

BC ROAD TRIP: GOLD RUSH TRAIL

For the explorer wanting to retrace history, there's no better route to take than the Gold Rush Trail. This historic route follows the path of gold seekers looking to find their fortune in the wilds of British Columbia. The trail begins in New Westminster, near Vancouver, and follows the mighty Fraser River through the Fraser Valley and up through the interior and Cariboo, all the way to Barkerville Historic Town & Park, with an option to continue on to Prince George or follow the prospectors further on the Alaska Highway!

PART 1

NEW WESTMINSTER TO HOPE BC

131.5 km | 1 hour 24 min



Fort Langley

When prospectors came from far and wide to seek their fortunes in the BC's gold rush they loaded up with provisions in New Westminster and set off along the mighty Fraser River on their way inland toward the Cariboo region. This is where our historical journey begins.

Take the Trans Canada Highway BC-1E toward Hope, BC.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Historic Fort Langley: Rising from the mist of the Fraser River, the palisades of Fort Langley stand tall. Inside the walls, rough hewn timber buildings recreate the rugged 1800s. See where Hudson's Bay Company fur traders mingled with California gold prospectors and hear First Nations interpreters tell century-old tales. **Directions:** Take the 232nd Street exit (Exit 66). Continue on 232 and take Glover Rd to the Fort-to-Fort trail/Mavis Ave. Address is 2433 Mavis Ave in Langley, BC.

Hope: Hope's place at the confluence of the Fraser and Coquihalla rivers has made it a natural stopping point and meeting place for the Stó:lō (STOH-lo) First Nation for 10,000 years. While here, be sure to check out the 80-plus chainsaw carvings in and around the town.

PART 2

HOPE TO LYTTON, BC

109 km | 1 hour 18 min



Hell's Gate Airtram - Boston Bar | Tyler Cave

This section of the highway is fun and winding, filled with old tunnels and spectacular scenery, as well as many fun attractions.

Continue on BC-1E through the Canyon.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Yale Historic Site: Yale, B.C. established in 1848, was once the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago. Yale grew with the influx of an estimated 30,000 gold miners during the gold rush of 1858 and later, with the construction of the Cariboo Waggon Road, became the main terminal for one of the largest sternwheeler routes in North America.

Alexandria Bridge: (temporarily closed for the 2022 season): Alexandra Bridge Provincial Park is a small park centred around the site of the original Cariboo Waggon Road bridge over the Fraser River. Because of its small size there are limited recreational opportunities within this park. You can access the historic bridge from a trail through the day-use area. Directions: 20 km past Yale (once you pass through Spuzzum, it's another 2 km to the park). The bridge trail is accessed at the end of the parking lot and is clearly marked.

Hells Gate Airtram: This section of the river was named after Simon Fraser's voyage in 1808 because Fraser stated that "no man should ever pass through here. It was truly like passing through the Gates of Hell!" A gondola will transport you across the river where you can walk across the suspension bridge to take a few snapshots or visit the village for historical education and refreshments. Directions: 25 km past the Alexandra Bridge Provincial Park, look for the entrance on the left.

Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Village: A First Nations heritage site and village, Tuckkwiowhum (Tuck-we-ohm) is located 5 km south of Boston Bar. The site offers guests an opportunity to experience the Nlaka'pamux (Ing-la-kap-ma) village lifestyle before the arrival of European culture, including a subterranean pit house, summer lodges, smokehouse and replicas of actual pictographs found in Nlaka'pamux territory. Directions: Leave Yale and continue on BC-1E toward Boston Bar and watch for the signs leading to the village.

Lytton: Lytton in British Columbia, Canada, sits at the confluence of the Thompson River and Fraser River. The location has been inhabited by the Nlaka'pamux people for over 10,000 years. It is one of the earliest locations settled by non-natives in the Southern Interior of British Columbia and offers a wide array of things to do, from sightseeing to whitewater rafting.

PLEASE NOTE: At Lytton, there are two ways to continue the Gold Rush Trail journey, Lytton to Lillooet to Historic Hat Creek OR Lytton to Spences Bridge to Cache Creek to Historic Hat Creek. Both ways are rich in Gold Rush History and things to do. Have a look at Part's 3,4 and 5 of this itinerary and choose your route according to interests.

