

Cariboo—Wells Gray

Plateau country
Central British Columbia is a high plateau bound by mountains to the east and west. Highway 97 between Clinton and Williams Lake travels through the 'Cariboo', the name given to the southeastern part of the plateau. Highway 5 at Clearwater provides access to the eastern plateau in Wells Gray Park.

Wells Gray Park
Famous for its waterfalls, canyons, and ancient volcanic sites on the edge of the plateau. Rivers and streams carve the plateau as waterfalls, over time these waterfalls have cut backward, creating deep canyons in the lava layers that underlie the plateau.

Why is the plateau flat?
The plateau is an ancient shield raised by Earth's crust and smoothed by subsequent erosion. It is 5 to 20 million years old.

B.C.'s lava plateau
Ancient lava flows, trapped during cooling, give the appearance of rock sponges.

Overhanging lip
Horseshoe Falls has slowly eroded upward over the last 1000 years, leaving behind a canyon carved into the lava flow.

Upper canyon
Sparhawk Creek flows from a narrow canyon, over Sparhawk Creek Falls, and into a larger canyon. Steep canyon walls form because the rock breaks along abundant vertical cracks in the lava.

Lower canyon
Sparhawk Creek flows from a narrow canyon, over Sparhawk Creek Falls, and into a larger canyon. Steep canyon walls form because the rock breaks along abundant vertical cracks in the lava.

Ice Age river
Though dry today, Cham canyon was cut by a former glacial river and waterfall at the end of the Ice Age.

Kamloops—Shuswap

Big valleys and lakes
From Cache Creek to Sicamous, Highway 1 follows the Thompson and South Thompson river valleys through dry grasslands past Kamloops Lake and the city of Kamloops, and eastward by farms and forests to the glacier-carved Shuswap Lake.

Volcanic rock
Climbing from the Columbia Mountains across older volcanic rocks, the Thompson River crosses the clear and warmer waters of the South Thompson River that drains from Shuswap Lake.

A fish fossil in mudstone
The Mabee fossil beds near Cache Creek are a managed fossil collecting site. Leaf, flower, insect, and fish fossils are preserved in 50 million year old mudstone that formed in an ancient lake beside a volcano. Volcanic eruptions later buried the mudstone with its fossils.

Highland Valley mine
Highland Valley mine, near Logan Lake, is Canada's largest copper mine. Tours are available for the mine, its mill, and the reclaimed mined areas. There is also a viewpoint along Highway 97C.

Active mining
Granite rock with copper ore.

How B.C. was built: an analogy

180 million years ago, as the Atlantic Ocean began to open, North America moved westward and collided with nearby ocean floor and volcanic islands, in a process somewhat like a bulldozer pushing soil and boulders from a field.

North America
Deformed North America tectonic plate.
Undeformed North America tectonic plate.
Atlantic Ocean.
Pacific Ocean.
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Today, B.C.'s landmass is a collision zone of deformed volcanic islands, seafloor, and North America continental margin.

Highway 3—Similkameen

Hope to Kereenos
Highway 3 winds from rainforests to Hope, over the Cascade Mountains, past former mining towns of Princeton and Hedley, to grasslands and the rich agricultural fields of the Similkameen River valley.

Curious circles pattern on Spotted Lake
Curious circles pattern on Spotted Lake are formed of mineral salts deposited from groundwater seepage that leech the lake. The lake has no stream outlet, therefore, as the lake water evaporates, the salt concentrates.

Local First Nations called Hedley 'Shishal'
The former Hedley mine is now a park. Layers of dark volcanic intrusions and grey mudstone exposed on the valley walls create the stripes.

Red ochre bluffs give Princeton its early name 'Vermillion Falls'
Ancient underground fires in coal seams baked adjacent mudstone, converting iron minerals to red ochre. First Nations used this red ochre as pigment in green paint for ceremonies and rock art.

Highway 3 crosses the 1906 Hope landslide
The largest landslide in western Canada. The wide tilted road materials buried the former Highway 3 by as much as 79 m of rock debris.

White Lake, west of Chagnoy Falls
completely evaporates in summer, leaving behind a dry lake bed of white mineral salts.

Rocky Mountains

Glaciers
Glaciers dissolved in British Columbia only.

