

Alberta Essentials

Find your ideal campsite in Alberta.



Wedged in the very heart of western Canada lies one of its richest provinces – Alberta. Flanked by the mountains of British Columbia to the west, the prairies of Saskatchewan to the east and the State of Montana to the south, Alberta is the fourth largest province in Canada with an area of 661,185 square km (255,303 sq. miles) and a population of three million. It's larger in size than all U.S. states except Alaska and Texas and is three times larger than Britain.

Edmonton, Alberta's capital, and Calgary to the south, are the province's largest cities with Calgary being the fastest growing city in Canada.

The province of Alberta was named after Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and the wife of the Marquis of Lorne, governor general of Canada from 1878 to 1883.

Provincial Capital:	Edmonton (pop. 900,000)
Provincial Flower:	Wild Rose
Provincial Rock:	Petrified Wood
Provincial Animal:	Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep
Provincial Fish:	Bull Trout
Provincial Bird:	Great Horned Owl
Provincial Tree:	Lodgepole Pine

- In the winter, winds can roll off the eastern slopes of the Rockies, shooting temperatures up by 40 C in 24 hours. Called chinooks, these blasts of hot air are a phenomenon unique to Alberta.
- Alberta has 245 named rivers, 600 lakes and 315 named creeks. Over half the province drains into the Mackenzie River System which flows north into the Arctic Ocean. In the south lies a sleepy ribbon of water called the Milk River which flows into the Mississippi River System, ending up in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Alberta averages about 2,000 hours of sunshine a year. It ties with Saskatchewan for sunniest spot in Canada.
- Alberta has six world-class downhill ski resorts and 66 regional ski hills. The country's largest single ski resort is Lake Louise.
- Attention shoppers! Did we mention no sales tax? Only province in Canada with this status.
- Alberta is one of the few places in the world that is rat free.
- Alberta ranchers produce more than 40 per cent of Canada's total beef. Alberta beef is world renowned.
- Alberta produces over 60 per cent of Canada's honey.
- The highest peak in Alberta is Mount Columbia, at 3,747 metres (12,294 ft.)
- The lowest point is 183 metres (600 ft.), in the far northeast corner of the province.
- There are 275 golf courses in Alberta.
- Alberta lays claim to Canada's largest mountain national park – Jasper; as well as Canada's oldest national park – Banff; and the world's first international "Peace Park" – Waterton Lakes/Glacier National Park.

Air

Alberta is home to two international airports, one in Edmonton and one in Calgary. Easy access to Alberta from more than 100 cities worldwide is available with most major airlines and charter companies. For specific information on scheduled and charter flights contact your local travel agent.

Banking and Currency

Travellers cheques and credit cards are accepted at most commercial establishments, banks and currency exchange offices. Banking hours are generally 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday; some banks are open Saturdays. Most automated teller machines (ATMs) accept one or more of the following networks: Interac, Cirrus, or Plus. They are found at banks and in retail areas.

Camping

Camping is available throughout the province in private campgrounds and resorts, national parks and provincial parks. Reservations can be made at private campgrounds and at some of the provincial parks. However, reservations are not accepted in national park campgrounds. Camping fees range from \$10-\$30 depending on services. To receive a campground guide call Travel Alberta at 1(800) 661-8888 or TravelAlberta.com

Customs and Immigration

United States citizens do not need passports or visas to enter Canada, but proof of citizenship and residence must be carried. Visitors from other countries must possess a valid national passport and should contact the nearest Canadian Consulate or Embassy for more information.

Fishing and Hunting Regulations

Fishing licences outside the National Parks can be purchased from select sporting good stores, convenience stores and some gas stations. Call 1 (888) 944-5494 for the nearest licence issuer. Web site: www.gov.ab.ca/env

Hunting regulations and special licensing requirements vary depending on the type of hunting. Hunting is absolutely prohibited in the national parks. For more information on hunting and fishing contact:

Alberta Environment Information Centre
Main Floor, 9945-108 St., Edmonton, AB T5K 2G6
Phone (780) 944-0313
Web site: www.gov.ab.ca/env

Health and Travel Insurance

Alberta has an excellent health-care system; however, the health-care plan does not cover out-of-province visitors. Clarify your coverage before entering Alberta through your personal insurance carrier. Contact your local travel agent for further details.

Highway Travel

Alberta is accessible from the east and west by two officially designated Trans-Canada routes. Highway 1 crosses Alberta in the South and the Trans-Canada Yellowhead Highway (Hwy.16) crosses Central Alberta. Northbound travel is provided on Hwy. 2 or you may want to take the scenic route through the Mountain Parks on the spectacular Icefields Parkway.

Hostelling in Alberta

Hostels vary from basic (bed, kitchen facilities) to superior standards (family rooms, laundry facilities, licensed café, showers, sauna). Alberta offers 16 hostels in Banff, Jasper (along the Icefields Parkway), Waterton, Kananaskis Country, David Thompson Country, Calgary and Edmonton. For more details contact Edmonton's office at (780) 432-7798 or e-mail NAB@HostellingIntl.ca or the office in Calgary at (403) 283-5551, or e-mail SAB@HostellingIntl.ca.

Metric Conversion

Canada uses the metric system. All highway and traffic indicators are in Km and Km/h, gas is sold by the litre, temperature is measured in Celsius, and the electrical current is 110 volts.

- 1 kilometre = 0.62 miles
- 100 km/h = 62 mph
- 3.8 litres = 1 gallon
- Temperature 25°C = 77°F

Motorcoach Travel

Special tours and services are available throughout Alberta and the Rockies. Drivers and guides offer historical information and insight into the area.

