

WHERE TO CAMP IN THE WEST KOOTENAY – BOUNDARY COUNTRY

The road less travelled in South-Eastern British Columbia

Kootenay Boundary country is the first region in BC to be designated a special area to help a vast array of wildlife to thrive. Grizzly bears, black bear, elk, big horn sheep, bald eagles and osprey abound in many natural settings along meandering roadways and wandering creeks as you steer your RV through the valleys in south-eastern BC.

The region is known for headwaters of the massive Columbia and Kootenay river systems in the Selkirk, Purcell and Monashee Mountains that drain the intense winter snow melt towards the Pacific Ocean some 2,000 kilometres to where the Columbia enters the Pacific Ocean at Astoria, Oregon.

RV guests will find plenty of campgrounds with availability for visits to south-eastern BC. With more than 100 campgrounds operated by PC Parks and 30 private RV parks in the West Kootenay-Boundary Country there is lots of space for visitors to mosey along the 1,500 kilometre route more or less half way between Calgary and Vancouver. An intricate highway system connects historic ghost towns, farmers' markets, national historic sites, hydro dams, hot springs and wellness centres.

While Banff, Jasper and Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies draw international visitors, the Purcell, Selkirk and Monashee Mountains in the West Kootenays are famous for their rugged peaks, alpine meadows and raging creeks, with very little congestion in the back roads. Vernon and Osoyoos serve as gateways from Vancouver on the west, Cranbrook from the Rockies, and Revelstoke from the north.

Two handy camping guides are published in BC and are available at RV rental stations in Calgary and Vancouver.

- **Super Camping BC Guide**
BC Lodging & Campgrounds Association.
- **Go Camping BC Guide**
BC Provincial Parks / Park Facility Operators

Campgrounds and RV parks are also listed on community and regional websites:

- **Kootenay Rockies** www.kootenayrockies.com/plan-your-trip/accommodation/
- **Boundary Country** www.boundarybc.com/directory/categories/parks
- **Hello BC** www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/accommodations.aspx
- **RVRAC** www.rvrac.com/pdfs/BC-RVRAC-Guide.pdf



Aerial view of Nelson on the West Arm of Kootenay Lake in the Selkirk Mountains.

KOOTENAY ROCKIES / KARI MEDIG



Tubing & small outboard motorboats on the Kettle River near Grand Forks in Boundary Country.

SANDY KEELE





KOOTENAY ROCKIES / DAVID GLUNS

Idaho Peak near the heritage hamlet of Sandon in the Valley of the Ghosts. Hiking trails follow some of the old railway grades around Christina Lake, Kaslo, New Denver, Salmo, Nakusp and parts of the Trans Canada Trail.

Most private campgrounds will find ways to accommodate drive-in RVs that do not have a reservation, and all are aware of guests who arrive for one or two nights simply because that is where they ended up for the night. However, it is advisable to make campground reservations at BC Parks Discover Camping Reservation Service at secure.camis.com/DiscoveryCamping/ during July and August. Some provincial parks do not take reservations and are just first come first serve.

BC Parks continue to improve their facilities with wash houses, sani-stations and ready access off highways. The private sector tends to offer more amenities such as laundry, general stores, Wi-Fi, cable TV. Check the campground guides for those with hookups, showers and sani-dumps ad other services.



GORD REES

Victoria Bridge across the Columbia River at Trail which makes its way from headwaters in the Canadian Rockies through the mountains to the Pacific Ocean at Astoria in Oregon. The Shuswap, Slokan, Kaslo and Lardeau rivers are tributaries of these big rivers that drain the Columbia Basin. The Kootenay River joins the Columbia at Castlegar. Tour the Revelstoke Dam that generates thousands of megawatts along with another five dams on the Kootenay River.

WHERE TO CAMP IN THE WEST KOOTENAY AND BOUNDARY COUNTRY

GATEWAYS TO WEST KOOTENAYS	CALGARY		VANCOUVER	
	Km	miles	Km	miles
Banff	138	86	847	526
Jasper	413	257	794	493
Cranbrook	403	250	845	525
Osoyoos	730	453	396	246
Revelstoke	410	254	565	351
Vernon	556	346	441	274

RV Rental Association of Canada
RVRAC
"Committed to the growth of Canadian tourism"

- RV Private RV Campground
- RV BC Provincial Park
- 🌿 National Historic Site

Primary and Secondary Roads
★ Canada/USA Border Crossings
3 Highway 3 97 Highway 97

↑ TO RADIUM HOT SPRINGS
↑ TO KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK
↑ TO CROWNEST PASS, FT. MCLEOD
↑ TO KASLOOPS
↑ TO MERRITT
↑ TO GOLDEN & BANFF

**Not to scale*

© Map courtesy of: Kaslo Area and Go & Do Regional Guides - Gary Schneider, Pennywise and Gord Rees, RVRAC 2018

Gateways to Kootenay-Boundary Country are Revelstoke on Hwy #1 in the north, Vernon on Hwy #6, Osoyoos on #3 west, and Cranbrook via Hwy #3 on the east through Crows Nest Pass, or Radium Hot Springs just south of Kootenay National Park.

WILDLIFE



KOOTENAY ROCKIES / PAT BATES

Black bears and grizzlies roam the Kootenay region. The spawning season attracts bears to shallow waters to feast on Kokanee and rainbow trout in the Lardeau River.

FREEDOM & OPEN SPACE



GORD REES

There are lots of empty places along the lakes and rivers for roadside stops during spring and fall travel in a motorhome when campfires are generally allowed. Be sure to take camping chairs from the rental stations.

HIGHWAYS & FREE FERRIES



GORD REES

Several free ferries cross the Arrow and Kootenay Lakes are part of the BC highway system. Share the ride with huge logging trucks on the ferry that crosses the Lower Arrow Lake between Needles and Farquier.

The circle routes through the Kootenays are also known as the International Selkirk Loop www.selkirklloop.org, and the West Koot Loop www.westkootroute.ca. The Silvery Slocan Heritage Tour offers various scenic drives through the West Kootenay between Nelson, Kaslo, Nakusp, and New Denver, with many ghost towns from bygone mining days. Here in the heartland of the Silvery Slocan, guests get a real sense of life in rural BC. Every spring the townsfolk in New Denver gather to review community bear policy that is intended to prevent wildlife encounters with people around the town.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS



DESTINATION BC / DAVE HEATH

Halcyon Hot Springs sits with a panoramic view above the Arrow Lakes. Public hot springs are also located at Ainsworth and Nakusp.

PRIVATE & PROVINCIAL PARKS



GORD REES

Large motorhome in Burton Historic Campground in the West Kootenay. There are lots of places to camp. Some areas do not have cell phone coverage.

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES



KOOTENAY ROCKIES / SARA RAINFORD

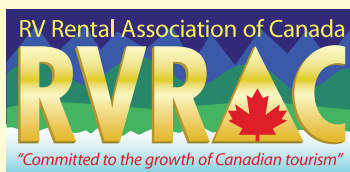
National Historic Sites include the SS Moyie Sternwheeler and the City Hall in Kaslo, along with Doukbor Suspension Bridge across the Kootenay River near Kaslo and the Nikkei Internment Museum in New Denver.

RV rentals in Calgary and Vancouver

- **CanADream** www.canadream.com/
- **Fraserway RV Rentals** www.fraserway.com/rentals/home
- **Cruise Canada** www.cruisecanada.com/
- **Best Time RV** www.besttimerv.com

RV BC/Alberta Spring & Fall Campground Discount Guide

Save up to \$200 at more than 80 private campgrounds offering 10% campground discounts during the shoulder seasons.



RV RENTAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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