



Written Destination Content

200 Word Description

Calgary is a city rich with beautiful landscapes, picturesque skylines and urban vibrancy. It's a place on the fringe - familiar, but largely undiscovered. From its bustling downtown to character-filled neighbourhoods, along winding rivers and inside every welcoming venue, Calgary is full of secrets, surprises, and stories — and Calgarians are eager to share those stories with the world.

Not only a business centre and an outstanding meeting and convention destination, the city has a dynamic array of experiences that allow visitors endless opportunities for adventure and to live in the moment. In the downtown alone, you can discover over 1,000 shops, 200 restaurants and 50 entertainment spots. Within the city there are also 8,000 hectares of open space and parkland to explore. Plus, the spectacular Canadian Rockies are only an hour's drive from the city centre.

Renowned for its warm western hospitality and community spirit, Calgary prides itself on being the Ultimate Host City. With one of the world's most modern airports, world-class accommodations and venues, an exploding culinary, arts and culture scene, and an impressive list of attractions and activities to suit every type of visitor, Calgary is a city that delivers a remarkable experience from arrival to departure.

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Calgary Fun Facts

- Calgary has over 850 km of paved pathways... bring your sneakers for a picturesque run along the Bow or Elbow rivers.
- The sunniest of Canada's metropolitan cities, Calgary enjoys an average of 2,405 hours of sunshine each year.
- Calgary was ranked as the most liveable city in North America by The Economist in 2018 and 2019.
- The Bow River is the 3rd best spot for trout fishing in the world.
- Calgary is within an hour's drive of the Canadian Rocky Mountains and close to four other UNESCO World Heritage sites: Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and Dinosaur Provincial Park.
- 200,000+ free pancakes are served during the Calgary Stampede.
- Alberta does not have a provincial sales tax.
- Chinook winds can warm a winter day by as much as 15°C (59°F).

About Tourism Calgary

Tourism Calgary is the official destination marketing organization for Calgary and has positioned the city as a destination of choice for travellers for more than 50 years. A strong advocate for the city's ongoing development, Tourism Calgary works diligently to ensure Calgary is the ultimate host city and welcomes visitors to enjoy its many events, attractions and shareable experiences year-round.

About the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre

The Calgary TELUS Convention Centre (CTCC) is more than a place to meet; they are a place where collaboration and meaningful relationships begin. Located in the heart of the city among choice hotels, restaurants, theaters and shops, the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre is the community hub where people come to network, share ideas and explore opportunities. They work with a number of partners and networks to foster business development, knowledge exchange and connect visitors to Calgary's

intellectual capital. Hosting local, national and international conventions, congresses, meetings and events, they are an integral part of the city center.

About the BMO Centre at Stampede Park

The BMO Centre is the largest and most versatile venue in Calgary - and growing! At over one million square feet, the newly expanded BMO Centre (opening mid-2024) will be the largest convention centre in Western Canada. As an anchor to the new and vibrant culture and entertainment district, guests will gather and be welcomed in one of the most energetic convention areas in North America.

About Calgary's White Hat Ceremonies

The cowboy hat is an enduring symbol of the Old West, evoking images of lonesome cowboys riding on the wide open range. A necessity for survival rather than an item of display, the original cowboy hat was an important part of daily dress. A cowboy hat kept the sun off the head during the day; fanned a campfire into life in the evening; held water for both horse and rider; and broke the hardness of the ground as a pillow at night.

The History of the White Cowboy Hat

The original cowboy hat was called a Stetson after its maker, John B. Stetson. A hatmaker by trade, Stetson traveled west in 1863 to regain his health after being diagnosed with consumption. Along the way, he fashioned a hat from fur felt with a wide brim and high crown to protect him from the elements.

Upon regaining his health, Stetson returned east where he opened his own hat business.

Remembering his experiences out west, he designed several hats along the lines of his original and visited hat dealers with his creations. Although his designs did not meet with overnight success, one hat in particular began to sell, the Boss of the Plains. Soon, a Stetson was the hat of the west.

