

Rock and Ice: Through the Canadian Rockies by Rail



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1

The Railroads in Canadian History



Driving the last spike in
the Canadian Pacific,
1885

While the Dominion of Canada was created on July 1, 1867, it only included the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick
Canada's expansion to the Pacific was made possible by the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad

2



The Canadian Pacific and its connections

It completed the route across Canada, linking Calgary to Vancouver. The Great Trunk Railroad took a more northerly route, from Toronto to Edmonton to Jasper.

3

Today's passenger railroads in Canada



Our trip last year

We traveled with Rocky Mountaineer, which offers daylight service from Jasper to Vancouver

VIA Rail Canada (shown here) stretches from Halifax on the Atlantic to Vancouver and Victoria on the Pacific

Its premier train, the Canadian runs from Toronto to Vancouver and offers through rail service with sleeper cars

4

Rocky Mountaineer

- ▶ This company offers two classes of service: SilverLeaf, where the passengers sit in comfortable coach seats
- ▶ Meal service is in separate dining cars, as is bar service
- ▶ In GoldLeaf service, which we took, passengers sit on the upper level of observation cars, with panoramic views
- ▶ Meals are served in a dining room on the lower level of each car
- ▶ There is bar service and cabin attendants on the upper level
- ▶ Our trip started in Calgary, with stays in Banff and Jasper
- ▶ The rail trip took two days: from Jasper to Kamloops, British Columbia on the first day
- ▶ On the second day, we rode from Kamloops to Vancouver

5

The Canadian Rockies

- ▶ Part of the “North American Cordillera” which stretches from the Yukon Territory to the Yucatan Peninsula
- ▶ Roughly 500 miles at maximum width
- ▶ Formed by the same upheavals that raised the Colorado Rockies
- ▶ While not as high as the highest peaks in the Colorado Rockies, there are 50 peaks over 3,000 meters in height
- ▶ Because of glacial action during the Ice Ages that followed their creation, the Canadian Rockies are more rugged than their American cousins

6

Canada's National Parks

Canada's national parks in the Rockies are prime tourist attractions

During our trip, we had the chance to visit Banff, Yoho, and Jasper National Parks



Day 2

7



8



Rim Rock Resort

On our 2024 trip, we stayed at the Rim Rock Resort Hotel, located on the slope of Mt. Rundle overlooking the town. Interestingly enough, the floors are numbered in reverse order; as you descend, the floor number increases.

9

Banff National Park



Day 3

Lake Louise's crystalline waters are a highlight of Canada's oldest national park

10



Day 4

The mountain lakes are some of the crown jewels of Banff National Park, although they're more impressive when the mountains are snow-capped

11

Yoho National Park



Yoho National Park is located on the eastern slope of the Rockies, nestled between Banff National Park and the crest of the mountains

12

Whyte Museum, Banff



Day 5

13



Athabasca River, Jasper National Park

14



On the Icefields Parkway

This 232 kilometer highway links Banff to Jasper, passing through some of the most impressive landscapes in the Rockies

15



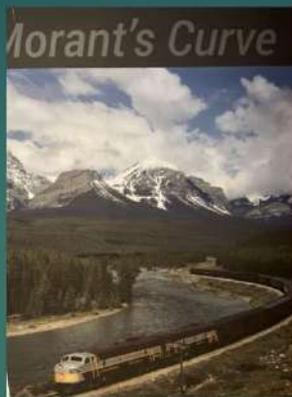
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First Nations Emblems

In contrast to much of the history of the American West, Canada's foundation included provisions for protecting the rights of the "First Nations"; the further west one goes, the more prominent the evidence of First Nations cultures becomes

17



Morant's Curve

One of the most famous stretches in western Canada, this is located along the line from Calgary and Banff to Jasper

18

Jasper

- ▶ Jasper, Alberta sits on the Athabasca River
- ▶ The Athabasca, North Thompson, South Thompson, Pitt, and Fraser Rivers have played a major role in shaping the landscape of both east and west slopes of the Rockies
- ▶ Some of the most impressive landscapes during the rail trip lie along the rivers
- ▶ Jasper was the start of our two-day rail journey; we got a First Nations serenade before we boarded the train



19

All aboard!

