



48 HOURS IN YELLOWKNIFE

You won't find the typical North American metropolis in the Northwest Territories. The tranquil yet dynamic capital Yellowknife is already the largest city in the region with a population of only 19,000. However, it has exciting things to tell! Even today, a hint of gold rush atmosphere still wafts through its historic Old Town. And a colorful mix of residents from over 90 nations makes Yellowknife an energetic and exciting place to be. A variety of festivals celebrate the different cultures, and there's an outstanding culinary offer, too! At the same time, Yellowknife's perfect location on the northern tip of Great Slave Lake makes it an ideal base for outdoor activities on land and water.

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Your 48 hours in Yellowknife could look like this:

DAY 1:

Begin your day with a first orientation at the **Northern Frontier Visitor Centre** – a perfect start to getting to know the wild capital of the North! Nearby are the **NWT Legislative Assembly Building** and the **Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Museum**. The latter is the mother of all northern museums and offers an excellent overview of the Northwest Territories' art, culture, industry and history. Exhibits range from Dene moose skin boats to gold rush era memorabilia and old bush planes.



If you're there at the right time, you can also enjoy exciting live presentations.

Afterwards, Yellowknife's funky and historic **Old Town** awaits your visit! With its quirky cottages, stately mansions, colorful houseboats, seaplanes and excellent access to Great Slave Lake, the Old Town is perhaps the most interesting neighborhood in all of Canada. Jutting boldly from the rocky outcrops above Yellowknife Bay, it was once the starting point of the gold rush in the Northwest Territories. The Old Town bustles with visitors and locals year-round, but to see it at its liveliest, visit it during the annual **Old Town Ramble & Ride**, which takes place on Civic Day weekend each year (early August).

Plan in a lunch stop at the historic **Wildcat Café**. The popular summer eatery is housed in an old log cabin reminiscent of Yellowknife's 1930s gold rush era. As the city's oldest restaurant – it dates back to 1937 – it looks back on eventful decades. Under the leadership of the Wildcat Café

Advisory Committee, the café is now one of Yellowknife's premier tourist attractions. With its delicious dishes made from local ingredients, the restaurant is not only historic, but also a culinary highlight!



Begin the afternoon with a unique panoramic view from the **Bush Pilot's Monument**. Yellowknife's most popular vantage point rises above the Old Town and offers a breathtaking view over Great Slave

Lake, Back Bay and the city's northern foothills. The monument is located high atop "The Rock" and can be reached by a spiral staircase. It is dedicated to the bush pilots and engineers who lost their lives flying in the wilderness of the Northwest Territories.

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The memorial also serves a practical purpose: when the light on top of the tower flashes, residents and visitors are warned that seaplanes or ski planes are flying in nearby Yellowknife Bay.

The sparkling waters of Great Slave Lake look inviting, don't they? Rent a canoe or paddleboard for the rest of the afternoon (e.g. at [Narwal Northern Adventures](#) or [Old Town Paddle](#)) and paddle around the Latham and Joliffe Island to marvel at the cabins, mansions, seaplanes and houseboats in Yellowknife Bay.

Then, back on land, enjoy your well-deserved dinner on the beautiful outdoor patio at [The Woodyard](#). The cool brew pub in Yellowknife's Old Town offers not only delicious food, but also home-brewed beer made from local ingredients.



Still not tired? In the most famous saloon of the North, the **Gold Range**, you can experience the spirit of the North until late at night. The illustrious mix of guests ranges from political elites to trappers who have just returned from the wilderness.



The first day in Yellowknife is drawing to a close. Whether you're staying at the campground in *Fred Henne Territorial Park*, in one of the houseboats of *Yellowknife Bay Floating B&B* or in a suite at the *Explorer Hotel*, it's important to look up at the sky on the way home. With a little luck, you'll witness another magnificent spectacle: When night falls in the Northwest Territories and millions of stars twinkle in the darkness, the celestial dance floor opens. High overhead, a breathtaking natural display of fireworks ignites as if by magic with whirring lights of bright colors. Bands of green, blue, white and red lights begin to glow in the sky, dancing and swirling around their own axis, slowly at first, then faster and faster. With mostly crystal-clear skies and a perfect geographic location under the Aurora Oval, Yellowknife is the world's best region for viewing the Aurora Borealis.



DAY 2:

After a hearty breakfast, the day begins with a truly sparkling experience! Yellowknife lies in the middle of an area rich in gold and diamonds. The latter were first discovered in the early 1990s, giving the region a renewed boom after its brief gold rush of the 1930s. While the diamond mines are located slightly outside, the **NWT Diamond Centre** in town awaits with the secrets of Arctic diamonds. Here, chunky rough diamonds are transformed into polished jewelry by expert cutters in front of the eyes of curious spectators.



Afterwards, rent a car, pack hiking boots, fishing rod and a picnic lunch and explore the beautiful **Ingraham Trail**. At about 70 kilometers long, Highway No. 4 – also known as the Ingraham Trail – runs east from Yellowknife to Tibbitt Lake. The region is also known as Yellowknife's "Cottage Country" due to its abundance of weekend cottages between Cassidy Point and Prelude Lake Territorial Park. Numerous beautiful lakes line the route.

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Prelude and **Reid Lake** as well as **Madeline**, **Prosperous** and **Pontoon Lake** offer good water access with boat docks and nice areas for swimming.

The highlight of the Ingraham Trail, however, is **Cameron Falls**. Here, in Hidden Lake Territorial Park, a short hiking trail winds through evergreen forests, over boardwalks and hilly outcroppings until you reach, about 20 minutes later, the viewing point on the other side of the falls where the Cameron River plunges 17 meters on its way to Great Slave Lake. From here, the trail continues upstream until you cross a bridge to the other side of the river, where excellent picnicking and fishing opportunities await, as well as swimming at the base of the waterfall (on hot days).

After an exciting day in the great outdoors, head back to Yellowknife in the late afternoon. Take a short breather and treat yourself to dinner at Yellowknife's legendary seafood restaurant **Bullock's Bistro** in the Old Town. Enjoy a cold beer and the "Catch of the Day": freshly caught fish from Great Slave Lake. The day in Yellowknife could not end more authentically...



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