

# **BESTSTAYCATIONS - 2020 ROCKPOINTE EDITION**

## **UPPER KANANASKIS LAKE HIKES - ALFRED AND KAREN**

If one wishes to do a hike, we recommend one at Upper Kananaskis Lake. You can do hikes on the north and on the south shores of the lake or you can hike all around the lake. I just read a review and someone did the whole lake in 5 hrs. The hike is rated as moderate. In addition to hiking the Upper Lake, you can hike the Kananaskis River water falls, Hidden Lake, Rawson Lake, Three Isle Lake, Aster Lake as well. I'm going to mention the north side of the lake hike which you can easily do in an afternoon. You can even bike the first part on the north side but then you'll need to walk the rest or just walk it all. Below are directions on how to do just a walk to the falls and back the same way along the north side of the lake. Pick a nice sunny day to maximize the joy.

1. Park at the 'north' parking lot by the Upper Lake - past and above the Interlakes Campground.
2. Walk north a bit, over the dam, over the metal bridge.
3. Get onto the trail and head west along the lake. This part of the trail is wide and good for bikes and provides a great view.
4. Go until the Rock Slide lunar landscape area appears on your left. Ditch your bikes here and walk down along the / a trail.
5. When you come to a campground, wiggle your way through it, find the river and head upstream.
6. You will then come to the water falls where you can get your pictures and head back.
7. Note: This is bear country. Take appropriate precautions.
8. Note: If you're walking around the whole lake you could park at the Boat Launch Parking Lot too and go either direction. I kind of like the counter clockwise concept though. I think the view is great that way. You can choose. The whole area is absolutely beautiful. Enjoy.

## **KINGSFOLD RETREAT CENTRE - MARLENE**

Get away from the city for a day or even overnight. King's Fold is an adult-only retreat centre that offers amazing views of the Ghost River, trails and sacred spaces inside and out. Cost: \$25 for a day retreat (9:00-5:30) - bring your own lunch, or \$120 for overnight with meals. Call 403-932-3174 to book a retreat today.

## **TURN YOUR GARAGE INTO A MOVIE THEATRE - STEPHANIE**

If you are missing going to the movies, here's how you can turn your garage into a movie theatre! Ideal for those cool nights where it's not quite warm enough for a fully outdoor movie and/or the weather is unpredictable. Open up your garage door, clear out any cars and in their places put your comfiest lawn chairs. You will need a projector and speaker to hook up to your laptop, but the rest is pretty easy. Attach a white queen sized sheet with binder clips to what is now the bottom of the garage door (top of the sheet) then use something from the garage to weigh down the bottom of the sheet (Dad's half full paint cans, extra tires, or paving stones will easily do the trick). Order movie popcorn from Cineplex, cue up your favourite 2 or 3 movie

trailers on youtube and let the movie watching experience begin! For extra ambiance, hang Christmas lights or the ever so popular Edison light bulbs in the garage behind where you will be sitting. (Side note: you can also make this work with the garage door closed if it's really a crummy weather night)

### **BIG HILLS SPRINGS PROVINCIAL PARK - BRAD**

Although it can be quite busy at times, Big Hill Springs Provincial park is less than a half hour from Calgary and an amazing little oasis with unique rock formations and waterfalls. There's a short little hike that's not too difficult, the kids can play in the creek and you can bring a picnic as there are a few picnic tables. Enjoy.

### **CAMPING AT HOME - ERIN**

We camped in our front yard and some of our neighbours joined us from their yard! We had a fire in the front and invited the neighbours for a socially distanced marshmallow! Cost is free.

### **EDWORTHY PARK - KATHY**

My husband and I love to ride the bike path from Edworthy Park along the river or all the way around the loop. Then we head to the Lazy Loaf and Kettle coffee shop located on Parkdale Crescent NW which is right off the path. It has great cinnamon buns and coffee.

### **GEOCACHING - CLAYTON AND CAROL**

One thing you can do to liven up a family stroll for the kids is geocaching. Geocaching is a game where people have hidden containers called geocaches in parks and natural areas and then posted the GPS coordinates on the [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) website. You can get the coordinates and tell kids we're going on a treasure hunt! Caches can differ but a basic cache will have a logbook for you to sign, info sheet and some trading items. The basic rule is take something and leave something so bring along some dollar store treasures to trade. Favourite areas to geocache are all the beautiful Calgary parks but every neighbourhood has many choices that you can hike or bike to. Enjoy your free outing.

### **ABC ACTIVITY DAY - SHARA**

Here is an idea that our family is excited to do this summer: ABC Activity Day/Weekend. This activity can be relatively inexpensive depending on the types of places and activities that you take part in. It can take a day or stretch it out over a weekend for some family fun. It just requires a bit of creativity on your part. For example, drive to Airdrie and visit Boardwalk for some lunch. After lunch, head to Chinook Winds Regional Park to play. Continue on to Drumheller and Explore Horseshoe Canyon. You can involve your kiddos in the planning of the trip and take photos of each activity to create a memory book of your time together.

