



# DEH CHO TRAVEL CONNECTION

**FROM/TO EDMONTON - 4,620 KM - 21 DAYS**

It still exists, the real wilderness! True to the motto “the journey is the destination”, the Deh Cho Travel Connection takes you through Canada’s wild Northwest, untouched by the stress and hectic pace of civilisation, past magnificent natural sites and secrets from days long gone. The Deh Cho Route follows the Mackenzie, the Liard and the Alaska Highway on well-maintained roads and gravel tracks, retracing the footsteps of the traders and pioneers who explored Canada’s North centuries ago. The route leads through the north of the province of Alberta and British Columbia as well as through the spectacular Northwest Territories.

## DAY 1: ARRIVAL EDMONTON

Transfer to your hotel. Welcome to the capital of Alberta! Let today’s arrival day come to a pleasant end. If you still have energy despite the time difference, you can find out about the natural history and Alberta’s Indigenous peoples at the Royal Alberta Museum or take a stroll around Edmonton’s neighbourhoods.

## DAY 2: GRIMSHAW (510 KM)

Pick up your rental car or campervan in Edmonton and stock up on supplies if needed. Drive northwest to Whitecourt. Here you can visit the Forest Interpretive Centre. South of Peace River, you can enjoy the view of the Peace River Valley and the confluence of the Peace, Smoky and Hert Rivers from Sagitawa Lookout.







The Peace River Museum, Archives and Mackenzie Centre has a wealth of information about the local history of the fur trade and explorer Alexander Mackenzie. Heading west, cross the Peace River on the Shaftesbury Ferry before reaching Grimshaw – Mile Zero of the Mackenzie Highway and your starting point for the Deh Cho Route.

### **DAY 3: NOTIKEWIN PROVINCIAL PARK (140 KM)**

In the morning, enjoy the sandy beach, the birding lookout and smaller hiking trails in [Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park](#). Back on the Mackenzie Highway, head north to Manning. Don't miss the opportunity to take a photo of the Manning Moose Statue. The giant moose is the town's landmark. Explore the Battle River Pioneer Museum, located about 1 km east of Manning on Highway 691.

### **DAY 4: HIGH LEVEL (400 KM)**

As you continue north on the Mackenzie Highway, the Twin Lakes Provincial Recreation Area offers fantastic fishing opportunities. You reach Keg River, a Hudson's Bay Company

trading post dating back to 1896 and leave the Mackenzie Highway for a short detour in an easterly direction. Take the Tompkins Landing ferry to the Mennocite community of La Crête. On the way, stop at Buffalo Head Hills, which rise around 600 metres above the surrounding farmland. As you continue your journey, you will reach Fort Vermilion, a community that is over 200 years old. Many of the original buildings have been preserved. Your destination for the day is [High Level](#). The Mackenzie Crossroads Museum and Visitor Centre is absolutely worth a visit. High Level is the geographical centre between Edmonton and Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories.

### **DAY 5: HAY RIVER (310 KM)**

Today you will cross the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel and the border to the Northwest Territories as you continue northwards. Be sure to pick up your "North of 60" certificate at the [60<sup>th</sup> Parallel Visitor Centre](#)! Your route now continues north along the waterfall route. At [Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park](#), you can enjoy a short hike between the Alexandra and Louise Falls and witness a powerful natural spectacle.

The Louise Falls have carved their way through 400-million-year-old rock. The Indigenous Dene call the Alexandra Falls “Hatto deh Naili”, the “Holy Place of Power”. Your destination for today is Hay River on the southern shore of Great Slave Lake. Stroll along the shore at the Hay River Territorial Park on Vale Island, explore the Kiwanis Nature Trail or rent a canoe to paddle on the Hay River.

### DAY 6: FORT SMITH (270 KM)

Today you leave the Deh Cho Route for detour to Wood Buffalo National Park. Pure nature at its finest! Wood bison, the largest land mammals in North America, are often seen along the park roads.



The park is a nesting site for the endangered whooping crane. The town of Fort Smith is the starting point for excursions into the park and is located at the northern end on the Slave River Rapids. With a bit of luck, you can watch a whole colony of pelicans sunbathing and fishing here.



### DAY 7: FORT SMITH / WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

The park offers a variety of experiences, from short walks on secluded forest trails to wild canoe trips through the hinterland on wide, meandering rivers. Visit the Salt Plains, which extend over 200 square kilometres.



These salt plains are extremely rare and one of the reasons why Wood Buffalo National Park has been declared a World Heritage Site. Salt bubbles up from springs across the plains, forming hills up to two metres high in some places. In spring, the salt spreads across the area and forms white patterns on the ground.

### DAY 8: KAKISA (390 KM)

In the morning, take another walk to the Slave River and the Rapids of the Drowned to watch the pelican colony. Outside of Fort Smith, you can enjoy one last view of the salt plains of Wood Buffalo National Park from the Salt Plains Lookout before returning to the Deh Cho Route. From Enterprise, you will once again be travelling along the waterfall route. On the way to Kakisa, take a detour to McNallie Creek Falls – a picnic opportunity with a wonderful view! Hiking trails take you to the spectacular waterfalls and a deep gorge. Kakisa is very close to picturesque Lady Evelyn Falls. It's worth spending some time at the foot of the falls – the fishing for grayling and pike is excellent!





