



THIS BOOKLET IS YOURS TO KEEP

ROUTE GUIDE JASPER—PRINCE RUPERT

The Jasper—Prince Rupert train travels 1,160 km between the Rocky Mountains and the northwest Pacific Coast. With its dramatic and diverse landscapes, the route takes in some of the most stunning scenery in Canada.

Bon voyage!

ITINERARY

Vast lakes, salmon-filled rivers, abandoned settlements, sawmills, lush farmland and rural communities punctuate great stretches of wilderness. Built around the vision of Grand Trunk Railways president Charles Melville Hays, Canada's northern transcontinental rail line was completed in 1914, two years after Hays's death aboard the Titanic.

Along the tracks, you can see evidence of how the area has been shaped by the traditions of First Nations peoples, sternwheelers, steam trains, goldpanners, and generations of farmers. The railway company surveyed and named many villages and towns along the line. Today the region is a thriving industrial hub, known for its forestry, agriculture, mining, tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, and the transportation corridor to the Port of Prince Rupert.

Canadian National trains carry freight such as coal, grain, and lumber across North America. Some trains are over 3.66 km (2.27 miles) long, and weigh as much as 18,000 tons (16.3 million kg). Try counting the rail cars of passing freight trains!

If you're lucky, you might spot wildlife. Keep an eye out for moose, elk, deer, black and grizzly bears, wolves, coyotes, eagles, hawks, and seals during the two-day trip, depending on the season.

01 JASPER

Mile: 0

Population: 4,590

Elk and mule deer often wander the main street of this picturesque town. Famous for outdoor sports and adventure activities, including hiking, biking, and skiing, Jasper attracts tourists from around the world. At Mile 4, passengers can see the Jasper SkyTram, at the top of Whistlers Mountain.

02 YELLOWHEAD PASS

Mile: 17.6

Elevation: 1,133 m (3,717 ft.)

(Highest elevation on the 2-day journey)

The Continental Divide marks the natural border between Alberta and British Columbia. Here, the time zone changes from Mountain to Pacific. The water system splits here, with the Miette River flowing eastward to the Athabasca River and up to Great Slave Lake, before pouring into the Arctic Ocean. From Yellowhead Lake (Mile 20-24) the waters join the Fraser River, which flows into the Pacific in

Vancouver, B.C. Southeast from Yellowhead Lake (Mile 20-25), Mount Fitzwilliam rises 2,911 m (9,550 ft.) above sea level.

03 FRASER RIVER

Mile: 25-arrival, Prince George

The Fraser River runs 1,375 km (854 miles) long and was designated as part of the Canadian Rivers Heritage System. Named after explorer Simon Fraser, it's the longest river within B.C.'s borders and the most important in the world for salmon.

04 MOOSE LAKE

Mile: 36-44

Thunder Falls is sometimes visible to the south, depending on the season. Moose Lake is a wide cross-section of the Fraser River. At Red Pass Junction (Mile 43.3-0), there are diverging tracks to the south.

05 MOUNT ROBSON

Mile: 9-12, on Robson Subdivision

Mount Robson Provincial Park was established in 1913, and at 3,954 m (12,972 ft.) Mount Robson is the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies. What makes this mountain so spectacular is its approximately 2,000 m (6,560 ft.) prominence. Mile

11.9 offers the best views of this world-famous mountain, and an excellent photo opportunity. On the Albreda Subdivision (Miles 52-59) the views are outstanding.

06 TETE JAUNE CACHE

Mile: 0-4.7

Population: 500

The CNR tracks diverge at Mile 0 and Mile 1.8 (Harvey). Eastbound travel at the Harvey signal dictates which subdivision/route we will take. Tête Jaune Cache was a large railway construction town of 3,000 pioneers when the line was being built. This area was the head of the navigation for sternwheelers on the Fraser River between 1911 and 1913.

07 DUNSTER

Mile: 23.4

Population: 75

The recently refurbished Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Type E station, built in 1913, is one of three remaining in B.C. It has a general store, post office, and gas station on the north side. At Mile 25, there's an oxbow—a free-standing U-shaped body of water—on the meandering Fraser River.

