# DMONTON

# Alberta's Dinosaur Trail

Discover two-billion-year-old rocks plus the largest collection of dinosaur skeletons in the world.

If Calgary is your gateway, head north toward Dinosaur Trail on Highway 2 to Crossfield and then veer east on Highway 72 (which becomes Highway 9) to Drumheller where the Trail begins. But before you

venture out on this scenic loop through Alberta's lunar-like Badlands, spend some time in the town of Drumheller where murals of dinosaurs decorate scores of historic buildings. At one end of Main Street, right on the banks of the Red Deer River, is the world's largest fibreglass Tyrannosaurus Rex, where 106 stairs lead you straight into the beast's actual mouth.

Just seven kilometres west of Drumheller, on North Dinosaur Trail, is the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, arguably the finest dinosaur museum in the world. The Tyrrell is devoted to dinosaurs and was named after Joseph Tyrrell, who in 1884 discovered an Albertosaurus, the first of hundreds of complete dinosaur skeletons, since removed from Alberta's Badlands. Today the museum has more than 80,000 specimens and 35 complete skeletons, more than any other museum in the world. All are strikingly and imaginatively presented with the crowd-pleasers being the original Albertosaurus and Tyrannosaurus Rex, as well as more unusual creatures such as the Xiphactinus. The museum alone is worth several hours but you can spend a full day here by tacking on a short hike or guided jeep tour to some nearby bone-beds. Throughout the summer the museum hosts family sleepovers, Dino Camps and full-day digs.

> Heading out on the Dinosaur Trail, drive west from Drumheller, along the Red Deer River Valley to the first point

of interest, the Little Church, often described as being able to seat thousands but only six at a time. The road then climbs steeply out of the valley onto the prairie benchland. Take the first access road on the left — it doubles back to Horsesthief Canyon Lookout from where there are spectacular views of the Badlands and the multicoloured walls of the canyons. The trail's halfway point is the crossing of the Red Deer River on the Bleriot Ferry, one of the few remaining cable ferries in Alberta. The road continues along the top of the valley to Orkney Hill Lookout for more panoramic views across the Badlands and the lush valley floor below.

After completing the loop take a little diversion south past the Horseshoe Canyon to the tiny town of Rosebud, for a dinner theatre performance.

Serious 'dinophiles' can add another day to their trip by heading south on Highway 56, then east on Highway 1, and slightly north on Highway 36 to Dinosaur Provincial Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Its focus is the Field Station, a base for scientific research, but is also home to numerous dinosaur bone-beds, rivaled only by sites in China's Gobi Desert. Most people come here for guided walks and the popular Badlands bus tours, which take in parts of the park otherwise out of bounds to visitors. Not only is the diversity of specimens great, but so is the sheer volume; more than 300 museumquality specimens have been removed from bone-beds found here, and are exhibited in museums around the world.

Back on Highway 1, continue heading east. Visit the city of Medicine Hat, described by Rudyard Kipling in 1907 as a city "with all hell for a basement" because of the huge gas fields under the city and this area. Today visitors flock to the world's tallest teepee, bask under Medicine Hat's endless skies or tour the Clay Products Interpretive Centre and the Medalta Historic Site.

From Medicine Hat, head to the southwest corner of the province on Highway 3 to the city of Lethbridge. On the way through visit the Nikka Yuko Japanese Gardens, Fort Whoop-Up and the Sir Alexander Galt Museum. Finish off the tour by heading back to Calgary on Highway 2 and visiting points of interest along the way.



Dinosaur Dig, near Drumbeller

# Number of days:

Tour distance:

Day 1 Calgary to Drumheller Drumheller to Medicine Hat

Medicine Hat to Lethbridge Day 3 Day 4

Lethbridge to Calgary

216 km/135mi

# SPECIAL INTEREST ROUTE

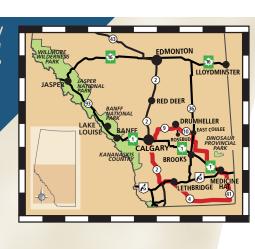
Village of Sterling National Historic Site (Sterling)

## Rosebud

Akokiniskway Gallery Akokiniskway Golf Course

Centennial Museum

Rosebud Theatre



4-5

771 km/480 mi

140 km/88 mi

247 km/155 mi

168 km/105 mi

Calgary See Tour 4 Brooks Dinosaur Provincial Park **Drumheller and Area** World's largest Dinosaur Fossil Shops Drumheller Valley Historical Interpretive Centre Splash Park/Centennial Park The Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology Dinosaur Trail Bleriot Ferry Homestead Antique Museum Horseshoe Canyon Horsethief Canyon McMullen Island **Hoo Doo Drive Trail** East Coulee "Big" School Museum Historic Atlas Coal Mine Hoodoos Mining History Statues Rosedale Suspension Bridge Valley Historic Sites Lethbridge Fort Whoop-Up Indian Battle Park Nikka Yuko Japanese Gardens Sir Alexander Galt Museum Southern Alberta Art Gallery University of Lethbridge High Level Bridge Alberta Birds of Prey Centre, Coaldale **Medicine Hat** Clay Products Interpretive Centre & the Medalta Historic Site Cypress Hills Provincial Park Saamis Teepee Milk River and Area Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park Devils Coulee Museum and Interpretive Centre (Warner)