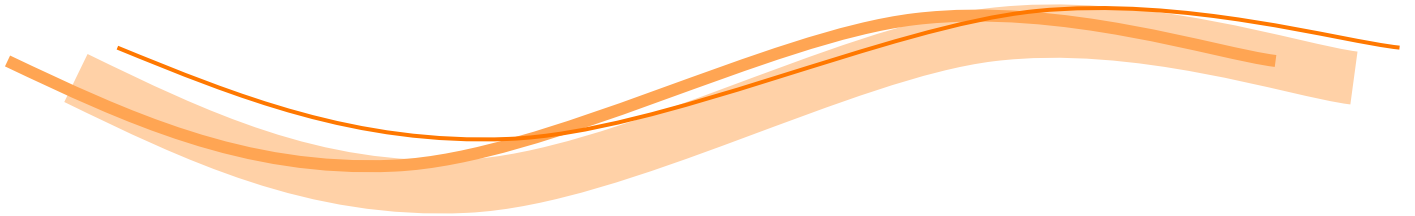




CALGARY





CALGARY	<p>Calgary is open for business after the floods in June 2013, and hardest hit Calgary Zoo partially re-opened just this last week, August 2013. The city has bounced back strongly with a whole program ahead of wonderful festivals to enjoy.</p> <p>There is so much to see and do in Calgary – from zip lining at the Olympic park to shopping the eclectic neighbourhoods. Famed for juicy Alberta steak, Calgary offers diverse culinary delights. It has vibrant arts and culture, and over fifty Summer Festivals. And it's close to the Rocky Mountains for outdoor adventure.</p> <p>Calgary has a thriving culinary scene with award winning chefs almost literally on every corner. Of course, it's famous for Alberta beef – or venture on the daring side and try some locally raised bison, elk or venison featured at several Calgary dining establishments. But don't stop there, as Calgary's cultural diversity shines through with fabulous Italian and French restaurants. And for nightlife, the Ranchmans is the place to be for a truly authentic western experience, where you can learn how to line dance every week or jump on the mechanical bull – if you dare.</p> <p>The Calgary Tower is a landmark that many people will remember from the 1988 winter Olympics where the flamed burned – making the tower the world's largest Olympic torch. The torch is still lit today for special occasions, like Canada Day and during the Calgary Flames race for the Stanley Cup.</p> <p>Calgary offers local theatre, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the Alberta Ballet. For a western experience, how about horseback riding – or dare to take a turn on the back of a bull! For adrenalin junkies, how about a trip on the zip line at Canada Olympic Park – or if you visit in the winter, you can feel like an Olympian with a turn on the bobsleigh track. And you are never far from fascinating history about "how the West was won." For instance Fort Calgary is the original site where in 1875 the North West Mounted Police constructed a palisade fort with the aim of suppressing whiskey traffic along the Bow River.</p> <p>For the latest information go to www.visitcalgary.com or phone 1-800-661-1678</p>
Location	<p>In Southern Alberta - it is situated on the Bow River in the south of the province, in an area of foothills and prairie, approximately 80 km east of the front ranges of the Canadian Rockies and 3,500 ft above sea level.</p>
Geography	<p>Straddling two mountain rivers, the Bow and the Elbow, the city of Calgary rests in a deep river valley where the great plains to the east</p>

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	start to buckle on their way to the Canadian Rockies.
Name	Originally named Fort Brisebois, after NWMP officer Éphrem-A. Brisebois, it was renamed Fort Calgary in 1876 by Colonel James Macleod. It was named after Calgary on the Isle of Mull, Scotland. Calgary Castle, was built in 1817 extending an earlier Calgary Estate laird's house. Colonel James Macleod, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, was a summer guest here. In 1876, shortly after returning to Canada, he suggested its name for Fort Calgary which gave rise to the city of Calgary, Alberta While there is some disagreement on the naming of the town, the Museum on the Isle of Mull explains that kald and gart are similar Old Norse words, meaning 'cold' and 'garden', that were likely used when named by the Vikings who inhabited the Inner Hebrides. Alternatively, the name might come from the Gaelic, Cala ghearraidh, meaning 'beach of the meadow (pasture)'.
Population	The City of Calgary has a population of 1,097,000 and a metropolitan population of 1,215,000, making it the largest city in Alberta, and the third-largest municipality and fifth-largest metropolitan area in Canada.
Language	English
Currency	Canadian Dollar
Tipping	In restaurants and bars with table service, a tip of about 15% is customary if service is cheerful and efficient. If service is exceptional, a 20% tip shows strong appreciation.
Government	Calgary citizens vote for members of the Calgary City Council every three years. City Council consists of the mayor and 14 ward aldermen. The mayor is Naheed Nenshi who is wildly popular!
Documentation	None required for Canadian citizens.
Time zone	Mountain Time, two hours behind Toronto and Montreal
Health	Canadian travelling out of their own province should ensure that they have appropriate travel insurance.
Safety tips	Calgary is considered a very safe city.