08 RAUSH RIVER BRIDGE

Mile: 32.7

At 315 m (1,033 ft.), Raush River Bridge is the second-longest bridge on this train route.

09 MCBRIDE

Mile: 43.4

Population: 616

Nestled in the Robson Valley, the town of McBride was established as a division point for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1912. McBride train station, built in 1919, is an elegant example of the classic railway architecture style. Both are named after Sir Richard McBride, the youngest premier of B.C. (1903-1915). The area is a playground for outdoor enthusiasts, offering everything from golfing and caving to zip-lining and more.

10 TUNNEL

Mile: 18

Length: 250 m (820 ft.)

11 MOUNT RIDER

Mile: 22

This mountain is named after Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), author of *King Solomon's*

Mines, who rode this train route in 1916. The peak to the north is 2,599 m (8,527 ft.) high and snow-capped with glaciers year-round.

12 CRESCENT SPUR

Mile: 32.8

Loos Mile 36.9, Dome Creek Mile 55.9

These communities are no longer active, and the sawmills, stores and family farms have long been closed. However, logging continues intermittently, and at Mile 32.8 a local lodge offers heli-skiing and hiking.

13 PENNY

Mile: 69

Once a bustling sawmill settlement, Penny is now home to just a few summer residents. It was the last community on this route to have Royal Mail delivered by train.

14 HANSARD BRIDGE

Mile: 99.1

Up until 2003, both rail and road traffic at this bridge over the Fraser River were controlled by a signal operator working in a cabin on the bridge. Since a highway bridge was built on the north side, trains and automobiles no longer have to share the bridge.

15 UPPER FRASER

Mile: 104

Hansard Lake Mile 100.2, **Aleza Lake** Mile 108.8,
Eaglet Lake Mile 116

Sawmill workers and logging trucks would transport timber over each lake to the Upper Fraser mill, which has since been demolished. There was a boardwalk built above the marshy waters for the logging trucks that transported the soon-to-be lumber. Remnants can be seen on the north side.

16 GISCOME

Mile: 122

This is the start of what was referred to as the East Line—the stretch between Giscome and McBride—for over 100 years. It was once home to the largest of more than 700 sawmills along this line. Greenish igneous hard rock is quarried and stockpiled here for railway ballast.

17 WILLOW RIVER

Mile: 127

On the north side is a log general store that has been operating since 1935. At Mile 144, there's a historical railway bridge over the Fraser River. Built in 1914, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Bridge is 800 m long

(2,625 ft.). Trains and automobiles have shared this bridge for 75 years.

18 PRINCE GEORGE

Mile: 146.1-0

Population: 74,003

The largest city in northern B.C., Prince George is a major manufacturing and service centre, a transportation hub and a crossing point between highways 97 and 16. Dubbed the “Spruce Capital of the World,” it’s also home to the University of Northern British Columbia, opened in 1994 by Queen Elizabeth II. The Central Interior Railway & Forestry Museum sits next to the CN rail yard, on the north side.

19 NECHAKO RIVER

Mile: 0-109.5

A major tributary to the Fraser River, the Nechako River is home to the increasingly rare white sturgeon, Canada’s largest freshwater fish. The dammed waters of the river generate electricity for one of the world’s largest aluminum smelters, in Kitimat, south of Terrace, B.C.

20 VANDERHOOF

Mile: 69

Population: 4,439

The geographic centre of B.C., Vanderhoof is named after a GTPR railway publicist and is Dutch for “of the farm.” It was the first agricultural settlement in B.C. Forestry and the dairy and beef industries are the area’s main economic drivers.

21 FORT FRASER

Mile: 94.3

Population: 275

Situated at the base of Fraser Mountain, Fort Fraser was established in 1806 as a North West Company fur trading post by explorer Simon Fraser. The last spike was driven in at Mile 93.3 on April 7, 1914, joining the eastbound and westbound sections of the GTPR.

22 FRASER LAKE

Mile: 96-109

This is a resting point for migrating birds, including Canada geese, along the Pacific Flyway. A fisherman’s dream lake for its rainbow and lake trout in summer, and its ling cod and char in winter, it’s one of the largest lakes we’ll see and is just a stone’s

throw from the Nautley River, one of the shortest rivers in the world.