Modern sediment
Mud, sand, and gravel.

Ice Age sediment
Silt (glacial lake bottom), Sand and gravel (glacial river channel), Till (glacial debris).

Rock
Limestone and dolomite, Sandstone and shale, Metamorphic (altering) sandstone and shale, Granite, Gneiss, Ultramafic rock (ancient ocean pillow).

Population
50,000 or more
10,000-50,000
5,000-10,000
1,000-5,000
500-1,000
0-500

Legend
Major roads, paved
Major roads, unpaved
Minor roads, paved
Minor roads, unpaved
Provincial parks and park boundaries
Location of photograph

Mines (producer, past producer)
22-Mount Polley (copper), 23-Katney Creek (gold), 24-Hot Lake (lead-zinc), 25-Fraser Canyon (lead-zinc), 26-Pavilion Limestone (limestone), 27-Walrus Creek (copper), 28-Highland Valley (copper), 29-Lorne (copper), 30-Campbell (copper), 31-Monk (copper), 32-Bellevue (copper), 33-Monk (copper), 34-Monk (copper), 35-Abbot Cone (copper), 36-Copper Mountain (copper), 37-Blaine Hill (copper), 38-Northern Plate (copper), 39-Bronze (copper), 40-Blaine Hill (copper), 41-Blaine Hill (copper), 42-Harper Ranch (limestone), 43-Golden (copper), 44-Monarch (zinc), 45-Monarch (zinc), 46-Monarch (zinc), 47-Fraser Canyon (copper), 48-Fraser Canyon (copper), 49-Greenhorn (copper), 50-Lakeview (copper), 51-Fraser Canyon (copper), 52-Abbot Cone (copper), 53-Abbot Cone (copper), 54-Fraser Canyon (copper), 55-Blaine Hill (copper), 56-Blaine Hill (copper), 57-Blaine Hill (copper), 58-Blaine Hill (copper), 59-Blaine Hill (copper), 60-Motherlode (copper), 61-Blaine Hill (copper), 62-Blaine Hill (copper).

Hot springs
14-Hedley (sulfur), 15-Fairmont, 16-Radium, 17-Fairmont, 18-Bull Creek, 19-Lussier, 20-Ram Creek, 21-Fraser Canyon, 22-Wild Horse River, 23-Caribou Lake, 24-Arrow, 25-Crocker-Huffman, 26-Crocker-Huffman, 27-Hedley, 28-Hedley, 29-Hedley, 30-Hedley, 31-Hedley, 32-Hedley, 33-Hedley, 34-Hedley, 35-Hedley, 36-Hedley, 37-Hedley, 38-Hedley, 39-Hedley, 40-Hedley, 41-Hedley, 42-Hedley, 43-Hedley, 44-Hedley, 45-Hedley, 46-Hedley, 47-Hedley, 48-Hedley, 49-Hedley, 50-Hedley, 51-Hedley, 52-Hedley, 53-Hedley, 54-Hedley, 55-Hedley, 56-Hedley, 57-Hedley, 58-Hedley, 59-Hedley, 60-Hedley, 61-Hedley, 62-Hedley, 63-Hedley, 64-Hedley, 65-Hedley, 66-Hedley, 67-Hedley, 68-Hedley, 69-Hedley, 70-Hedley, 71-Hedley, 72-Hedley, 73-Hedley, 74-Hedley, 75-Hedley, 76-Hedley, 77-Hedley, 78-Hedley, 79-Hedley, 80-Hedley, 81-Hedley, 82-Hedley, 83-Hedley, 84-Hedley, 85-Hedley, 86-Hedley, 87-Hedley, 88-Hedley, 89-Hedley, 90-Hedley, 91-Hedley, 92-Hedley, 93-Hedley, 94-Hedley, 95-Hedley, 96-Hedley, 97-Hedley, 98-Hedley, 99-Hedley, 100-Hedley.