PART 3

OPTION 1—LYTTON TO LILLOOET TO HISTORIC HAT CREEK

135 km & 1 hour 47 min



Xwisten Experience Tours - Lillooet, BC | Jonny Bierman

This section of the trail will take you through deserts, mountains and grasslands. It's abundant with wildlife, rich in history, and breathtaking to behold.

Take Hwy BC-12N from Lytton to Lillooet.

Lillooet: Lillooet is considered “Mile Zero” of the Cariboo leg of the Gold Rush trail and is the beginning of the famed Cariboo Waggon Road. Despite once being the 2nd largest North American town in the 1860s, Lillooet has whittled itself down to a gorgeous small town with a nice mix of modern culture and a rich history of both indigenous peoples and settlers from the gold rush. Situated in a valley along the Fraser River, the town is bordered by mountains and surrounded by outlying lakes. Even if you are following the Gold Rush Trail for the history, the sheer magnitude of the natural abundance surrounding the town cannot be ignored. There is, simply, so much to do around Lillooet.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

[Lillooet Visitor Centre & Museum](#)

Mile 0 Cairn on Main Street (start of the Cariboo Waggon Road). Directions: Can't miss it. Sits in the middle of Main Street as you drive into town.

Jade Walk (a walk downtown memorializing the significance of Jade in the region). Directions: Walking map is available at the Visitor's Center.

Old Suspension Bridge: A suspension bridge built in 1913 and no longer in use. It's also an excellent place to watch the local First Nations fishing below. Directions: Located on Old Bridge Road and accessible from in town.

Xwisten Experience Tours: award-winning guided tours of the archeological summer fishing site of the St'at'imc (Stat-lee-m) First Nations. You can also partake in a delicious salmon BBQ or try some homemade bannock from the onsite Bearfoot Grill. Directions: Available at Visitor's Center.

Side day trip to **Gold Bridge, Bralorne** & Pioneer (also sites established during the Gold Rush. Directions: Maps available the Visitor's Centre. It's also a good idea to check the conditions of the road before setting out as it is a narrow gravel road that can be adversely affected by weather. Best to go on a bright, clear day. There are motels in both Bralorne and Gold Bridge.)

PART 4:

OPTION 1A - SIDE OR MULTI-DAY TRIP THROUGH THE BRIDGE RIVER VALLEY

105 km / 2 hr 45 mins



Tyax Adventures - Gold Bridge | Jonny Bierman

Nestled in the Bridge River Valley among the towering peaks of the South Chilcotin Mountains, [Gold Bridge](#), [Bralorne](#) & Pioneer await history buffs who enjoy poking around old ghost towns and abandoned mines, as well as outdoor enthusiasts who will appreciate the valley's fishing, hunting, mountain biking, rock hounding, and rugged mountain beauty! It's a good idea to check the conditions of the road before setting out as it is a narrow gravel road that can be adversely affected by weather. Summer and winter adventures await at [Chilcotin Holidays](#), [Tyax Adventures](#), and [Tyax Lodge & Heliskiing](#). Definitely worth the side trip!

Return to Lillooet, take Hwy BC-99N toward Clinton and Cache Creek.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Fort Berens Winery: Love wine? Consider stopping in at the recently established Fort Berens Winery, just outside of Lillooet, to sample wines crafted from the best grapes in Lillooet, the Similkameen and Okanagan. **Directions:** On the left side of the highway just outside of Lillooet (1881 Hwy 99 North)

Marble Canyon Provincial Park: A favourite playground for locals and visitors. Marble Canyon is a small, quiet campground and picnic area, set between two small lakes, Turquoise and Crown. The lakes are teeming with fish and the park is also popular with bird watchers due to the large diversity of birdlife in the area. Serenely nestled in the rugged Pavilion Mountain Range, this limestone canyon is a rare geological formation in British Columbia. There's even a waterfall on the far end of Turquoise Lake (an easy 15-minute hike from the parking lot). Highly recommend stopping here to have a look (or paddle if you have kayaks or boards). **Directions:** On the left side of the highway between Hat Creek Ranch and Lillooet. Look for the lakes and the sign for the park. Very easy to find.

