

Golden Circle

Whitehorse to Haines Junction

If you drive straight through from Whitehorse, you will be in Haines Junction within two hours. But, with so much to see, enjoy this scenic drive. Stop at Takhini River Valley viewing point and learn about wildlife found in this area. As you continue along the Alaska Highway, you'll see the Ruby Range to the north, Dezadeash Range to the south and Kluane Range up ahead.

As you get close to Haines Junction, you will see Otter Falls Cutoff. There are camping spots here, gas, groceries and a wildlife museum. At this junction, a road leads to Otter Falls. Toward Haines Junction again, you will cross Aishihik River Bridge. It has a view of the original bridge built in 1920. As you get closer to Kluane Range, you will see its ice fields.

Haines Junction is the jumping-off point to many adventures in the Kluane National Park and Reserve. The Kluane National Park has the highest mountains in Canada and has the largest non-polar icefield in the world. Your first stop should be the Visitor Reception Centre to get a feel for what's available. Tour operators, outfitters and rental companies are located here to help you enjoy the great outdoors with glacier flight seeing, river rafting, mountain biking, horseback riding, llama trekking, hiking, snowmobiling and cross country skiing.

Driving Distance – 158 KM

Haines Junction to Haines

When you leave town (fill up your tank with gas first), follow the signs to Haines, Alaska on the Haines Highway. As you get closer to the mountains, you will start to see bald eagles playing in the thermals swirling around the mountaintops that you will be driving through. Twenty kilometres from Haines Junction is Kathleen Lake, known as the windiest lake in the Yukon. If you brought your fishing rod and fishing license purchased in Haines Junction, you can catch rainbow, lake trout, kokanee and grayling here. Or, visit Klukshu, a native fishing village, eight kilometres further down the highway.

Haines is an Alaskan town of 2,500 offering shopping, restaurants and various sightseeing experiences/activities. If you want to do some serious eagle spotting, about an hour from Haines is Mosquito Lake State Recreation Site. Here, you're at the edge of the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve. And, in the evening just before dusk, take in an amazing sight – bears and eagles feasting on salmon for late night dinner. Drive five minutes along the shore on Lutak Road (just follow the signs to the ferry terminal) and turn left when you reach the bridge. Just down this road, you will find a weir across a river. Park your camper and watch the show.

Driving Distance – 257 KM

Haines to Skagway (by ocean ferry)

Skagway today, as it was in 1898, is a bustling town with false-fronted stores and boarded sidewalks. This town knows how to keep that Gold Rush era flavour. There are historic buildings,

tours of graveyards, gold dredge exhibits and restaurants that sit right on the harbour. Visit the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Visitor Center to learn more about this era.

While in Skagway, consider taking a trip on a narrow-gauge railway that will take you around the sides of canyon walls, over trestles and up into the mountains from lush valley floors. The White Pass Railway and Yukon Route has done a marvellous job of offering a breathtaking and authentic journey. People come from all over the world to experience this trip on a rail system that is considered one of the seven engineering wonders of the world.

Driving Distance – 11 KM

Skagway to Carcross

As you descend into the Southern Lakes region of the Yukon, colour returns with volcanic rock and impressive limestone bluffs. You'll arrive at Tutshi Lake, where you can fish. At the far end of the lake is a campground. The roads here are tight, so you may want to walk in first to ensure your camper will fit. From here to Carcross, you will be wedged between mountains on your left and lakes on your right. A turnout, 12 kilometres past Tutshi Lake Campground, has picnic tables and information on the Venus Mines and the next lake you will pass is Tagish Lake. Carcross is surrounded by mountains, is slow of pace and is a harbour of quiet. It is also a very spiritual place as it sits at the convergence of four valleys and two water systems. It's also home to the oldest store in the Yukon, Matthew Watson General Store and the oldest hotel.

Driving Distance – 106 KM

Carcross to Whitehorse

Your last few days on the road begins with the Carcross Desert, the world's smallest desert. It is 260 hectares and is home to several plant species that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Just a few minutes further up the road, toward Whitehorse, you will see Caribou Crossing Trading Post. Just a little further is Emerald Lake, a natural wonder of clear, blue water that is lit up with blue-green swirls of colour throughout. As you continue your journey, you will see Caribou Mountain to the east, Montana Mountain to the south and Gray Ridge Range to the west. As you get close to the Alaska Highway once more, you can stop for a swim at Kookatsoon Lake. Although fed by glaciers, it is shallow enough to warm up quickly in the afternoon.

Open year-round, enjoy the Takhini Hot Pools in Whitehorse after two weeks on the road. Or, if you're curious about the wildlife you've seen on your journey, consider checking out the Yukon Wildlife Preserve which features 11 species of animals. Whitehorse is a beautiful city where you can enjoy intimate meals, hot and cold drinks and experience Yukon excitement such as mushing excursions in the winter and more viewing of the northern lights if you haven't squeezed enough in.

Driving Distance – 74 KM