

Klondike/Kluane Loop

highlights

From gold panning to glaciers, this drive packs almost all of the Yukon's premier attractions into one route.

In the days of the Klondike Gold Rush, thousands of prospectors in homemade boats navigated the Yukon River to Dawson City. In Whitehorse, you can still take a boat trip through Miles Canyon and experience the adventure of river travel first-hand. The North Klondike Highway roughly follows the Yukon River from its clear headwaters close to Whitehorse, to its braided channels by the village of Carmacks, meeting up with it again as a much larger river in Dawson City.

Despite its remote, wilderness location, Dawson City is a vibrant mining, cultural, and tourism centre. Exploring the Klondike goldfields will give you a taste of the gold fever that gripped North America a century ago and for a brief period of time made this charismatic town the largest metropolis north of Seattle.

Relive Klondike Gold Rush history and stay for adventure in Dawson City. Visit www.dawsoncity.ca for more information on events, attractions, accommodations, and the many things to see and do during your visit.

- > the North Klondike Highway
- > the Top of the World Highway
- > the Alaska Highway

DISTANCE: 1,435 km Whitehorse to Whitehorse
MINIMUM TIME RECOMMENDED: 5 nights

itinerary

Distance from Whitehorse start (Wh) Distance from Dawson City base (D)

DAY 1 Whitehorse to Dawson City: 536 km

Wh 16 km At the junction of the Alaska and Klondike highways, head north for the Klondike.

Wh 104.8 km Stop at Braeburn Lodge for what may be the world's largest cinnamon buns. The small airstrip on the other side of the highway is known as the "Cinnamon Bun Strip."

Wh 180.6 km The village of Carmacks is named after George Washington Carmack—a co-discoverer of gold in the Klondike. Across the bridge is the Tage Cho Hudan Interpretive Centre of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation.

Wh 204 km Five Finger Rapids—challenge yourself by taking the 217 steps down to the lookout, which puts you right above the river channel negotiated by paddlewheelers a century ago.

Wh 286 km Pelly Crossing is your halfway point between Whitehorse and Dawson City and makes a nice stop for lunch.

Wh 356 km **OPTION:** 111 km Silver Trail. Add time to your itinerary to make a side trip on the Silver Trail—Mayo and Keno City. Enjoy hiking, fishing, tours, and the mining museum at Keno City.

Wh 476.3 km The Tintina Trench is a picturesque viewpoint over a linear valley formed by a large fault line. Geological evidence suggests that one side of the fault has moved over 450 km in the last 200 million years.

Wh 495 km **OPTION:** 74 km Tombstone Territorial Park. Add some extra time to follow the Dempster Highway to the Tombstone Territorial Park Interpretive Centre (late May to mid-September). Enjoy good hiking trails and interpretive programs, and beautiful fall colours in this arctic tundra landscape.

Wh 536 km Dawson City is located at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers. Visit the Dawson City Visitor Information Centre on Main Street for information on events and activities to take in.

Overnight Dawson City

DAY 2 Spend the day exploring the Dawson City gold fields

D 2 km Historic Bonanza Creek Road will take you to the source of Klondike gold, still being actively mined today. 12 km down the road is Dredge #4 Historic Site—the largest gold dredge in the world, which created the sculpted-gravel piles you see when entering Dawson City. 2 km farther is Discovery Claim, where George Carmack, Skookum Jim and Dawson Charlie found gold on August 16, 1896.

D 8 km "The Dome," at 877 metres (2,894 ft.) offers spectacular views of the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers, the Dawson City townsite, and the gold fields.

Overnight Dawson City



Klondike to Kluane Loop

A free ferry carries passengers and vehicles from Dawson City across the Yukon River to the Top of the World Highway. This scenic winding, ridge-top road crosses into Alaska and joins the Taylor Highway. The Taylor Highway can be in rough condition since it is a gravel road, but the sceneries make it all worthwhile. The Taylor Highway joins up with the Alaska Highway at Tetlin Junction.

Travelling east on the Alaska Highway, you re-enter Canada, paralleling the majestic Kluane Front Range. The highway snakes its way around the shores of the Yukon's largest lake (Kluane Lake) past prime wildlife viewing habitats such as Parks Canada Tachal Dhal Visitor Centre (Sheep Mountain).