### **TORRINGTON GOPHER MUSEUM - SHELLEY**

Below are four links to three of the best staycation ideas I could think of under the current restrictions. Torrington Gopher Museum is famous worldwide - very affordable with only a \$2 entrance fee and Horseshoe Canyon and the Suspension Bridge could be visited in the same day at no cost. Add in Siffleur Falls which is a popular and scenic destination three hours and

fifteen minutes outside Calgary which comes at no cost provided you bring your own picnic lunch.

<http://gopherholemuseum.ca>

<https://www.travelalberta.com/ca/listings/horseshoe-canyon-2003/>

<https://www.travelalberta.com/ca/listings/rosedale-suspension-bridge-4513/>

<https://explorecentralalberta.ca/guide/see-do/summer-outdoors/hiking/siffleur-falls/>

### **CAMP AT ASPEN CROSSING - TERENCE**

We found a great little railroad-themed park South East of Calgary called Aspen Crossing. The park includes a campground with full hook-up sites and some with no services. There are also three Caboose cabins for rent real train cabooses that have been converted into fully-equipped cabins with bathroom, kitchenette and a fireplace. Aspen Crossing acquired a bunch of train cars and locomotives from various rail companies and runs its own private 25 km railroad. They do a variety of 2-hour long tours with different themed trips. There is a green house, gift shop, restaurant, escape rooms and a pub that delivers food to your campsite! There's even an area where you can set-off fireworks (with permission). You can camp, stay in a Caboose or just visit as a day trip. Some attractions are not open yet due to Covid-19, so check before going! All this is located one hour southeast of Calgary near Mossleigh, Alberta. More information can be found at <https://www.aspencrossing.com/>.

### **A HIDDEN KANANASKIS GEM - DRINDA**

This is a provincial park that is part of Kananaskis, but is much closer. Drive to Bragg Creek, go right to cross the Elbow River, turn left and drive until you run out of road. I like it because you can ride your bike or horse, hike a long way or just a bit and sit beside the small creek that runs through the park. There are lots of trails so you make a loop. And then when you finished, you go to Bragg Creek and have ice cream!

### **NORTHERN LIGHTS - KATE**

We've just passed a solar minimum meaning that solar activity will ramp up over the next four years. Checkout Ovation Aurora <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/aurora-30-minute-forecast> or join the Alberta Aurora Chasers group on Facebook (no experience required). Wait for the sun to throw out a flare, pray for good weather, clear skies, and go and find a nice spot out of the city to check out the Northern Lights. (Our RockPointe Bears paw site makes a great spot to watch!). In summer it'll be a late night - midnight to 3 am is best for viewing. Note: The Northern Lights are a product of the sun's radiation reacting to the Earth's magnetosphere. We have the magnetosphere because Earth has a molten core, giving us the magnetic poles. The magnetosphere is weaker at the poles so that's why we get the lights there. Because we have the magnetosphere life exists on this planet otherwise the sun's radiation would destroy life. The northern lights are a wonderful example of God's perfect creation on display for all to see. (I'm not a scientist and this is a brief description. There's much more to it with the reaction of charged particles etc - just coming from a person who loves to see God and His work in the science of our lives!)

### **DAYTRIPS FROM LETHBRIDGE - ANNE AND GARY**

In recent years, our family of 23 - due to our size - has been enjoying an annual week of camping together on the lake near Penticton, BC. This year our reservation was rejected so we made alternate plans to gather at our daughter's acreage east of Lethbridge and do day trips. Some of the ideas we have come up with are hiking and picnic at Waterton Nat'l Park, hiking in the Lethbridge River Valley, Golf in the Crowsnest Pass, boating (skiing, tubing, wakeboarding, swimming) in one of the numerous irrigation lakes in the area and lots of good outdoor cooking, fellowship, laughter and chatting and enjoying each other as we do no matter where we gather. God is Still Good All the Time! We are blessed!

### **SKYLINE LUGE AT C.O.P. - STEPHANIE**

Our family's favourite place while on staycation--just a 5+ drive from our house--hands down is Skyline Luge at Canada Olympic Park! The go carts are so much fun.