Historic Hat Creek Ranch: Historic Hat Creek Ranch offers you a rare opportunity to explore the original buildings used by the Gold Rush travelers of the 1860's. Stroll along the actual dirt road the wagon trains traveled on, and visit the historic roadhouse, where interpreters dressed in period clothing will take you on a guided tour. **Directions:** Just before the junction of BC-97N, you will see the ranch on the right side. The entrance is well-marked and easily visible

PART 5

OPTION 2—LYTTON TO SPENCES BRIDGE TO CACHE CREEK TO HISTORIC HAT CREEK

96 Km / 1 hour 8 min



Ashcroft | Kelly Funke

This section of the GRT is classified by desert hillsides following rushing rivers. Jam packed with stops along the way, keep an eye out for bighorn sheep as they love this stretch of road.

Take BC-1E to Hwy 97N to Historic Hat Creek.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Goldpan Provincial Park: On the Thompson River, this park offers a tranquil stop to stretch your legs, walk the dog, swim and fish. **Directions:** 26.1 km from Lytton on BC-1E.

Murray Creek Falls: Murray Creek Falls is a substantial waterfall occurring within one of the driest areas of British Columbia. This easily accessible waterfall in the desert is a must see! The falls are two-tiered, dropping 38 feet in the first and 123 feet in the second. The trail is easily accessible and well-used, but there are no safety railings and bits of the trail can be steep. Please use caution.

Directions: 12 km from Goldpan Provincial Park. Keep an eye out for signs to the falls.

Spences Bridge: Just before the gold rush began, Americans Mortimer Cook and Charles Kimball were freight contractors for the Hudson's Bay Company. The Thompson and Nicola River peoples had previously lived in the region for thousands of years, hunting deer and fishing for salmon. With the sudden influx of prospectors on their way to the goldfields, Cook and Kimball built a rope ferry across the Thompson River, and the area became known as Cook's Ferry. By 1864, the ferry had been replaced with a bridge that was built by road contractor Thomas Spence during the construction of the Cariboo Road from Yale to Barkerville. Nowadays, Spences Bridge is known for amazing fishing and river rafting as well as local fruits and vegetables grown and harvested by local First Nations and sold at roadside kiosks. If you have a chance, grab some wild asparagus! It's better than any you'll ever taste from a garden!

Ashcroft Manor: Built by English brothers Clement Francis Cornwall and Henry Pennant Cornwall, founders of Ashcroft Ranch. The brothers emigrated to Canada from Ashcroft in Gloucestershire England originally intending to search for gold themselves. However, they gave up on the search after being unable to stake a claim and, instead, founded the town of Ashcroft as a way stop for other gold rushers. They provided goods to locals as well, helping to build the community. Ashcroft Manor was a popular stop-over for travellers heading north to the goldfields in the 1800s and later the district's first courthouse; it's now a teahouse, museum and art gallery. **Directions:** Turn right off BC-1E at the signs for Ashcroft Manor. If you hit the turnoff for Cornwall Road, you went too far. Backtrack about 0.5 km and you'll see the entrance.

Ashcroft: Ashcroft was founded in the during the Cariboo Gold Rush. After the gold rush died down, residents began farming to sustain the community and, due to the hot and dry climate with access to ample water from the Thompson River, agriculture flourished and still does. We definitely recommend

stopping in to see some of the original gold rush-era buildings and admiring the beauty of this small community.

Ashcroft Museum: Considered one of the best community museums in BC, the museum's collection includes artifacts that date back to the early 1900s. Displays honour the local Indigenous People, the Chinese community and other pioneers of the area. If you are a history buff, pop in for a visit! The museum is housed in the town's 1917 red brick post office at 414 Brink Street.

Cache Creek: The name Cache Creek refers to the fur trade era of the early 1800s when supplies were "cached" there by nearby fur traders. The village of Cache Creek originated as a stopping point on the Cariboo Waggon Road during the gold rush in the 1860s, but the area soon developed into cattle ranching country soon after and it's still going strong today. Set in a dramatic desert landscape at the junction of Highways 1 and 97, Cache Creek is an ideal base for some of the best rockhounding, canoeing, horseback riding, fishing and hiking through dry grasslands in the area.

Gold Country GeoTourism: Try your hand at geocaching in gold country, either with maps and directions provided or with one of their geocaching guided tours.

Painted Hills: As you travel north along Highway 97 outside of Cache Creek, keep an eye out on the left for the Painted Hills—a section of hillside that looks as though Mother Nature painted stripes into it with a brush. The bands of colour come from large deposits of iron and other minerals in the soil and it makes for a truly spectacular natural canvas.

Continue on BC-97N, making left at the junction of BC-99 and BC-97N for a must stop at **Historic Hat Creek** (see above in Part 3 of this itinerary).