Custer is said to have worn a Stetson at the battle of the Little Big Horn: only a Stetson would do for Wild Bill Cody in his Wild West shows. Early movie cowboy stars such as Hoot Gibson and Tom Mix wore Stetsons, as did later stars John Wayne and Lorne Green.

The North West Mounted Police adopted a version of the Stetson as part of their uniform. After their arrival in western Canada, they soon discovered that their pillbox hats did little to protect them from the harsh elements of the prairies.

Of course, cowboy hats of every description are worn by visitors and competitors alike at the Calgary Stampede. Started in 1912 by a trick roper named Guy Weadick, with the financial backing of four prominent Calgary businessmen, the Calgary Stampede has grown into a 10-day annual event. In 1926, the first promotion to encourage the public to wear western hats during Stampede was begun, and western wear has become a tradition during Stampede week.

The White Hat as a Symbol of Hospitality

Although many city officials in Calgary's early days gave cowboy hats as gifts to dignitaries visiting the city, a series of events led to the establishment of the white cowboy hat as the city's symbol of hospitality.

White was not the standard colour for "real" cowboy hats because light colours became dirty too fast. (Although the "good guys" in Hollywood westerns wore white hats, they were not really white, but silver-gray or off-white.) There was, however, a demand for light-coloured hats after WWII. In 1946, local hatmaker Morris Shumiatcher of Smithbilt Hats Inc., established in 1919, decided to go one better and produce pure white cowboy hats. However, he ended up having to send all the way to Russia to obtain the white felt to make his hats.

The family of oilman Bill Herron debuted the white hats in the Stampede Parade of 1947 and took the "best dressed" prize with their matching black and white outfits, horses, saddles and bridles. Shumiatcher invested heavily in white felt after his auspicious debut and 1948 became the first "White Hat" Stampede, for those who could afford them.

In the same year, the Calgary Stampeders won a chance to compete in Toronto against Ottawa for the highest honour in Canadian football, the Grey Cup. Calgarians were so excited about the prospect of their home team playing in the Grey Cup, that a group of prominent local citizens organized a special train to take fans to Toronto for the game. Two hundred and fifty Stampeders fans, a chuckwagon, 12 horses and a host of entertainers headed to Toronto aboard the Stampede Special.

The unofficial costume of fans was a "Smithbilt" white cowboy hat and a colourful scarf worn around the neck cowboy-style. From newspaper reports of the time, it is evident that no one got much sleep on the two-day trip. In spite of that, the Calgarians swept off the train on its arrival in Toronto, and kept up a constant flow of western high spirits and hospitality that astounded the Torontonians. Square dancing in the streets, pancake breakfasts from the back of the chuckwagon, riders on horseback in full regalia - Toronto had never seen anything like it. And of course, the mayor of Toronto was presented with his own 10-gallon white hat. The "Smithbilt" white cowboy hats wowed Torontonians, and many Calgarians had their hats "liberated" by envious easterners. To meet the demand, cardboard cowboy hats were sold at \$4 a hat.

After the Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup, the fans, horses and assorted entertainers piled back on the train and celebrated all the way back to Calgary. The streets of Toronto must have seemed very quiet after this boisterous bunch left town.

The Tradition Continues

A young alderman and radio announcer, Don MacKay, was along on the famous trip east.

MacKay went on to become a high-profile Calgarian and in 1950 was elected mayor. Being the promoter he was, MacKay presented "Smithbilt" white hats as gifts to all visiting dignitaries and soon the tradition of the "Smithbilt" white cowboy hat was well established.

In 1958, City Council voted to drastically reduce the number of white hat presentations to save money. According to newspaper accounts of the City Council session, several aldermen felt the white hat presentations were not only overdone, but damaging to the city's reputation. The Calgary Motel Association disagreed with this view and raised enough money for the presentations to continue.

Tourism Calgary (then called the Calgary Tourist and Convention Association), established in 1957, eventually took over the white hat ceremony officially welcoming visitors to Calgary.

