

**Number of days:**

4-5

Tour distance:

694 km/434 mi

Day 1	Mayerthorpe to Rocky Mountain House	196 km/123 mi
Day 2	Rocky Mountain House to Calgary	229 km/143 mi
Day 3	Calgary	
Day 4	Calgary to Waterton	269 km/168 mi
Day 5	Waterton	

SPECIAL INTEREST**Bragg Creek**

- Horseback riding
- B&Bs
- Western Art
- Antiques

Calgary

See Tour 4

Cardston

- Remington-Alberta Carriage Centre
- Card Pioneer Home
- Courthouse Museum

Cochrane

- Cochrane Ranche Historic Site

Crowsnest Pass Corridor

- Bellevue Mine
- Crowsnest Museum
- Crowsnest Pass Art Gallery
- Frank Slide
- Frank Slide Interpretive Centre
- Hillcrest Mine Disaster Cemetery
- Lundbreck Falls
- Leitch Collieries
- Volcanic Rocks - Crowsnest Mountain

Fort Macleod

- Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump
- Fort Museum

Longview

- Bar U Ranch National Historic Site

Pincher Creek

- Crystal Village and Heritage Acres
- Kootenai Brown's Pioneer Village
- Oldman River Dam and Provincial Recreation Area

Rocky Mountain House

- Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site
- Voyageur Canoe trip

Sundre

- Pioneer Museum
- Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve

Turner Valley

- Turner Valley Gas Plant National Historic Site

Waterton Lakes National Park

- Akimina Parkway, Kootenai Brown's Headstone, Cameron Falls, Cameron Lake, Red Rock Canyon, Waterton Shoreline Cruises

The Cowboy Trail

Explore Alberta's historic Cowboy Trail and discover how the Old West lives on in its art, history, food, hospitality and culture.

Officially, the 640-kilometre-long Cowboy Trail stretches the entire distance of Highway 22 from Mayerthorpe (northwest of Edmonton) south to Pincher Creek. It then jogs south on Highway 6 and east on Highway 5, ending in Cardston, a lodge above Montana, USA.

While it's possible to drive the entire distance, most people carve it into little two and three day loops, using Calgary — the official Gateway to The Cowboy Trail as a starting point. Whatever portion you choose, you'll see cowboys ropin' cattle, experience small town rodeos, country fairs and rich ranchland where quarter horses still reign. The proximity to the Rockies means you'll also witness a great diversity in wildlife and scenery. From deer and elk to numerous small town rodeos — The Cowboy Trail is full of geographic and historic gems.

Out of convenience, let's start in Mayerthorpe and head south along the eastern flanks of the foothills to Rocky Mountain House. Here is a superb National Historic Site where the story of Canada's fur trade and rugged voyageur life is re-enacted.

For a different perspective take a Voyageur Canoe trip down the North Saskatchewan River, ending at this very site. So wild is this forested area that when you spot the teepees and smell the smoke from the site's camp, you'll be spirited back 200 years when the trading post was first built.

Back on Highway 22 continue south through Sundre, which is a good jumping-off point for wilderness trips or horseback ventures into the Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve. Or, just poke around Sundre's Pioneer Museum.

For more of the Wild West, visit Calgary at Stampede time (early July) and kick up your heels at the 10-day whoop-up, known as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth".

From Calgary, veer west to Bragg Creek. Full of artisans, this funky little village is a great place for a picnic, a hike and horseback riding, as well as shopping for western art and unique crafts. Bragg Creek is an ideal gateway into Kananaskis Country, should you want to add another loop to your itinerary.

Back on The Cowboy Trail, continue south through towns like Millarville (famous for its farmers market held on Saturdays throughout the summer), Turner Valley (it was here, in 1914, that Canada's first major crude-oil discovery was made), Black Diamond and Longview. These towns are all part of Diamond Valley - The Heart of the Cowboy Trail. For an unusual diversion take a gas plant tour in Turner Valley. The tour tells the story of the area, once one of the most active oil and gas fields in the British Empire.

Just south of Longview is another excellent interpretive centre, the Bar U Ranch, full of original buildings, ongoing archaeological digs and intriguing exhibits. At this point you could take Highway 541 into Kananaskis Country for a horseback trip or gentle trail ride. Or, stick to The Cowboy Trail, bound for Pincher Creek — most noted for Kootenai Brown's Pioneer Village. And just a jog east on Highway 3 is Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) on the fringes of Fort Macleod.

If you choose not to go to Fort Macleod, head south on Highway 6 to Waterton Lakes National Park (see Tour 1), full of charming B&Bs, lodges, hotels and natural mountain splendour.

To complete The Cowboy Trail, turn east on Highway 5 to Cardston where the Remington-Alberta Carriage Centre is the No. 1 magnet. Housing one of North America's largest collections of carriages, buggies and wagons, it's a spectacular example of another era . . . the Wild, Wild West.

The Cowboy Trail . . . *No Horse Required!*



Bar U Ranch National Historic Site