CLIMATE	
General climate	Calgary and area has a moderate four-season climate, with large variations in temperature between seasons and from one locale to another. Summer days in the city of Calgary are usually warm and dry with cool evenings because of the altitude and proximity to the mountains. However, a summer day in Drumheller is often very hot and dry, approximating desert-like conditions. A summer day in the mountains can be hot but the evenings are always cool. Alberta has more hours of sunshine in a year than any other province in Canada and Calgary is known for its blue skies. A unique phenomenon called a Chinook wind can raise temperatures more than 20 degrees in

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	one day, turning winter days into spring. A strong wind and an arch of clouds form over the mountains, heralding the Chinook. Calgary and area is typically dry with the largest amount of rainfall during the spring months. Although the mountain areas receive significant amounts of snow in the winter, Calgary often receives only a very moderate snowfall.
Today's weather	18 C and sunny in Calgary (May 4 th 2013)
Best time to visit	Calgary is very much a four season destination with winter thrills in the cold months and so much to see and do in the warmer seasons.

GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	Air Canada and WestJet have frequent service from Eastern Canada to Edmonton and the flight duration is approximately 4.5 hours. Cab fare to downtown hotels comes to around \$25. Several downtown hotels provide shuttle service from the airport.
Distances	Calgary is 300 km south of Edmonton; Vancouver is 11 hours by car; and Toronto is a 35 hour drive!
+15	The "Plus 15" system is a series of enclosed walkways connecting downtown buildings, 15 feet above street level. These walkways enable you to shop in living-room comfort, regardless of the weather. Watch for the little "+15" signs on the streets for access points. All the downtown malls are connected, as are several office towers.
LRT	Many of Calgary's attractions and shopping experiences are only a short ride away using Calgary's transit system of buses and/or the light rail train (LRT). The LRT is free in the downtown core and very reasonably priced outside the core. Visit attractions, shops and restaurants without the hassles of driving and parking.
Trains	The Rocky Mountaineer and Royal Canadian Pacific operates railtour service to Calgary; VIA Rail no longer provides intercity rail service to Calgary. More information is available on the Rocky Mountaineer elsewhere on this site at: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Destinations/WESTERNCANADA/RockyMountaineer.aspx
Car Rental	Car-rental firms include Avis (211 6th Ave. SW; tel. 403/269-6166); Budget (140 6th Ave. SE; tel. 403/226-0000); and Hertz (227 6th Ave. SW; tel. 403/221-1681). Each of these has a bureau at the airport.
Buses	Calgary transit's buses are efficient and good value, with a day pass costing only \$5.60.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	Downtown offers a full complement of international business-class brands like Sheraton, Westin, and Delta, with few independents and little to distinguish between them, save location. A couple of boutique
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hotels have emerged in the core in recent years: the Kensington Riverside Inn (www.kensingtonriversideinn.com) and the **Hotel Arts** (www.hotelarts.ca) where I stayed on my most recent trip, both sleek, modern, and unique.

Less expensive rooms tend to cluster around the motel strips: Macleod Trail S, or 16th Avenue NW, which is what the Trans-Canada Highway becomes as it passes through the city. A few deals can be found downtown at value chains like Best Western (www.bestwestern.com), Sandman Inn (www.sandmaninn.com), or Travelodge (www.travelodge.com).

If you like **B&Bs**, try the Bed and Breakfast Association of Calgary (www.bbcalgary.com), which has several dozen listings for the city. The many hotels in Motel Village, which link to the city centre via the C-Train, are another option; you can often find these rooms at discount hotel websites.

The Calgary West **Campground** (tel. 403/288-0411), on the Trans-Canada Highway West, allows tents and pets. Facilities include washrooms, toilets, laundry, a dumping station, hot showers, groceries, and a pool.