PART 6

HISTORIC HAT CREEK TO 150 MILE HOUSE

174 km | 1 hr 53 min



Historic Hat Creek Ranch | Tyler Cave

From Historic Hat Creek, located at the junction of BC-99 and BC-97, turn left onto BC-97N to Clinton. Perhaps the busiest stretch of the GRT, Historic Hat Creek to Williams lake will probably leave you dizzy from all the stops and starts. There are just too many great places to stop and see along the way.

Continue on BC-97N toward Clinton.

SUGGESTED SIDE TRIP:

Loon Lake: This lake is consistently ranked as one of North America's Top 10 naturally stocked lakes and, as an added bonus, it's a really fun lake to fish. Here you'll find a kokanee and rainbow trout hatchery and a provincial park. The Loon Creek Hatchery is one of five run by BC Fisheries. Combined, these hatcheries populate about 1200 lakes with between 10 and 12 million fish per year. Loon Lake Provincial Park is set in a forest of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine with 14 campsites.

Marigold Fishing Resort has rentable cabins and boats. Loon Lake is also open to water sports and it's a dream to kayak or paddleboard in the early morning when the water is glassy, and the Loons pop up beside you as you paddle. Highly recommend stopping to fish this lake and take it all in.

Directions: From the junction of BC-99 and BC-97 at Historic Hat Creek, follow BC-97N for 10 km and turn right onto Loon Lake Road. Follow it for 18 km until you see the lake on the right-hand side.

Clinton: Clinton is known for its gold rush and pioneer history but also as the Guest Ranch Capital of BC. This tiny town still boasts some original buildings from its inception (the museum is in the original schoolhouse built in 1892) and offers an abundance of history and memories of gold rush days while also still serving as a central hub for many outlying ranches and smaller communities. While the town carries historical significance, its surroundings are equally enamouring for tourists. Only 20 km from Clinton, Chasm Provincial Park—often called Canada’s Mini Grand Canyon—will leave you breathless. An hour from the town center is Marble Range Provincial Park, known particularly for spectacular Limestone formations, caves, and sinkholes and other natural wonders—it’s a hiker’s dream.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Walking Tour: If you are interested in the history of the area, consider taking a historical 20-stop walking tour. The tour includes many buildings built 100-200 years ago, including China Town/Pioneer cabins, and the old schoolhouse turned museum, built in 1892. To book the tour, pop into the Museum at #1419 on the Highway through town.

Antiquing: Clinton is an antique collector’s heaven with five antique stores – enough to spend an entire day!

Marble Range Provincial Park: Known for limestone karst formations (a type of formation created by dissolved limestone, dolomite, and gypsum that results in sinkholes and caves), this park exists in an alpine and subalpine habitat. Old growth forests surrounded by karsts and mountains, this wild and unmanaged area is the perfect mix of primordial nature and abundant wildlife. The park is packed with hiking trails, is popular with backcountry and horseback riding enthusiasts and it offers a mix of both easy ambling for those who want to stretch their legs and summit scaling for those who want to test their mettle. The park does not provide any facilities and does not contain water sources, so be sure to prepare yourself accordingly. **Directions:** Approximately 9 km from Clinton, turn left onto Big Bar Road. Follow Big Bar for approximately 43.5 km and then turn left off of Big Bar (unnamed road) and follow that road for another 10.5 km.

Chasm Provincial Park: Often referred to as the Mini Grand Canyon, the Painted Chasm is one of the most geologically unique parks in the Cariboo. It displays a spectacular array of colour during the spring and summer months, with a startling contrast between the red, brown, and purple lava walls of the gorge and the green of the Ponderosas and grasses of the valley below. Carved by melting glaciers and erosion

over the past 10 million years, the Chasm is 8 km long, 600 metres wide, and 300 metres deep. In a word, epic. It has a fenced viewing platform at the top and there are hiking trails all over it. After you've seen the lookout, follow the trail that parallels the train tracks north. It will fork. Take the trail that leads southwest and is lined by giant Ponderosa Pines. It follows the edge of the canyon quite a ways and the views are worth the hike.