Volcanoes
21-Blaine Hill, 22-Blaine Hill, 23-Blaine Hill, 24-Blaine Hill, 25-Blaine Hill, 26-Blaine Hill, 27-Blaine Hill, 28-Blaine Hill, 29-Blaine Hill, 30-Blaine Hill, 31-Blaine Hill, 32-Blaine Hill, 33-Blaine Hill, 34-Blaine Hill, 35-Blaine Hill, 36-Blaine Hill, 37-Blaine Hill, 38-Blaine Hill, 39-Blaine Hill, 40-Blaine Hill, 41-Blaine Hill, 42-Blaine Hill, 43-Blaine Hill, 44-Blaine Hill, 45-Blaine Hill, 46-Blaine Hill, 47-Blaine Hill, 48-Blaine Hill, 49-Blaine Hill, 50-Blaine Hill, 51-Blaine Hill, 52-Blaine Hill, 53-Blaine Hill, 54-Blaine Hill, 55-Blaine Hill, 56-Blaine Hill, 57-Blaine Hill, 58-Blaine Hill, 59-Blaine Hill, 60-Blaine Hill, 61-Blaine Hill, 62-Blaine Hill, 63-Blaine Hill, 64-Blaine Hill, 65-Blaine Hill, 66-Blaine Hill, 67-Blaine Hill, 68-Blaine Hill, 69-Blaine Hill, 70-Blaine Hill, 71-Blaine Hill, 72-Blaine Hill, 73-Blaine Hill, 74-Blaine Hill, 75-Blaine Hill, 76-Blaine Hill, 77-Blaine Hill, 78-Blaine Hill, 79-Blaine Hill, 80-Blaine Hill, 81-Blaine Hill, 82-Blaine Hill, 83-Blaine Hill, 84-Blaine Hill, 85-Blaine Hill, 86-Blaine Hill, 87-Blaine Hill, 88-Blaine Hill, 89-Blaine Hill, 90-Blaine Hill, 91-Blaine Hill, 92-Blaine Hill, 93-Blaine Hill, 94-Blaine Hill, 95-Blaine Hill, 96-Blaine Hill, 97-Blaine Hill, 98-Blaine Hill, 99-Blaine Hill, 100-Blaine Hill.

Highway 1—Mountain National Parks

Some of the most remarkable mountain scenery in British Columbia can be observed along Highway 1 in Mount Revelstoke, Glacier, and Yoho national parks, and along Highway 55 in Kootenay National Park. Many road-side stops and well-maintained trails allow you to explore features of interest.

Mount Revelstoke National Park of Canada
The access road to Mount Revelstoke National Park of Canada provides panoramic views of the Columbia River Valley and Kootenay National Park.

Kootenay National Park of Canada
Three different springs along Highway 93 in Kootenay National Park of Canada represent different groundwater plumbing systems in the Earth. All are fed from surface water.

Yoho National Park of Canada
A hike up the Incline Trail provides a view of the setting of Takahewa Falls. The green lambs from a high-altitude valley into the deep glacial canyon Yoho River valley.

Glacier National Park of Canada
The Glacier House Trail in Glacier National Park of Canada provides spectacular views of the Yoho and the rugged peaks of the Selkirk Mountains.

Glacier rock flour creates the opaque turquoise colour of Emerald Lake.
The world famous Burgess Shale locality is visible on the ridge high above the lake.

Viewpoint just south of Radium look across
ecologically important wetlands that extend 100 km from Columbia Lake to Golden within the Rocky Mountain Trench.

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Rocky Mountain Trench—Crowsnest Pass

Highways 95 and 93 follow the Rocky Mountain Trench from the U.S.A. border north to Golden, passing forests and farms, grasslands and wetlands, big rivers, lakes, and hot springs. In contrast, Highway 3 cuts across the grain of the mountains and follows smaller valleys through the Rockies to Alberta.

How the Rockies formed
1) Violent seafloor (750 to 180 million years ago)
2) Mountain building (180 to 60 million years ago)
3) Erosion (60 million years ago to today)

West Kootenay
West Kootenay is a diverse landscape of forest, glacial peaks, big lakes and rivers, pasture and farms, hot springs, and ghost towns. Fine heritage buildings in Nelson, Kaslo, Roseland, and Trail reflect the wealth produced by historic silver and gold mines.

Okanagan valley—Boundary
The Okanagan valley is famous for its large lakes, agriculture, and dry landscapes. The valley follows an ancient fault in the Earth's crust that has been eroded by rivers and ice Age glaciers. To the east along Highway 3 is the Boundary country with a rich history of mining.

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B.C.—North America's leading edge

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