23 FRASER LAKE COMMUNITY

Mile: 108

Population: 988

Known as the “White Swan Capital of the World,” Fraser Lake is a temporary home to thousands of trumpeter swans twice a year, on their migratory route. Molybdenum mines and a large modern sawmill are the main employers. Lejac, at Mile 115.4-0, is the former site of a residential school and current site of Rose Prince Memorial.

24 BURNS LAKE

Mile: 24-35

Population: 1,779

Burns Lake is the gateway to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, one of the largest parks in B.C. Two large sawmills and mixed ranching support this village. Fishing, boating, snowmobiling and a rodeo are popular pastimes. At Mile 33 is Dead Man’s Island, a memorial was erected for Chinese railroad workers who died in a blasting accident.

25 ROSE LAKE

Mile: 51.3

This is the highest point along the line between Prince George and Prince Rupert and a watershed for the Upper Bulkley and Skeena system. Waters flow east through the Endako, Nautley, Nechako and Fraser rivers, before spilling into the Pacific Ocean near Vancouver. Waters also flow west through the Bulkley and Skeena rivers and spill into the Pacific Ocean near Prince Rupert. The railway crosses the Bulkley River 11 times.

26 HOUSTON

Mile: 85

Population: 2,126

Known as the “Steelhead Capital of the World,” Houston has many recreational lakes and rivers, and is a popular fishing area. It is home to the largest fly fishing rod in the world and a sculpture of steelhead trout in a fountain in the park, visible on the south side, east of the station.

27 TELKWA

Mile: 116

Population: 1,327

Telkwa is an Indigenous word meaning “where the rivers meet.” This community sits at the junction

between the Telkwa and Bulkley rivers and was a service area until Smithers was founded.

28 SMITHERS

Mile: 125-0

Population: 5,401

The gateway to Babine Provincial Park, Smithers was founded by the railway company in 1913, and its station was built in 1919. This recreation destination is also a service centre and a hub for mining, forestry and agriculture. It's surrounded by four mountain ranges—Babine, Hudson Bay, Kitsequecla and Telkwa.

29 HUDSON BAY MOUNTAIN

Mile: 4

Peak: 2,589 m (8,494 ft.)

One of the best views of a glacier in all of Canada from a VIA train is that of Kathlyn Glacier, whose peak is 2,560 m (8,415 ft.). Twin Falls can be seen to the south.

30 MORICETOWN

Mile: 22.3

Population: 306

This is a Wet'suwet'en settlement and a vital fishing spot for First Nations who are trying to preserve their

culture in this area. Evidence suggests people have lived here for over 5,000 years.

31 BOULDER CREEK

Mile: 28.4

Porphyry Creek Mile 31.3, **Mudflat Creek** Mile 36.1

This area provides photo opportunities of beautiful historic trestles, both to the east and to the west.

32 BULKLEY CANYON

Mile: 39-44

Three tunnels take the train over this canyon as the Bulkley River churns 98 m (322 ft.) below. At 636 m (2,087 ft.), the eastern tunnel at Mile 40.8 is the longest tunnel on the route. This is the most northern point on our journey today.

33 NEW HAZELTON

Mile: 46

Population: 580

This community was named for the hazelnut trees grown in the area and is one of several communities clustered near the junction of the Bulkley and Skeena rivers. To the south, Roche de Boule Mountain—also known as the “Mountain of Minerals”—stands 914 m (2,999 ft.) tall. At Mile 49.5, the Skeena River

emerges from the north. The train follows the river all the way to Prince Rupert.

34 SEELEY GULCH BRIDGE

Mile: 50.5

Here we see a curved trestle 275 m (902 ft.) long and 60 m (197 ft.) high, with steep-sided canyons on both sides. There are remarkable views to the north of the Seven Sisters mountain range and the Skeena River.

35 SKEENA CROSSING BRIDGE

Mile: 62.3

Built in 1912, this historic bridge is 54 m (180 ft.) high and 288 m (930 ft.) long. Crossing this bridge is the only time we cross the Skeena River, which at this point is flowing through the rugged Coast Mountains. The community to the south and west is Kitsequecla.