70 Mile House: The construction of the Cariboo Waggon Road during the Cariboo Gold Rush of the 1860s resulted in new towns and roadhouses springing up throughout the southern Cariboo, such as 70 Mile House, located 70 miles from Mile 0 in Lillooet. The [70 Mile General Store](#) is the perfect place for a pit stop and if maple syrup or no-shortcut poutine are a favourite, then take in a little piece of Quebec in the heart of the Cariboo at [The Sugar Shack](#)!

70 Mile is in the heart of a gorgeous stretch of cattle and lake country, so it's an excellent place to visit a local guest ranch, head out fishing, or spend some time in the Green Lake area.

100 Mile House: Also one of the famed "mile marker" communities along the Cariboo Waggon Road, 100 Mile House (located at the 100 mile mark) is one of the South Cariboo region's hub communities and home to an original Barnard Express BX Stagecoach. As the gold rush subsided, ranchers began to settle the surrounding area and today 100 Mile House is the hub of many small unincorporated communities in the outlying areas, and is home to an abundance of amazing art galleries and the [Chris Harris Photography](#) studio is just north of town at 105 Mile House.

100 Mile Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary: According to the South Cariboo tourism association, "almost forty species of waterfowl can be found on South Cariboo lakes and wetlands. Many migratory species live here during the summer months or pass through in the spring and fall during their annual passage. These include not only various ducks and geese, but also trumpeter and tundra swans, and the odd white pelican. The great blue heron is often seen quietly standing at the water's edge. Lake and stream edges, known as riparian zones, are important to nesting birds such as loons and geese, as well as sensitive amphibians. These zones impact the health of the water and creatures who live there; not only fish, but also beavers, otters and muskrats. Watch for moose peeking from among the willows and black cottonwood trees." Be sure to stop in and grab a printed guide of all the local birds and wildlife at the [100 Mile House Visitors Centre](#) at 155 Wrangler Way and then head to the Sanctuary, which is next door!

Bridge Creek Falls: 100 Mile House's best kept little secret! These gorgeous falls are on the edge of town and an easy 1.2 km hike. The hike starts in the city's well-maintained and family-friendly Centennial Park and it's an excellent excuse to stretch your legs and get some fresh air. **Directions:** From the highway, turn right on 4th street, and then right on Cedar Avenue and then left on the road to the park (can't miss it, look for the park signs at the end).

108 Mile Ranch: Once a working cattle ranch, 108 Mile Ranch is now a small residential community 12 km north of 100 Mile House. A heritage site welcomes visitors as they roll into the north end and contains 12 historic buildings from a period between 1860 and 1914, including one of the last Clydesdale barns still standing in Canada. In addition to the heritage sites and many kilometres of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, there is also a 9.2 km trail winding around 108 and Sepa lakes that is an easy walk for the whole family. 108 Mile Ranch is an engaging stop along the highway with all the amenities for travellers and adventurers. **Directions:** Approximately 14 km from 100 Mile House, turn left on Kitwanga Drive and then left on Cariboo drive and look for the Heritage Site sign on the right.

Lac la Hache: Often called The Longest Town in the Cariboo, this community's resorts, ranches, restaurants and homes are scattered along the lake's 19 km shoreline. It's particularly popular among wakeboarders, power boaters, and anglers. One of the most popular recreational lakes in the Cariboo, the lake includes campgrounds, resorts, and bait and tackle shop. It's also well stocked with Rainbow and Kokanee and sports wild lake trout, burbot and mountain whitefish. Something for everyone and a fantastic way to spend a day out on the lake in the sun. **Directions:** Approximately 66.5 km from Williams Lake on the right side of the highway.

150 Mile Schoolhouse: The 150 Mile Little Red Schoolhouse is the oldest functional school building in the Cariboo Chilcotin. The schoolhouse was constructed in the 1895 beside the original Cariboo Waggon Road when 150 Mile House was still a thriving hub of commerce, transportation and governance for the Cariboo Chilcotin region. **Directions:** Located at 3081 Cariboo Highway (BC-97N) in 150 Mile House. On the right side of the highway.

NOTE: Below are two options to get to Barkerville. Option 1 (recommended only in the summer months) will take you from 150 Mile House to Barkerville on the Backroad and Option 2 continues on the Highway to Williams Lake and onto Barkerville.