Hotel Arts
Hotel Arts is a 175-room, full-service boutique hotel. For business or pleasure, it offers a travel experience of luxury, art, service, and cuisine. Located in the heart of downtown Calgary, it is steps away from the city's emerging arts and entertainment district and vibrant business centre. Hotel Arts places you on the red carpet of fabulous shopping, theatre, spas, dining, convention facilities and the world-famous Calgary Stampede. I stayed here on my last visit to the city.
<http://www.hotelarts.ca>

LIFESTYLES	
Kids	Suggestions: Calgary Zoo (especially the dinosaurs!); the Midway at Stampede Park; Heritage Park; Calgary Science; Fort Calgary Historic Park and the Canada Olympic Park.
Teens	The Calgary Stampede would be enjoyed by any red-blooded teen and the outdoorsy activities in the city such as mountain biking and canoeing would also be liked.
Romance	For a romantic dinner try the hidden courtyard at Mescalero , a Spanish style tapas restaurant at 1315 1 st Street SW.
Honeymoons & Weddings	For weddings and honeymoons, lovers may wish to go to the mountains for a unique setting such as Banff and the famous Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel.
Seniors	Whilst Calgary is a very young city both by history and demographics, it is also a very civilized city and perfectly suitable for senior citizens. The

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	mix of excellent hotels and restaurants with a lively arts scene and accessible nature is difficult to replicate elsewhere.
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UNIQUES	
Surprising	For adrenalin junkies, how about a trip on the zip line at Canada Olympic Park – or if you visit in the winter, you can feel like an Olympian with a turn on the bobsleigh track.
History	<p>Before the Calgary area was settled by Europeans, it was inhabited by Pre-Clovis people whose presence has been traced back at least 11,000 years. In 1787, cartographer David Thompson spent the winter with a band of Peigan encamped along the Bow River. He was the first recorded European to visit the area, and John Glenn was the first documented European settler in the Calgary area, in 1873. The native way of life remained relatively unchanged until the late 1870s, when Europeans hunted the buffalo to near-extinction.</p> <p>With the buffalo gone, the natives began trapping beaver and other fur-bearing mammals for the Hudson's Bay Company and North-West Company, who set up trading posts in the Bow Valley and at Rocky Mountain House to the northwest.</p> <p>The site became a post of the North-West Mounted Police (now the RCMP). The NWMP detachment was assigned in 1875 to protect the western plains from U.S. whiskey traders, and to protect the fur trade. When the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the area in 1883 and a rail station was constructed, Calgary began to grow into an important commercial and agricultural centre. The Canadian Pacific Railway headquarters are located in Calgary today. The Calgary town site had the good fortune to be built at the entrance to the Kicking Horse Pass, one of the few passages through the sheer eastern wall of the Rocky Mountains. The 10,000–12,000 foot-high peaks denied access to a railway all along their thousand-mile length, except for a narrow valley which led from Calgary into the heart of British Columbia. This meant that the railroad had to be routed through Calgary, which became a major supply station during the construction process.</p> <p>Calgary was officially incorporated as a town in 1884 and elected its first mayor, George Murdoch. In 1894, it was incorporated as "The City of Calgary" in what was then the North-West Territories. After the arrival of the railway, the Dominion Government started leasing grazing land at minimal cost (up to 100,000 acres for one cent per acre per year). As a result of this policy, large ranching operations were established in the outlying country near Calgary. Already a transportation and distribution hub, Calgary quickly became the center of Canada's cattle marketing and meatpacking industries.</p> <p>Between 1896 and 1914 settlers from all over the world poured into the area in response to the offer of free "homestead" land. Agriculture and</p>

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	ranching became key components of the local economy, shaping the future of Calgary for years to come. The world famous Calgary Stampede, still held annually in July, grew from a small agricultural show and rodeo started in 1912 by four wealthy ranchers to "the greatest outdoor show on earth".
Books	Frommer's Calgary is an excellent guide to all the city has to offer.
1000 Places to See Before You Die	The Calgary Stampede is noted as the "Wild West, Canada-style" and one of the must-experience festivals of the world.
Must Sees	<p>The Calgary Tower is a landmark that many people will remember from the 1988 winter Olympics where the flamed burned – making the tower the world's largest Olympic torch. The torch is still lit today for special occasions, like Canada Day and during the Calgary Flames race for the Stanley Cup, sparking fond memories as well as a certain civic pride in all Calgarians.</p> <p>Reaching 762 steps or 191m (626 ft.) into the sky, this enduringly touristy landmark was once far and away the tallest structure in the city. Dwarfed now by the ever-climbing office towers of this bustling oil-driven metropolis, this tower still offers brilliant views from its observation terrace, from which you can take in the city, the mountains, and prairies beyond. The elevator whisks you to the top in just 63 seconds. A stairway from the terrace leads to the cocktail lounge, where you can enjoy drinks and a panoramic vista. Photography from up here is fantastic. Kids will no doubt enjoy the rotating restaurant as the outer floor slowly passes by the stationary inner ring at the Panorama Restaurant. www.calgarytower.com</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	As part of the wider Battle of Alberta, the city's sports teams enjoy a popular rivalry with their Edmonton counterparts, most notably the rivalries between the National Hockey League's Calgary Flames and Edmonton Oilers, and the Canadian Football League's Calgary Stampeders and Edmonton Eskimos.
Golf	The Calgary area has around 40 golf courses with modest par 3 courses at one end and exclusive and gorgeous championship courses at the other end. There are a number of wonderful courses with Rocky Mountain backdrops to the west of the city such as Wintergreen Golf and Country Club and the Silver tip Golf Resort .
Fishing	In the summer, the Bow River which flows through Calgary is very popular among fly-fishermen. If you're planning to fish, either in the city or outside of it, you need to obtain a license. They're available at most sporting goods stores, convenience stores, and gas stations at a cost of \$21. Under 16 and over 65 are free.
Horse riding	Spruce Meadows is an internationally renowned equestrian facility hosting five major show-jumping championships a year - The National,

