wintery **Jasper National Park** (boxed text, p608)
- 3** Take in a festival and unlock the bohemian bonhomie of historic **Old Strathcona** (boxed text, p550) in Edmonton
- 4** Head north on the **Mackenzie Highway** (p619) into a pure, untamed, boreal wilderness
- 5** Get above the tree line on the **Carthew-Alderson Trail** (p616) in Waterton Lakes National Park
- 6** Relax in **Banff Upper Hot Springs** (p593) after a hike
- 7** Enjoy a brew in the **Lake Agnes Teahouse** (p604) high above bluer than blue Lake Louise