

Travel Alberta stay

Think you know

Alberta?

You may think you've seen and done it all, but we bet you'll find something totally new in this list of unique Alberta adventures.



All eyes were on last month's long-awaited re-opening of the Art Gallery of Alberta – but what about our stomachs? With its curvy steel ribbons and massive gallery space exhibiting works by Edgar Degas, Francisco Goya, Yousuf Karsh and Edward Burtynsky, try not to miss its other all-star attraction – the new resto lounge. Step into the uber-chic Zinc and you'll find a menu of local artisan food products, fresh Alberta ingredients – even dishes inspired by featured art exhibits. (youraga.ca; 780.422.6223)
Photo: Robert Lemermeier



What do you get when you give dinosaurs some vocal chords and movement? Terror? Maybe. Spellbound kids? A given. New respect for the size and ferocity of these 65-million-year-old beasts? Absolutely. The Calgary's Zoo's new \$1-million exhibit, Dinosaurs Alive!, welcomes 20 new animatronic dinosaurs (one is a snarling 56 ft long creature) to their ever-so-real Prehistoric Park. This exhibit of fleshy, highly textured beasts that roar, squeak and move runs until the end of Oct. (calgaryzoo.org; 403.232.9300)



Snow-glommed pine trees. Each twinkling flake. Thudding in your chest. Untrammelled forest. Let Nature in Focus take you to places only snowshoes and locals know of – and you'll fall in love with the Rockies and the sport. If you can walk, you can snowshoe, especially on the high-tech, lightweight wonders this company uses. Both Banff-based guides are experts in local flora, fauna, wildlife and general mountain lore – plus they make a mean thermos of chai tea! (natureinfocus.squarespace.com; 403.762.9239)



Keep looking. GPS. Ice cleats. Clue sheets. Check. But where is it? Not under the log. Not taped to the bottom of the bench at this jaw-dropping viewpoint. Ah ha – look waay up. The cache is in a tree. Man, these guys behind the geocache game at Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park are devious. All five caches will dazzle you with their ingenuity. This family-friendly event runs Feb 27 & Mar 13 from 10:30 am–noon. Meet at the Visitor Centre on the Alberta side of the park. (cypresshills.com; 403.893.3833)



Some remember the 165-stair climb. Others remember the whoosh of wind that can, literally, sway you. Certainly the views – Chief Mtn in Waterton National Park to the west, checkered farms to the east, the Old Man River to the North – dazzle everyone. That's what you get when you chow down at Ric's Grill in Lethbridge, a steakhouse 150 feet up in the air that once was an old water tower. Don't want to nosh on the juiciest steak in town? Just pop up for the view. It's on Ric's! (ricsgrill.com; 403.317.7427)



Try a knuckle hop. Or a three-person airplane. Glutton for punishment? Master an Alaska high kick. Or try a knee jump. These are just some of the eclectic sports being played in Grande Prairie where the Arctic Winter Games are running from Mar 6 to 13. About 2,000 developing athletes (12 to 17 years old) from places as far north as Russia and Scandinavia will perform 21 different sports as well as regale audiences with poetry, concerts, dance and other art works. (awg2010.org; 780.538.4777)



Here, spring always comes in with a roar. Or at least for the past 26 years – since the Festival of Speed has wowed crowds with its raw and ready races. Nowhere else can you watch snowmobile drags, ice racing, motorbike and sidecar sprints on the same frozen surface. Join hundreds of competitors and thousands of spectators who'll flock to the frozen shores of Lac La Biche on Mar 6 & 7 to watch souped-up cars spit snow and fury into the air as they fly around a challenging ice track. (classicwheels.org; 780.623.2662)
Photo: Lac La Biche Post



Not only is it the loftiest lodge in our Rockies, but it's swank. Long gone are the spartan rooms at Sunshine Village Ski Resort. In the lodge's new west wing of rooms and suites you'll find floor-to-ceiling windows, high thread counts, radiant heating in roomy slate-filled bathrooms, cozy fireplaces, flat panel TVs, spectacular outdoor hot tub – in other words the works. Of course, the biggest bonus is the fact you're slopeside. Ski-in, ski-out means you can sleep in and still get first tracks. (skibanff.com; 1.877.542.2633)



Watch some of Canada's hottest ceramic artists create new works or turn the wheel back on this historic site's fascinating past at Medicine Hat's Historic Clay District. In the recently opened Turning Room Gallery, you'll discover poignant stories about the people who made Medalta Potteries and Alberta Clay Products one of the largest producers of stoneware back in the '20s and '30s. Pottery dances, love stories, the 1947 strike – it's all here in western Canada's largest national historic site. (medalta.org; 403.529.1070)



Muffled from all human sounds, wintertime at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge looks like Mother Nature draped a fluffy duvet over the entire property. But don't get sleepy (unless it's in front of one of their grand rock fireplaces). Cross-country ski trails, guided snowshoe expeditions, skating rinks on Lake Mildred and Lac Beauvert are all right there. From Mar 12–14, a women's only PJ party is scheduled, followed by the ultra-swank Epicurean Food & Wine Festival, Mar 9–21. (fairmont.com/jasper; 780.852.3301)

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