PART 7

OPTION 1-150 MILE HOUSE TO BARKERVILLE VIA HORSEFLY AND LIKELY ON “THE BACKROAD”



Quesnel Lake | John Wellburn

If you are so inclined (and have good tires), you can take the Backroad to Barkerville during the summer months. The trip takes approximately three hours if you don't stop, and then a bit longer if you go through Horsefly, but there are well-marked points of interest along the way worthy of stopping, so allow for more time if you have it. **Directions:** 5 km north of 150 Mile House on 97N, turn right onto Likely Road and follow the Gold Rush Trail signs to Barkerville (they are well marked).

SUGGESTED STOPS:

The Rusty Bucket: Step inside The Rusty Bucket to discover a unique collection of eclectic and hart-to-find decor!

Horsefly: Horsefly is a tiny village near the Williams Creek, where gold in the Cariboo was first discovered—located in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains, offering spectacular views as you drive into the village. Today, Horsefly is a forestry center and acts as a gateway to an inviting wilderness playground. The surrounding area offers many [local attractions](#) and [outdoor activities](#) for the whole

family, as well as nearby [Horsefly Landing Resort](#) on Horsefly Lake and [Crooked Lake Resort](#) on Crooked Lake

Quesnel Lake: Quesnel Lake is one of the deepest fjord lakes in the world and a hugely popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. It's recently seen a lot of development at the western end of the lake with several resorts, newly constructed boat launches and campsites. If you love fishing, this lake holds trophy-sized rainbows, lake, and bull trout and it's a favourite lake for water sports enthusiasts as well. **Directions:** From Horsefly, head east on Horsefly road to Upper Horsefly road. Turn right on Upper Horsefly and follow it, staying left, for approximately 9.2 km and the road will turn into Hen Ingram Lake/Z road. Follow that for another 14.2 km and the road turns into Haggens Point Road. Follow Haggens for another 20.2 km (staying left) until you reach Quesnel Lake. The signs are clearly marked along the way.

Moffat Falls: This gorgeous double waterfall is a Must See when you are in the Horsefly area. **Directions:** 7 km east of Horsefly on 108 Mile Road, follow the signs to falls, park, and then take the trail for a fast 3-minute walk to the falls.

Likely, BC: Another remnant of the gold rush, Likely is located in a picturesque setting on the mouth of the Quesnel River, at the west end of Quesnel Lake, and offers plenty of [activities](#). After the Rush, Likely became a village for local open pit gold miners and their families until 1942 when the Bullion mine officially closed. Today, Likely and Horsefly are both known for their wilderness and outdoor recreation areas and [Ecotours-BC](#), based right in Likely, is the perfect family-based signature wilderness adventure destination. [The Likely Lodge](#) is a must-stop on this road-trip, providing fantastic home-cooked meals, a choice of quaint guest rooms, and local pub. [High Country Inn](#) is another fantastic option for you overlooking Quesnel Lake.

Quesnelle Forks Historic Site: A gold mining ghost town on the north shore of the Quesnel River near the confluence of the Cariboo and Quesnel Rivers. The Forks (as it's commonly known) holds historical, cultural, social and spiritual evidence of the significant Chinese Canadian contribution to the very earliest development and settlement of British Columbia. The Forks was the original gateway to the Cariboo gold fields before Barkerville took over as the hub.

Directions: 12 km from northwest of Likely. Head northwest on Keithley Creek Road and turn right on Rosetta Lake Road. After approximately 6 km Rosetta turns into Quesnel River Road. Continue to follow it to Quesnelle Forks.

Proceed to Barkerville.

Barkerville: Welcome to the Granddaddy of them all - [Barkerville Historic Town & Park](#), the final destination on the Cariboo Waggon Road. In 1862, Billy Barker struck gold in this area of the Cariboo

and 150 years later, the town of Barkerville is one of Canada's most significant historic sites. Declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1924 and a BC Heritage Site in 1958, Barkerville continues to be the destination of choice for gold rush history buffs and family fun seekers alike. What was once the biggest boomtown in British Columbia is now a site of living history with a unique streetscape of more than 125 heritage buildings, period displays, satellite museums, restaurants and shops there is still so much to explore.

[Things to do in Barkerville:](#) Check out this comprehensive list of tours, shows, and activities during the summer months.

[2022 Schedule of Events:](#) A list of all the significant events happening this summer.