Today, Tourism Calgary officially welcomes visitors with hundreds of white hat presentations each year.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

Basic Acknowledgement

The basic acknowledgement is recommended for the opening remarks at small, internally focused events, like meetings and small gatherings:

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

Specific Territorial Acknowledgement

The specific territorial acknowledgement is recommended for opening remarks at larger internal meetings or small public events:

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika[1], Piikani[2], and Kainai[3] First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation [4], and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki[5], Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

Extended Acknowledgement

The extended acknowledgement is recommended for opening remarks at large public events, such as University of Calgary Convocation, building openings, and conferences.

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Getting to Calgary

Getting to Calgary is easy with many transportation options to travel from destinations around the world. With one of the world's most modern and welcoming airports, getting to Calgary by air is simple with commercial airline access and other options available to travellers. As one of Canada's largest airports, [YYC Calgary International Airport](#) welcomes millions of visitors to Calgary each year. YYC is a hub for major Canadian airlines [Air Canada](#) and [WestJet](#) and offers direct flights within Canada and to the USA, Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and Central America. With two in-terminal hotels, several restaurants, and a brand new international terminal, flying in and out of Calgary is a great experience for travellers from around the world. As a premier shopping destination, YYC boasts more than 135 shops and services for business and leisure travellers to enjoy.

The international airport is conveniently located in the northeast of Calgary, approximately 20 minutes from the downtown core.

Getting Around Calgary

Public Transit

The backbone of Calgary's transit system is the C-Train, a light-rail train system that runs NW to SE and SW to NE. Since 2001, the C-Train has been completely emission free — the first of its kind in North America. Best of all, the downtown core is a Free Fare Zone, allowing passengers to travel between hotels, restaurants and events free of charge. The University of Calgary, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Stampede Park are some of the major stops outside the city centre.

Regular bus and C-Train tickets are purchased at YYC or paid by cash on the bus or at the station.

For more information, visit calgarytransit.com

Car Rentals

Rental cars are available in a variety of sizes and for any duration you wish in Calgary. Rental offices are located throughout Calgary, with a cluster of car rental desks at YYC Calgary International Airport and throughout downtown Calgary.

Taxis, Limousines & Ride Sharing

Taxis charge a base rate of \$3.80 and an additional surcharge at the airport. Most services have online and mobile booking apps. Stands are located at YYC and at most downtown hotels. Connecting from YYC to downtown will take approximately 25 minutes.

Limousines and luxury sedans charge a fixed rate and are a great way to begin your stay in Calgary. Limousines and sedans are available for transportation from YYC as well as general transportation and special occasions from several organizations in the city.

Ride sharing is a convenient mode of transportation with Uber offering the digital service in Calgary. Download the Uber mobile application to book a ride on the spot from a local driver.

Bike & E-Scooters

Calgary has the most extensive urban pathway and cycle path network in North America, with approximately 850 kilometres of regional pathways and 95 kilometres of trails. The popular dockless electric scooter sharing program, Lime, is available in Calgary. Users can download the Lime mobile app, locate, and rent e-scooters starting at \$1.00.

Explore Calgary on Foot

The downtown core is very walkable, with plenty of wayfinding signage to guide you to attractions, restaurants, and public art. Calgary also has the world's largest elevated, climate-controlled pedestrian pathway — 18 km (11 miles) long, to be exact. The +15 (pronounced Plus 15) links over 100 downtown office buildings and shopping centres. In most buildings, the +15 can be accessed on the second floor — watch for the blue +15 signage.

Entry into Canada

All visitors to Canada arriving from a different country must cross the Canadian border and pass through customs. Visitors arriving by air travel will complete the customs process at the airport upon arrival in Canada.

Visitors to Canada must carry valid travel documents when crossing the border no matter how you arrive. You will require a [passport or equivalent travel document](#) in order to cross the border and enter Canada.

You can consult the Government of Canada's [Requirements to Enter Canada](#) for more information regarding entry requirements or the [Canada Border Services Agency](#) for customs regulations. These rules apply to all border crossings in Canada, including road and air entry points near or in Calgary.

For detailed customs information on entering Canada, visit [Canada Border Services](#). To determine what documents you need to visit Canada, visit [Canada's Immigration and Citizenship](#) website.