### **THE PERFECT SOUTHERN ALBERTA DAY TRIP - KRISTI**

Day Trip for the Trekkie fans: I love meandering down the back highways of Alberta and taking in all the fields and small towns finding grain elevators and run down farmstead homes and barns to take pictures of. Sorry ... costs unknown, as I haven't been these places for 2-3 years. One of my favourite road trips:

- Strathmore: Begin with breakfast with coffee at Tim Horton's and an A&W bacon 'n egger sandwich
- Drive down Highway 817 over to Carseland and down Highway 24 and then Highway 23 to Vulcan
- Vulcan is a cute small town with lots of Star Trek "memorabilia" to take pictures of. Just off Main Street find a hand mold of Spock's (Nimoy's) Vulcan greeting hand. Remember to take along some hand sanitizer!
- Head down through to Lethbridge and Two Guys and a Pizza is an amazing place to have a take-out lunch.
- To extend your adventure down south, head out around Taber and take in the beautiful sunflower fields - full bloom takes place at the end of August
- Return through Carseland and up Highway 2 (QE) through Nanton. Hit the candy store and ice cream parlour!
- Have supper at the Saskatoon Berry Farm. Grab some Saskatoon berry elk sausage along with some of their Saskatoon berry jams or syrups which are perfect additions to a waffle brunch for your next morning at home!
- If camping spots are open, you could make this a weekend adventure and add in Heads-Smashed-in-Buffalo-Jump National Park.

### **HERITAGE PARK - MARY-LOU**

The best staycations around Calgary is Heritage Park. I had a fun day riding on the stage coach ride with my 7-year old grandson. It took me back to younger days going on fair rides. I would also suggest Callaway Park which is awesome with so much to explore. It's Flintstones theme ride took me back again to my younger days when I use to watch the cartoon.

## **MYSTERY TOWN TOUR IN CANMORE - WES AND JAN**

I would suggest doing a Mystery Town Tour in Canmore. This is a family-friendly activity and can easily be done on bikes or walking. There are several choices - ours was Smugglers Cove and it took us around the town to find answers to scavenger-type questions we were given. You need a phone which is used to submit your answers before you get the next clue. This activity is family-oriented and can certainly be done at a safe distance from others. Just google Mystery Town Canmore and you will have several options from which to choose. We highly recommend it for an afternoon in that lovely town.

## **OL' MACDONALDS RESORT - COLLEEN**

I've been camping at Ol' Macdonald's Resort for 11 years. The resort is located 2.5 hours from Calgary east of Red Deer and 19 kms from Stettler on Buffalo Lake. Families have been coming here for years. Today we see grandparents who camped here as children, bring their grandchildren. Families bring their bikes and children can ride throughout the campground. This is truly a family campground with a 10 km speed limit due to the number of children. There's lots to do and the prices for all activities is within reason. There's a beach, a variety of campsites, Grandmas Kitchen (if you choose not to cook), a coffee shop, several playgrounds, go-cart rentals, arcade, museum, gift shop, mini-golf, evening train rides through the park, a merry-go-round, evening children's movie in the school house and the family dog or dogs are welcome for an additional fee. Day rates are also available if you aren't camping. I operate Ladybug Recycling and campers can leave their recyclable - bottles, cans and tetra packs and donations are made to several charities such as Children's Make-A-Wish, Ronald MacDonald House, Stettler Food Bank, Veterans Food Bank.

## **START AN UNESCO BUCKET LIST - JOHN AND BIRNIE**

You may not know this, but Alberta is home to five World Heritage sites identified by UNESCO - an organization which catalogues and preserves sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance all over the world. Maybe this is the summer to visit four of them which are located within a few hours of Calgary. An UNESCO Alberta History Annual Pass can be purchased for unlimited Admission to all Alberta Provincial Historic Sites. Adult: \$55; Senior: \$40; Youth: \$30; Family: \$125. Each site has a day admission fee as well. Here is a list of the four.....

1. Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump located 18 kms west of Fort Macleod on Highway 785 about two hours from Calgary.
2. The Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks made up of four national parks and three provincial parks. The four national parks are Banff and Jasper National Parks are in Alberta and Yoho and Kootenay National Parks in BC. The provincial parks are Mount Robson, Mount Assiniboine and Hamber in B.C. Driving and Hiking are free but a National Park Pass is required for parking within the parks.
3. Waterton Lakes National Park in southwestern Alberta was Canada's fourth national park, formed in 1895. The scenery is dominated by a beautiful lake and village surrounded by high mountains and deep canyons, glacial formations and rich forests. The meadows of wildflowers are a favourite of grizzlies, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, coyotes and elk herds which migrate across the border. Calgary to Waterton Lakes National Park is about a 3:15 drive.

4. Dinosaur Provincial Park located 48 kilometres from Brooks, Alberta and a 2.5-hour drive from Calgary. More complete dinosaur skeletons have been discovered there than anywhere else in the world. Over thirty-five types of dinosaurs have been found with more than 150 full dinosaur skeletons and more than 50 fossils species of turtles, fish, lizards and flying reptiles. Camping is available in the area.