PART 8

OPTION 2 - 150 MILE HOUSE - WILLIAMS LAKE - BARKERVILLE

216 km & 2 hours 41 min



Barkerville Historic Town & Park - Barkerville | Tyler Cave

And here we are, entering the home stretch and cruising deep into the heart of gold country. Enjoy this last stretch of highway as it opens up into big skies, big mountains, and gold fever.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Williams Lake: Williams Lake is the hub city of the central Cariboo region. It's also a mountain biking mecca that serves up some of BC's best biking on Westsyde Ridge, Desous Mountain, and Fox Mountain. The River Valley Trail also offers a 12 km gravel trail down to the Fraser River that's great for walking, running, mountain biking and horseback riding. For nature and wildlife addicts, Scout Island houses a nature sanctuary with a beach, picnic grounds and a wide variety of small animals and birds. If history interests you, Williams Lake has a rich First Nations history and it is actually named after Chief William of the Secwepemc First Nation. Also, because Williams Lake is in the heart of Cowboy Country, it hosts a famous rodeo, the [Williams Lake Stampede](#), every year in July, drawing rodeo buffs from all over the world. We highly encourage you to take a day and have a look around and stop into the [BC Cowboy Hall of Fame](#), located in the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin, which is open daily and offers an interesting insight into the lives and histories of the regions' cowboy past. View [Williams Lake accommodation, activities and attractions](#).

Xat'sull Heritage Village: The majestic Fraser River runs alongside the Xat'sull Heritage Village (pronounced hat-sull) and has played an integral role in the community throughout the years. This unspoiled region is home to a wide array of plants, fish, and wildlife—each perfectly adapted to this unique environment. Stop by Xat'sull and take one of their regularly scheduled tours to experience their spiritual, cultural, and traditional way of life. **Directions:** Leaving Williams Lake, follow BC-97N for 31 km and turn left onto Williams Lake Cutoff Rd. Continue going straight until you reach the Village.

Cariboo Wood Shop: Your Cariboo source for Canadian-made gifts, custom wood furnishings and homemade treats, including fresh fudge and BC Honey, located near McLeese Lake.

McLeese Lake: The small resort community of McLeese Lake, situated 30 minutes north of Williams Lake, was named in honour of nearby Soda Creek resident from the 1880s. Robert McLeese owned a sternwheeler, hotel and store and was the postmaster of nearby Soda Creek for 25-plus years. Modern day travellers who are history buffs or those seeking outdoor adventure, [McLeese Lake Resort](#) provides a great base for both.

Pine River Carving: Professional wood carver, Ken Sheen, makes his home in Marguerite, BC, 80 km or approx 50 minutes north of Williams Lake. After living and working in the BC woods for thirty years, Ken ignited his creative side and started making art with a chainsaw and now, 19 years later, Ken is a full-time artist with a busy gallery worth a stop at the Cariboo Castle!

Antique Machinery Park: Located on Highway 97 at 3055 Dragon Lake Rd, the Antique Machinery Park is operated by a volunteer association dedicated to the preservation and restoration of machinery that was important to the development of the region. A blacksmith shop and a sawmill—reminiscent of the once ubiquitous "Cariboo bush mill"—are fully operational with demonstrations held periodically.

Last year's Quincy Coach restoration from the 1880s, as well as a vintage farm truck, are now on display as well. Park hours should be confirmed on a seasonal basis, but they are generally open Friday through Tuesday during the summer months (June – August).

At Quesnel (the Gold Pan City and the home of the world's largest gold pan) at 118 km (or 1 hour 20 minutes north of Williams Lake), proceed through the community to the north end, watching for signs to BC26 and Barkerville, then head east toward Wells and Barkerville.

SUGGESTED STOPS:

Cottonwood House Historic Site: One of the last remaining original roadhouses along the Cariboo Waggon Road. This wheelchair accessible provincial historic site will allow you to experience over 75 years of the Boyd family history and the many features this unique heritage site has to offer. The site includes a number of historic buildings, including a general store, interpretive building and horse barn. Camping and picnicking, trails and a host of other activities are available there too.

Directions: 26 km east of Quesnel on Highway 26 (the Barkerville Highway)

Wells : This charming town 236-resident town, built in the 1930s to accommodate Quartz-Gold miners, is cradled in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains near the end of Highway 26. It's known for its happening art scene (offering classes in visual, literary, and performing arts, as well as the popular Arts Wells Festival of All Things Art held in the first week of August), historic gold tours and endless opportunities for outdoor activities—most notably a huge network of scenic trails that are enjoyed by hikers and mountain bikers in the summer months.