### DAY 9: YELLOWKNIFE (370 KM)

You leave the Deh Cho Route once again and make a detour to the tranquil capital of Yellowknife. On your onward journey to Fort Providence, you will cross the mighty Mackenzie River, which the First Nations call “Deh Cho”, on the Merv Hardie Ferry. Be sure to refuel in Fort Providence, there are no more gas stations on Highway 3 for the time being. The journey to Yellowknife takes you through the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary, a protected area for bison. Watch out for wildlife on and off the road. On the way, enjoy a picnic lunch at Chan Lake – a picturesque place to eat and savour. With a population of just 19,000, Yellowknife is the largest city in the Northwest Territories and can be described as a true pioneer city. You can still feel the atmosphere of the gold rush around the Great Slave Lake in its historic Old Town. Be sure to make a stop at the legendary Wildcat Café!

### DAY 10: YELLOWKNIFE

Yellowknife is not only the capital of the Northwest Territories, but is also known worldwide as the diamond capital. The small city with the big-city-amenities is made up of more than 90 different nations. Once founded on the wealth from gold mines, diamonds now provide a certain glamour. There is plenty to see and even more to do here!

Enjoy the summer festivals, visit the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the igloo-shaped Parliament House. Drive along the Ingraham Trail and visit Cameron Falls. Hiking, canoeing or boat tours on Prelude Lake are also available along the route. In winter, the Ingraham Trail is the starting point for one of the famous ice roads to Dettah.

A boat or fishing tour on Great Slave Lake is the perfect way to round off your side trip to Yellowknife.

### DAY 11: FORT PROVIDENCE (320 KM)

After a leisurely breakfast, you make your way back to the Deh Cho Route. In the craft shop in Fort Providence, you will find a wide selection of woven goods made from moose hair. The Snowshoe Inn Motel will be happy to help you organize excursions: Boat tour, canoe trip or Indigenous culture excursions are available.

### DAY 12: SAMBAA DEH FALLS TERRITORIAL PARK (180 KM)

Head west on the Mackenzie Highway to Sambaa Deh Falls Territorial Park. From a high plateau, you can enjoy the marvelous view over the Trout River at Coral Falls. With a bit of luck, you may find some interesting fossils here.





### DAY 13: FORT SIMPSON (150 KM)

You continue northwest to Fort Simpson. With a population of 1,200, the town at the confluence of the Liard and Mackenzie River is the largest in the region and also the starting point for tour into the legendary Nahanni National Park. At the Visitor Centre you can find out about different tours into the park. As the tours are highly dependent of the weather, you should plan to stay at least 2 nights in Fort Simpson.

### DAY 14 & 15: FORT SIMPSON

Whatever mode of transport you prefer to explore Nahanni National Park, there is sure to be the right trip for you. Take a floatplane to breathtaking Virginia Falls inside the park.



Charter airlines in Fort Simpson offer a variety of tours. Or paddle through the park on the South Nahanni of Flat River. You can take a jet boat down the Mackenzie and North Nahanni Rivers. The numerous mountains and canyons make for great hikes that are rewarded with fantastic views. Be sure to refuel in Fort Simpson – this is your last opportunity until you reach Fort Liard.

### DAY 16: FORT LIARD (290 KM)

You head south along the Liard Highway. The gravel road, which is passable in all weathers, promises panoramic views of the Nahanni Mountains and the Liard River, especially in the Blackstone Territorial Park. Today's destination is Fort Liard, your last stop in the Northwest Territories. The log cabin village is located in one of the oldest permanently populated areas in the North. The birch bark baskets made here, decorated with traditional Dene patterns, are famous throughout Northern Canada.

### DAY 17: FORT NELSON (250 KM)

On the way to Fort Nelson you cross the border to British Columbia. It will be almost impossible not to see any wildlife today: mountain goats, bison, moose, caribou, deer as well as wolves,

coyotes, fox, grizzlies, black bears and lynx live in the almost uninhabited north-east of British Columbia. Take your time to take photos along the way. The former fur trade centre of Fort Nelson is now mainly dedicated to the timber and gas industry. You can replenish your supplies and refuel here.

### **DAY 18: FORT ST. JOHN (360 KM)**

Today you drive south on the Alaska Highway to Fort St. John. In the [Fort St. John North Peace Museum](#) you will get a dose of local history. In Beaton Provincial Park, 10 minutes north of the town, you can make another paddle stop at Charlie Lake or cast out your fishing line.

### **DAY 19: WILLIAMSON PROVINCIAL PARK (310 KM)**

You travel on heading southwest. Shortly before [Dawson Creek](#), Mile Zero of Alaska Highway, you can take a detour via the original Alaska Highway and the Kiskatinaw Bridge. The latter is one of the longest winding wooden bridges in North America and the only original bridge on the Alaska Highway that can still be travelled on. At the Alaska Highway House in Dawson Creek, you can find out how the highway was built. The “Mile Zero Cairn” boundary stone next to the roundabout marks the spot where construction of the Alaska Highway began in 1942. At Swan Lake, you cross the border into Alberta and reach [Grande Prairie](#), where you leave the Deh Cho Route.

### **DAY 20: EDMONTON (370 KM)**

You drive back to [Edmonton](#) and return your rented vehicle. For shopping fans, a final detour to the West Edmonton Mall is an absolute must. The largest shopping mall in North America not only impresses with its countless shops, but also with its indoor amusement park with a river course, wave pool and bungee

jumping tower. Overnight stay in a city or airport hotel of your choice.

### **DAY 21: JOURNEY HOME**

Have a good flight home!