There's no squabbling over boarding groups or overhead storage space on the Rocky Mountaineer

You board whenever your car opens for boarding

All luggage (except for small carry-ons) is checked

One of the onboard games is calling out "Bear Alert" or "Elk Alert" when critters are spotted



20

Jasper-Kamloops

Those who've visited the Alps will note the similarities to the Alpine Meadows one sees here



21

Along the North Thompson River

One of the two rivers that join at Kamloops



22



Columbia River tributary

23



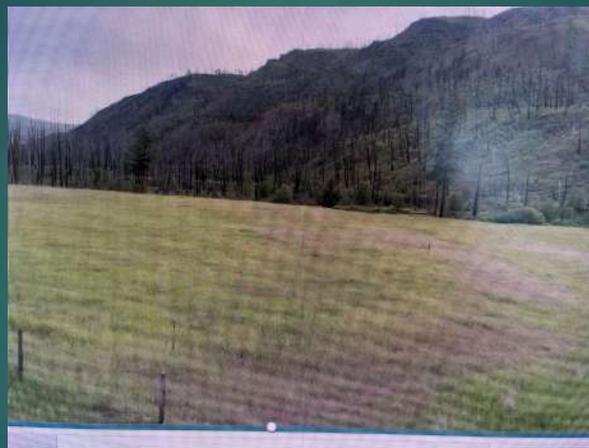
Mist-covered mountains

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On the western slopes of the Rockies, rain from the Pacific creates some spectacular waterfalls

25



Fire zone

26



Kamloops - Vancouver

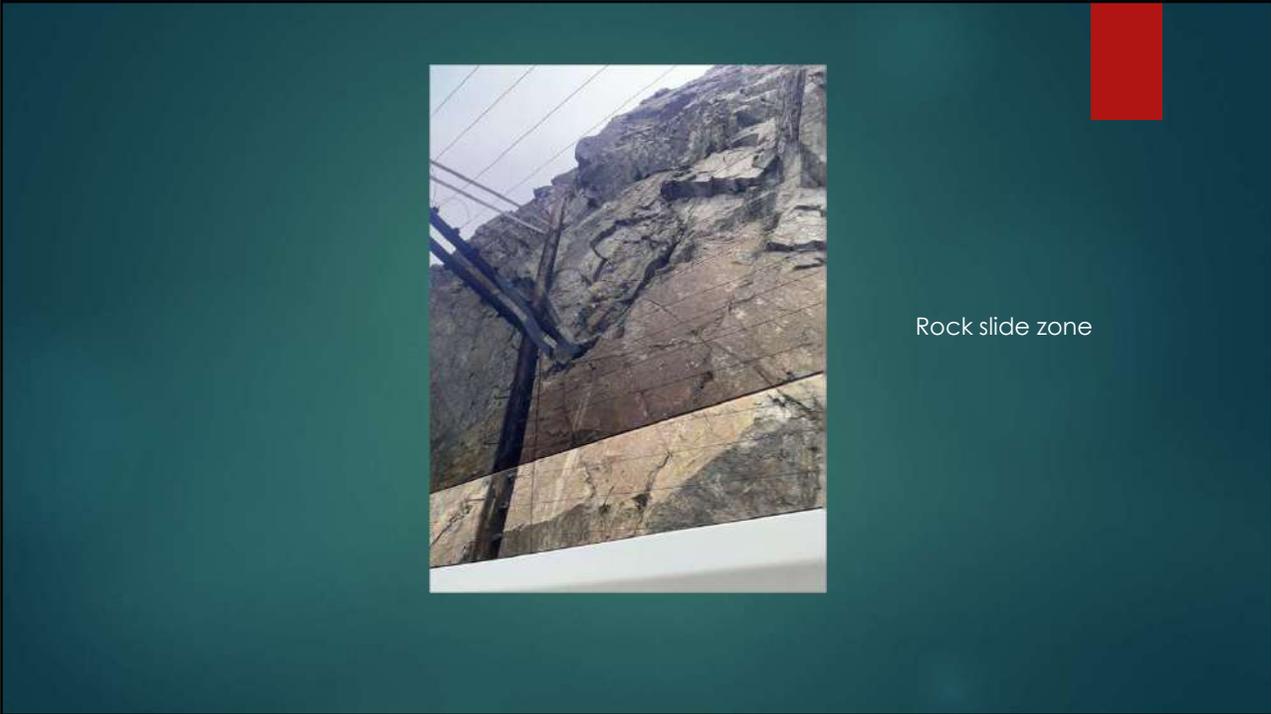
Kamloops is an indigenous word that means "where the rivers meet". This reflects its location at the confluence of the North Thompson and South Thompson Rivers.