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	<p>Canada One, North American, Masters and Continental. Open year-round to visitors.</p> <p>For a real western experience, how about horseback riding or for those of you who dare – care to take a turn on the back of a bull?</p>
Hiking	<p>Fish Creek (www.tprc.alberta.ca/parks/fishcreek ; tel. 403/297-5293), at the city's southern end, is the only urban provincial park in Alberta. At 1,400 hectares (3,460 acres) it's also among the largest urban parks in all of North America. Fish Creek hosts about 2 million visitors every year, many of them drawn to the 50km of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. This is my personal favourite spot for getting away from it all in Calgary: walking, running, biking, however you want to go.</p>
Cycling	<p>Calgary has an extensive bicycle path system that connects the central core to some of the far-flung suburbs, and everything in between. All in, Calgary had about 635km of devoted bike paths throughout the city - the most of any city in North America - with even more planned. Ride alongside the Bow River, through downtown, and off and around the Glenmore Reservoir without ever seeing a city street.</p> <p>Sports Rent at 4424 16th Ave. NW; tel. 403-292-0077; www.sportsrent.ca is a reliable bike rental option. They rent basic mountain bikes for \$25 per day, with kids' bikes at \$10 per day.</p>
Wintersports	<p>In large part due to its proximity to the Rocky Mountains, Calgary has traditionally been a popular destination for winter sports. Since hosting the 1988 Winter Olympics, the city has also been home to a number of major winter sporting facilities such as Canada Olympic Park (luge, cross-country skiing, ski jumping, downhill skiing, snowboarding, and some summer sports) and the Olympic Oval (speed skating and hockey). These facilities serve as the primary training venues for a number of competitive athletes.</p>

CULTURE	
Arts	<p>The city has local theatre, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the Alberta Ballet that feature regular performances in the city.</p> <p>Art Gallery of Calgary</p> <p>Housed in a historic building, the gallery's constantly changing program features prominent contemporary artists from all over the city and around the world in virtually every discipline - you will see well-curated photography, painting, and avant-garde sculpture, all with a smart, contemporary edge. It also offers a cafe with a lovely sidewalk patio for people watching.</p>
Music	<p>The Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts (205 8th Ave. SE; tel. 403/294-7455) - now called the Epcor Centre, after its corporate sponsor - is the catch-all venue for live theatre, symphony, and opera. Calgary has a vibrant theatre scene, with three major companies, Alberta Theatre Projects (tel. 403/294-7402; www.atplive.com),</p>