- Brewster Transportation and Tours: (403) 762-6700, toll free in NA, 1 (800) 661-1152
- Greyhound Bus Lines: toll free 1 (800) 661-8747
- Red Arrow Bus Lines: (403) 531-3685.

Pets

Owners must accompany their pets when entering Canada. Owners of dogs and cats must bring a certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian clearly identifying the pet and certifying that it has been vaccinated against rabies within the preceding 36 months. There are exceptions made for seeing-eye dogs and puppies or kittens that are younger than three months old.

For more details on border crossings with a pet, contact: Canada Customs Regional Office
Ste. 320, Harry Hays Building
220 - 4th Ave. S.E.
Calgary, AB T1Y 6X2
Phone: (403) 292-4660, (780) 495-3400
Toll Free Customs inquiries: 1 (800) 461-9999.

Rail Routes

Alberta is served by Via Rail scheduled service. Stops are scheduled in Edmonton and Jasper. Call the VIA number in your area for reservations and information. In the U.S., VIA Rail can be booked through AMTRAK.

Renting A Car

All car rental companies have a strong network of outlets in Alberta. To rent a car you must be 21 years old and hold a valid driver's licence and a major credit card. (A small surcharge may apply to drivers under 25 years of age).

Renting a Motorhome

Renting a motorhome is a convenient way to explore Alberta. Reserving ahead is wise and could result in a lower rate. You may purchase insurance at the time of rental. It is recommended that bookings be made three to four months in advance. For more information visit TravelAlberta.com

Taxes

Alberta is the only province in Canada with no Provincial Sales Tax (PST). However, it has a five per cent hotel tax and a seven per cent, Canada-wide, Goods & Services Tax (GST). Rebates on some accommodations and purchases taken out of the country can be claimed by non-residents of Canada. For more information in Canada, call 1 (800) 66-VISIT; outside Canada, call (902) 432-5608; or contact Canada Customs at (403) 292-4660.

Tipping

The average tip in Canada is 15 per cent. However, depending on the level and the nature of the service, tipping may range from 10 per cent to more than 20 per cent. Tips are generally given for good service by food and beverage servers in bars and restaurants, taxi drivers, tour guides and hotel bellman. It is not necessary to tip other service staff.

U.S. Ports of Entry

International visitors driving to Canada can use any of the following ports of entry:

- Aden, Alberta/Whitlash, Montana;
- Carway, Alberta/Peigan, Montana;
- Del Bonita, Alberta/Del Bonita, Montana;
- Wild Horse, Alberta/Wild Horse, Montana;
- Coutts, Alberta/Sweetgrass, Montana;
- Chief Mountain, Alberta/Chief Mountain, Montana

Weapons

Revolvers, pistols, fully automatic firearms and other weapons and self-defense sprays (i.e. mace, pepper spray) are prohibited entry into Canada. All firearms (i.e. hunting rifles, shotguns) must be declared. To obtain information on firearms legislation, please call the Canadian Firearms Centre inquiry line at 1 (800) 731-4000 or visit TravelAlberta.com

Weather

Average Temperatures:
Summer (June to Aug.) 20°C 68°F
Fall (Sept. to Nov.) 11°C 52°F
Winter (Dec. to Feb.) 11°C 12°F
Spring (Mar. to May) 9°C 48°F

Where to Meet

There are visitor and convention centres in Calgary, Edmonton and many of the smaller cities which are able to host meetings and conventions of any size. The full-service resorts, hotels, lodges and restaurants in Alberta's most popular destinations are other ideal sites for conferences and meetings. Call 1 (800) 661-8888 and ask for Operator 12.

2003 Canadian Public Holidays

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| • New Year's Day | Jan. 1 |
| • Alberta Family Day | Feb. 17 |
| • Good Friday | April 18 |
| • Easter Monday | April 21 |
| • Victoria Day | May 19 |
| • Canada Day | July 1 |
| • Heritage Day | Aug. 4 |
| • Labour Day | Sept. 1 |
| • Thanksgiving Day | Oct. 13 |
| • Remembrance Day | Nov. 11 |
| • Christmas Day | Dec. 25 |
| • Boxing Day | Dec. 26 |

Major Events

- Banff Arts Festival, May - Aug., 2003
- The National - Spruce Meadows, Calgary, June 4 - 8, 2003
- Calgary International Jazz Festival, June 13 - 22, 2003
- Canada One - Spruce Meadows, Calgary, June 20 - 22 and June 25 - 29, 2003
- Jazz City International Music Festival, Edmonton June 20 - 29, 2003
- The North American - Spruce Meadows, Calgary, July 1 - 6, 2003
- Ukrainian Pysanka Festival 2003, Vegreville, July 4 - 6, 2003
- Calgary Stampede, July 4 - 13, 2003
- Edmonton International Street Performers Festival, July 4 - 13, 2003
- Edmonton Klondike Days, July 17 - 26, 2003
- Big Valley Country Music Jamboree, Camrose, July 31 - Aug. 3, 2003
- Edmonton's Fringe Festival, Aug. 14 - 24, 2003
- The Masters - Spruce Meadows, Calgary, Sept. 3 - 7, 2003

For a full events listing, visit: TravelAlberta.com

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The tourism destination region maps on pages 24, 38, 44, 52, 58 and 64 are courtesy of the Alberta-Montana Discovery Guide.

For the latest information visit: TravelAlberta.com

For more information:

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Box 2500
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2Z4, Canada
Toll-Free: 1 (800) 661-8888 (Canada and U.S.),
1 (780) 427-4321 (International)
Fax: 1 (780) 427-0867
E-mail: travelinfo@travelalberta.com

There are Travel Alberta Visitor Centres conveniently located at entry points around the province. See map on the inside front cover.