Kluane National Park and Reserve contains Canada's highest mountains, the largest non-polar icefield in the world, and a rich variety of bird, plant, and animal life. Kluane has some of the healthiest populations of grizzly bears and Dall sheep in the world, and recorded sightings of nearly 200 bird species. The park is a major tectonic zone (besides being the highest mountains in Canada, they are also the fastest growing) and the major agent in landscape formation is glaciation. The park contains over 2,000 glaciers—including valley, alpine and rock glaciers. The park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Kluane National Park and Reserve hiking trail maps and descriptions can be found at www.pc.gc.ca/kluane.



DAY 3 Stay another day in Dawson City—there's plenty to explore

• Explore the town by taking an historic walking tour—they depart regularly from the visitor centre. Visit the Jack London Interpretive Centre, Robert Service's Cabin and the Dawson City Museum.

D 9 km Take in a round of golf at the Top of the World Golf Course across the Yukon River.

• Shop for gold nuggets, mammoth-tusk ivory jewelry, and souvenirs.

• Visit the beautifully constructed Dänojà Zho Cultural Interpretive Centre. The centre is a showcase of first nation artifacts, arts and crafts. Regular audio-visual presentations and shows bring local natural history and culture to life.

• **New for Spring 2007**—Eagle Boat Company has built an historic paddleboat, the *Klondike Spirit*, to provide visitors with a relaxing tour and interpretation of the Yukon River via short riverboat excursions.

• Take in the show at Diamond Tooth Gertie's Gambling Hall and try your luck at roulette, black jack, or the slots.

Overnight Dawson City

DAY 4 Dawson City to Beaver Creek: 443 km

It will be a full days drive to Beaver Creek on the scenic, winding Top of the World Highway, the Taylor Highway, and then the Alaska Highway.

Wh 710 km The colourful and eccentric gold-mining town of Chicken, Alaska has a gas station, café, post office (delivering mail since 1906), and a gift shop well stocked with Chicken memorabilia.

Wh 817 km At Tetlin Junction, Milepost 1306 on the Alaska Highway (the junction of the Taylor and Alaska highways), turn south to Beaver Creek.

Wh 1018 km Beaver Creek has hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and RV parks. The Visitor Information Centre also has a collection of White River First Nation artwork.

Overnight Beaver Creek

DAY 5 Beaver Creek to Haines Junction: 298 km

Wh 1033 km A bridge takes you over the White River. This glacier-fed river is named after the milky sediments it carries—it flows into the Yukon River upstream from Dawson City, changing the colour of the Yukon River's water system from clear to sediment-rich.

Wh 1115 km Kluane Wilderness Village has a restaurant, gas station, auto repair, RV park, wilderness tours, and a viewing platform of Mt. Kennedy and Mt. Logan. You will also find Scully's, which is run by the "Burl King of the North."

Wh 1205 km Parks Canada Tachal Dhal Visitor Centre at the south end of Kluane Lake, has an interpretive display and spotting scopes set up for viewing the Dall sheep that inhabit the sage-covered slopes of the mountain. The best viewing times are spring and fall.

Wh 1275 km Haines Junction is situated at the junction of the Haines Road and Alaska Highway. It is the headquarters of Kluane National Park and Reserve, and located in the traditional territory of the Champagne/Aishihik First Nation. Start your visit at the Kluane National Park and Reserve Visitor Information Centre for interpretive displays and an audio-visual presentation, as well as information on campgrounds, accommodations, wildlife, and a wide variety of activities: hiking, glacier flightseeing, river trips, fishing, and more.

Overnight Haines Junction

DAY 6 Haines Junction to Whitehorse: 158 km

The drive to Whitehorse takes just two hours, so you can still fit in an activity in Haines Junction.

Wh 1433 km Call in at the Visitor Information Centre in Whitehorse and see the film *As the Crow Flies*. The centre has complete information on the many activities available in the region—including tours of the S.S. *Klondike* sternwheeler, the world's longest wooden fish ladder, the Yukon Transportation Museum, nearby Takhini Hot Springs and Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

• If you've caught gold fever, visit the MacBride Museum's *Rivers of Gold* exhibit. This is one of the largest public gold collections in North America—included are a miner's tent, sluice boxes, and demonstrations on historic and modern gold-mining methods.

• Regular river trips are offered through Miles Canyon on the Yukon River, made legendary during the Klondike Gold Rush. The canyon may also be seen from the walking trail along the river's edge.

Overnight Whitehorse