27



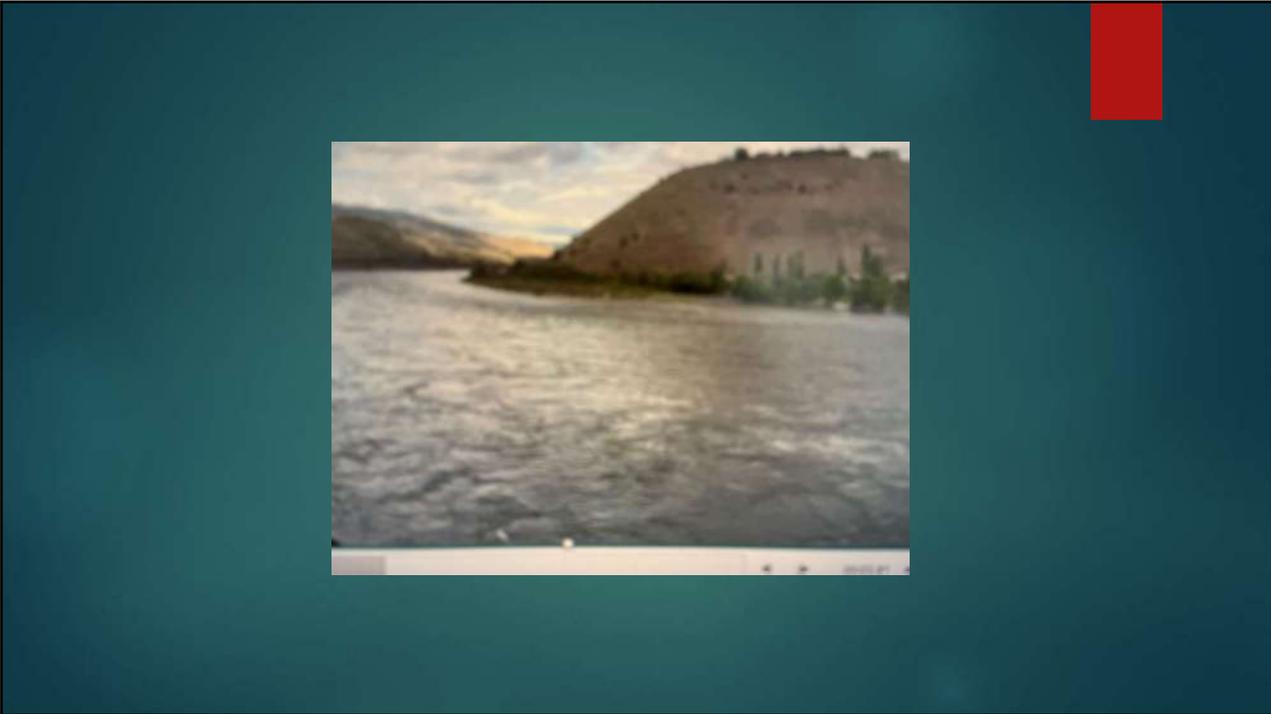
Not every place in Canada is clean and green

28



Rock slide zone

29

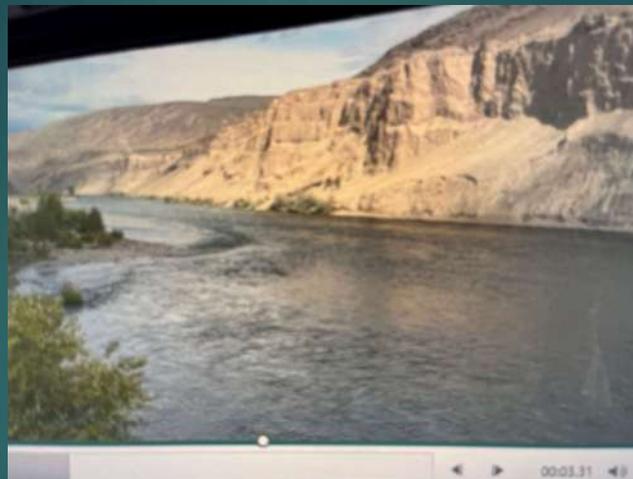


30



Railroad bridge,
with osprey's nest

31



Sandbars and shoals sometimes make
a trip down the river an adventure

32



Long train running (my apologies to the Doobie Brothers)

33



My wife's image looms over the Pitt River

34



Anyone interested in some waterfront property close to Vancouver?

35



Arrival in Vancouver

You can see what an advantage sitting on the upper level gives

36

Stanley Park

Vancouver's Stanley Park is a favorite venue for both locals and visitors



37

Raincouver

Vancouver is in the same climatic zone as Seattle – with predictable climatic results



38

Vancouver Art Gallery

A celebrated cultural venue



39

Quiet place in the heart of the city

Unsurprisingly, this is a favorite spot for downtown workers to eat lunch



40

Canada Place

Canada Place was built when Vancouver was chosen to host the 2010 Winter Olympics

It also has a cruise terminal for Alaska and Transpacific voyages



41



A quotation from Chief Dan George

Remember him? He was the Cheyenne patriarch in Little Big Man

42

North Vancouver



43

Homeward bound

On our return flight to Dallas-Ft. Worth, we detoured to the south to avoid inclement weather

And we were able to get this close-up of Mt. Rainier



44

Some other sites of interest

- ▶ Those who have adequate time and money might want to investigate some other places we visited in 2016
- ▶ We'll take a brief look at them as a wrap-up

45

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump



Before the Spaniards introduced the horse to North America, the native tribes used to hunt the bison by provoking a stampede, driving the animals over a cliff

46



Glacier National Park

One of the highlights of our first trip to the Canadian Rockies (2016) was a brief visit to Glacier National Park; we crossed from Canada into the U.S. and back to Canada

49



The Calgary Stampede

Held in early July, it's well worth a visit if your schedule permits

50