Barkerville: Welcome to the Granddaddy of them all - [Barkerville Historic Town & Park](#), the final destination on the Cariboo Waggon Road. In 1862, Billy Barker struck gold in this area of the Cariboo and 150 years later, the town of Barkerville is one of Canada's most significant historic sites. Declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1924 and a BC Heritage Site in 1958, Barkerville continues to be the destination of choice for gold rush history buffs and family fun seekers alike. What was once the biggest boomtown in British Columbia is now a site of living history with a unique streetscape of more than 125 heritage buildings, period displays, satellite museums, restaurants and shops there is still so much to explore.

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BARKERVILLE – HIXON – PRINCE GEORGE – HUBLE HOMESTEAD

189 km & 2 hours 25 min



Hixon Falls - Hixon BC | Travel British Columbia

SUGGESTED STOPS:

10 Mile Lake Provincial Park: Located 11 km north of Quesnel off Highway 97, this popular park has two campgrounds (with a total of 107 campsites) and offers a variety of activities. Both campgrounds offer full amenities and there are a series of trails around the park for year-round use, as well as a boat launch, large picnic area, three sandy beaches and some fantastic fishing. Other water sports such as water skiing and paddle boarding, are also popular with visitors. **Directions:** Take BC-97N approximately 11 km north of Quesnel. The park entrance is on the left.

Cinema Cafe & Second Hand: is a great stop for eats, road-tripping snacks and local treasures worth exploring. **Directions:** Located approximately 35 km from Quesnel on BC-97N toward Hixon, BC.

Hixon: A small community, located between Prince George and Quesnel, with a rich gold mining heritage in placer gold mining. The surrounding area offers a wide range of outdoor activities including fishing, hunting, hiking, and many backcountry backpacking trails. If you are looking for a place to rest, relax, hunt, fish, or even pan for gold, look no further than [Kreekside Motel, Campground and Trailer Park](#).

Hixon Falls: The 100-foot Hixon Falls (named after Joseph Foster Hixon who found gold on Hixon Creek in the 1860s) falls into a series of deep pools and is a favourite swimming hole for locals and visitors alike. The walk into the falls is short and easy. Worth the stop! **Directions:** Take Hixon Creek Road and look for the sign a sign saying, "Hixon Falls and Hixon Chutes". Continue on that road, which turns into gravel, staying left the whole time for about 4km. The first parking lot on the left is for Hixon Chutes and the second parking area is for Hixon Falls. If you continue past the parking lots, it will take you to the Hixon Falls trail head, a hike down to the bottom of the falls.

Fraser River Provincial Park This huge park was created to protect a large piece of the Fraser River and, although there are no developed facilities at the park, there are plenty of trails leading to the river and beyond, all with stunning views. The trails are challenging, however, so make sure you have sturdy shoes. Hiking poles are recommended for the steep parts of many trails. **Directions:** From Prince George, follow Yellowhead Hwy W/BC-16 W for 23.3 km and turn left onto Blackwater Road. Follow it 11.3 km and it will turn into W Lake Road. Follow that for another 37.7 km until you see the park ahead of you.

Stone Creek RV Park & Campground: Located 30 mins from Prince George, this picturesque, open field, pet-friendly campground is located on the banks of the Fraser River. With a large grassy area with many trees for shade, the campsite has full amenities and beautiful views. **Directions:** From Hixon, take BC-97N approximately 33 km and look for the signs for the campground on the left. You'll have to make a slight U-turn to get to the campsite's gates.

Prince George: The largest city in northern BC, Prince George is a good place to stock up on supplies and gas up before you continue north. PG (as it's known by locals) has plenty of things to do for visitors, including many parks and hiking trails located in and around the city, a large local arts scene, a rich First Nations culture, as well as varied outdoor recreation activities available outside the city limits.

Huble Homestead: A historic site featuring the house and outbuildings built by rancher Albert Huble in 1911. The house and many of its original buildings have changed ownership many times and housed a large number of ranch hands over the years. In 1985 the Giscome Portage Heritage Society restored the house and it was declared a BC Historic Site in 1989. Huble House is now the oldest building in its original location in the entire area. **Directions:** Leaving Prince George, take BC-97N for 44.4 km and turn right onto Mitchell Road. Follow Mitchell for another 5.6km and the homestead is on the right.

and then on to Dawson Creek, Mile 0 of the [Alaska Highway](#)

Cheers to road-tripping the Gold Rush Trail!