



Retracing Simon Fraser's Steps

A Recommended Driving tour from Fort Langley National Historic Site to Fort St. James National Historic Site

Visitors to Fort St. James National Historic Site will be pleased to learn about another spectacular Fur Trade site protected by Parks Canada. Why not explore British Columbia's incredible past by retracing the route that Simon Fraser would have used to journey Fort St. James to the Pacific Coast in 1808 during his voyage of discovery. We recommend taking three days to drive and explore all of the spectacular features along the way. When driving from Fort Langley (or anywhere in the Lower Mainland) to Fort St. James, be sure to try the following itinerary and explore along the way

ROUTE: Be sure to plan your travels involving resources from Tourism BC and check your driving plans by consulting www.drivesafebc.com before you go

Journey on Hwy 1, Trans Canada Highway from the Lower Mainland up the Fraser Canyon. Follow the Cariboo Highway (Hwy 97) north from Cache Creek, BC to eventually arrive in Prince George, BC. Heading west for 90km on Hwy 16 will take you to Vanderhoof, BC. From there, a 50km drive north on Hwy 27 will finally bring you to Fort St. James and the National Historic Site.

DAY ONE:

Congratulations on visiting Fort Langley (the other day!!). You are now embarking on a journey which fur brigades and adventurers used for close to two hundred years to connect the capital of New Caledonia in Fort St. James with outside markets around the world via the Pacific Coast. This driving tour is a recommended journey from Fort Langley to Fort St. James and is a suggestion only on how to comprise your trip.

Drive from Fort Langley along the spectacular Fraser Valley Highway to Hope, BC. Head north through the churning Fraser Canyon that kept fur brigades at bay, created major headaches for gold seekers heading northwards to the Cariboo goldfields and is home to two incredible engineering marvels of railway construction. As you drive north, the twisting highway follows the route of the old Cariboo Wagon Road, which linked destinations in the vicinity of Fort Langley with Barkerville, BC.

For day one, you'll want to think about overnighting somewhere in the Cariboo Country. Clinton, 100 Mile House and Williams Lake all offer fun, affordable and quality accommodation from hotels to beautiful campgrounds.

Possible stops along the way could include:

Alexandra Bridge Provincial Park: spectacular suspension bridge remaining from the wagon road era

Hell's Gate Airtram: a firsthand experience over the formidable rapids that took many a life in the early to mid 1800s' and led to the un-navigable reputation of the Fraser River in this area.





Historic Hat Creek Ranch: Delve back into the cowboy ways of Cariboo country and visit this complete working ranch which was amongst the largest in Western Canada

Chasm Provincial Park: a short drive off of the main Hwy 97 leads to this incredible painted chasm formed 10,000 yrs ago in the last ice age.

Museum of the Cariboo: Williams Lake hosts a spectacular museum and interpretive centre that tells the story of the area's cowboy culture unlike any other.

DAY TWO

Driving northwards from the southern Cariboo, you are passing now from arid desert country and the domain of cowboys and ranching into country filled with wild gold rush past and plenty of frontier adventure. Passing through resource based communities like Quesnel and Prince George brings you into contact with the beating heart of BC's interior and some key links to the past. This drive should include a chance to take several hours off the main route and travel to Barkerville along Hwy 26. This world renowned heritage town is the largest heritage park in Western North America and was at one time the busiest community in interior BC. At the end of day two. Consider staying the night in Barkerville, Wells or Prince George, BC.

Possible stops on day two might include:

- **Quesnel Museum:** Classified as one of BC's very best community museums and archives
- **Cottonwood House National Historic Site:** A roadhouse which served the gold rush era on the Cariboo Wagon Road has been painstakingly restored and is a great place to step out and check out a quaint heritage village. Unique bunk style accommodations are on hand.
- **Wells, BC:** this community has a renowned arts and culture scene which is an experience not to be missed. Check for theatre performances nightly, explore the interesting shops and galleries, or drop in for a tasty dinner in one of several excellent restaurants.
- **Barkerville Historic Town:** The largest collection of heritage buildings at any heritage park in western North America, Barkerville is definitely a highlight of any vacation in this area. Drop by Barkerville and make sure to get there early in the day; there's enough to keep you going here for several days of exploration.





DAY THREE

We recommend beginning this day and spending a few hours in Prince George visiting one of three exciting attractions. Prince George is the capital of BC's north and was originally founded in 1806 as Fort George, a secondary fur trading post from Fort St. James. Though the economic powerhouse of the area today, Prince George's past is squarely tied to the fur trading past that originates in Fort St. James. Traders brought their goods to and from Fort George via the river highway created by the Stuart and Nechako Rivers. The confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers was an advantageous location to work from, allowing for trade routes to the east, north, south and west to converge easily. Home to the Golden Raven collection of cultural heritage sites, you will want to depart Prince George sometime in the afternoon in order to make the two hour drive to Fort St. James, BC.

- Possible stops on day three might include:
A visit to one of three **Golden Raven cultural sites** in Prince George. Visit **the Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum** for an outstanding collection of regional railroading lore, **the Exploration Place** which houses a great museum and science centre for families, or take a 40min drive north of Prince George and drop in on **Huble Homestead** for a look at homesteading's past.
- Pause at the **Vanderhoof Community Museum** for a look at settlement history, a collection of Frank Swannell artefacts or for dinner at the locally renowned OK Cafe.
- Driving north of Vanderhoof, arrive in Fort St. James in the late afternoon and either camp on the shores of Stuart Lake at one of two provincial parks, or stay the night at **Fort St. James National Historic Site's** own period bed and breakfast (advance reservations required)

We recommend spending the night in Fort St. James and arriving early to take part in all the interpretive programs, allow time to tour our 7 heritage buildings and to wander the newly created Ripples of the Past Interpretive walk.

RETURN TO FORT LANGLEY

For more information on where in Northern BC to travel, visit www.hellobc.com/nbc