36 KITWANGA

Mile: 73

Population: 430

Gitwangak, a Gitksan village formerly known as Kitwanga, is the gateway to Alaska. In the distance, totem poles come into view to the south, a century-old church; and on both sides, a sacred cemetery.

37 SEVEN SISTERS RANGE

Mile: 74-90

Row of sawtooth peaks to south. Tunnel 200 m long at Mile 78.9.

38 REMOTE OR ABANDONED SETTLEMENTS

Cedarvale Mile 85.9, **Dorreen** Mile 101

Look for the person waving from the second-storey window of the building with yellow trim. Mile 106.9 was once a division point for the GTPR. At Mile 119.3, a reaction ferry (cable ferry propelled by the river's current) operates across the Skeena. Look for the orange and white towers to the south.

39 KITSELAS CANYON AND TUNNELS

Mile: 121-123

Kitselas means "People of the Canyon." The Skeena River splashes against the jagged rocks of the steep-sided canyon to the south. The rail line skirts the canyon through four close tunnels, at Mile 121.9-122.8. The best views are seen from the dome car or the back of the train.

40 TERRACE

Mile: 131.9-0

Population: 15,723

This is the service centre for the Skeena Valley and northwest. Known as the “Gateway to the North,” Terrace adopted the Kermode spirit bear as its official mascot. Snowfall is high and in a single night can average 61 cm (2 ft.). The George Little House, once home to the founder of Terrace, was built in 1914. It now functions as VIA’s waiting room and the local tourism office.

41 SKEENA RIVER

Mile: 40-60

In the Aboriginal language Tsimshian, Skeena means “Water of the Clouds” and in Gitksan, “River of Mists.” The river is 579 km (360 miles) long and can rise over 6 m (19.7 ft.) in 24 hours. At Mile 40, the westbound Skeena River mixes with the tidal waters of the Pacific Ocean.

42 KWINITSA

Mile: 48

Built in 1911, Kwinitsa’s original railway station is now a historic railway museum, relocated to Rotary Park, on Prince Rupert’s waterfront, as part of the Museum of Northern B.C. At Mile 67.1, there are pictographs,

which are ancient markings on the rock bluff, a territorial boundary for First Nations. These were discovered by chance in 1925.

43 NORTH PACIFIC CANNERY HISTORIC SITE

Mile: 81.9

This is the oldest cannery on the coast of B.C. It operated from 1889-1980 and was designated a National Historic Site by Parks Canada in 1985. There is a railway model museum onsite.

44 PORT EDWARD

Mile: 86

Population: 467

This small community is home to a marina for fishing boats and floating lodges. At Mile 87.2 we'll cross a bridge connecting the mainland to Kaien Island, where Prince Rupert is located. The island is 33 km (21 miles) in circumference. Reversing tidal rapids flow below the bridge. Kaien is a Tsimshian First Nation word meaning "sea foam."

45 RIDLEY ISLAND

Mile: 87.3

To the south is a massive grain and coal port, which exports overseas. Mile 91.6 is a container port, where you can see eight enormous cranes to the south. At Mile 92.7, Alaska Marine Ferry Terminal is visible to the south.

46 PRINCE RUPERT

Mile: 92.9

Population: 12,220

Forestry, fishing, the railway and tourism support the city's economy. The Museum of Northern B.C. displays 12,000 years of coastal history. Harbour tours are available to see ancient villages and a grizzly bear sanctuary, and for whale watching. Trying the local halibut is a must.

RAILWAY SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

One of the many railway traditions—the milepost—provides the key to locating a train’s current position. Mileposts may be on either side of a track, and are usually rectangular white signs with black numbers. Though Canada now uses the metric system, the original markers for railroads were in miles—and they still are today. Each line is subdivided at railway division points; these subdivisions are not a standard length, as they were based on the distance a steam locomotive could travel in a day.

MILEPOSTS

Milepost numbers increase as you travel from east to west and reset to zero at the start of each subdivision. Subdivisions are 43 to 146 miles (69 to 235 km) long.

SIDING AND STATION NAME BOARDS

Newer siding and station name boards are white with the name in black. Older station name boards are also white with the name in black, but the lettering is all uppercase and the signs are mounted on buildings.

Populations are approximate. All other information was accurate at the time of printing.

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