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	<p>Theatre Calgary (tel. 403/294-7440; www.theatrecalgary.com), and the avant-garde, internationally celebrated One Yellow Rabbit (tel. 403/264-3224; www.oyr.org) all working out of the Epcor Centre. Epcor is also home to the excellent Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra (tel. 403/571-0270; www.cpo-live.com), an international-class ensemble. Calgary's country music scene is also notable.</p>
Films	<p>The Calgary area draws filmmakers and numerous motion pictures have been filmed in the general area. The Tom Selleck picture Crossfire Trail was shot on a ranch near Calgary though the stated setting of the film is Wyoming.</p>
Museums	<p>Several museums are located in the city. The Glenbow Museum is the largest in western Canada and includes an art gallery and first nation's gallery. Other major museums include the Chinese Cultural Centre at 6,500 m2, the largest stand-alone cultural centre in Canada, the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame and Museum (at Canada Olympic Park), The Military Museums, the Cantos Music Museum and the Aero Space Museum.</p> <p>Telus World of Science: Push, pull, open, look, talk and listen in an exciting hands-on science playground that features one of North America's newest and best multi-media theatres.</p> <p>Grain Academy Museum: Learn about the grain industry at this interpretive centre. Includes model train and elevator displays, grain varieties, educational films and artifacts.</p> <p>Heritage Park and the Gasoline Alley are Canada's largest living history museum – it's a very authentic historical experience taking the visitor from the 1860's to the 1940's.</p>
Festivals	<p>Calgary features over 40 festivals and events from May through September. There are festivals celebrating Jazz, Blues, Food and Wine, Cycling, Circus performance, Comedy, Buskers, Arts and much more! Here is just a taster of 3 major festivals:</p> <p>The Calgary Stampede - the "Greatest Outdoor Festival in the World" - is in July celebrating Western heritage with a Rodeo, Chuck Wagon Races, Agricultural Show and more - plus a fantastic music concert line up.</p> <p>Globalfest which takes place in August allows Calgary's unique cultural communities to come together to showcase arts and crafts, music and dance, food and drink, and activities for all ages. Each night ends with the Trico Homes International Fireworks Festival as it illuminates the night sky with an artistic display of pyrotechnics and music.</p>

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	<p>Spruce Meadows is an international icon in the show jumping community - they host a variety of international show jumping events including the Spruce Meadows National in June. Spruce Meadows draws Olympic champions to junior riders.</p>
<p>ATTRACTIONS</p>	<p>Calgary Zoo is a must see. Visitors can discover the Canadian Wilds animals (grizzly, cougar, wolf, and more) – it's a great preparation ahead of a trip to the Parks for the wild adventure in the Banff. And Dinosaurs Alive! brings the dinosaurs to life, with 26 realistic, scary animatronic dinosaurs! The Zoo Island suffered damage in the recent floods.</p> <p>The National Music Centre Explores instruments and objects that will tell the stories of music in Canada in dynamic and engaging ways. It celebrates the musical cultures of Atlantic Canada, Québec, Ontario, the West and the North. And it recognizes Canadian icons – both people and objects. Its collection goes beyond keyboard instruments to include electronic instruments and sound equipment. www.nmc.ca</p> <p>TELUS Spark is Calgary's new kind of Science Centre. It is Canada's first new purpose-built Science Centre in more than 25 years. Facilitators fuel curiosity. Exhibits and programs ignite a sense of wonder and excitement. It is a place for people of all ages and abilities to let go and embrace the desire to explore and discover science, technology and art.</p> <p>Glenbow Museum At the Glenbow Museum, intriguing stories from Western Canada connect with extraordinary art and artifacts from around the world. Combining a museum, art gallery, library and archives all under one roof, Glenbow boasts over a million artifacts and some 28,000 works of art in its vast collections and is one of the largest museums in Canada.</p> <p>Heritage Park Explore 1860 all the way to 1950 and discover "How the West was Once" at Canada's largest living history museum. With more than 200 exhibits and attractions spread over 127 acres of lush parkland, Heritage Park Historical Village has a lot to offer both the history buff and the pleasure seeker. It's the perfect balance between historical fact, adventure, discovery and fun that tells the tale of Western Canadian settlement in a unique way.</p> <p>Calaway Park Western Canada's Largest Outdoor Family Amusement Park, Calaway Park has been offering affordable, family-friendly fun and</p>

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	<p>entertainment for over three decades. Calaway Park has no less than 32 rides designed for thrill-seekers of all ages and beautifully choreographed, high-energy entertainment.</p> <p>Winsport's Canada Olympic Park Canada Olympic Park is perhaps the most visible legacy of the 1988 Games. It continues as a multi-purpose competition, training and recreation area, designed for year-round use by both high performance athletes and the general public. In the winter Canada Olympic Park is host to more than 290,000 ski and snowboard visitors each year.</p> <p>Canada's Sports Hall of Fame The National Sports Hall of Fame is dedicated to preserving and celebrating Canada's impressive and inspiring sport history. Visit 11 galleries representing 58 sports, experience more than 50 interactive visitor experiences, watch a 10-minute feature highlighting great sport moments in history, and learn about Canada's sporting traditions through artifacts, video and photo collections.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Calgary Zoo is one of the finest in North America and an absolute must-see, especially with kids. Their research initiatives and successes, outreach programs worldwide and their commitment to conservation are exemplary.</p> <p>They offer a wide range of programs from the avid gardener, to children of all ages with sleepovers, birthdays, animal encounters, behind the scenes, camps, and special guest speakers on travel adventures and animal expertise.</p> <p>There is a special focus to introduce visitors to the Canadian Wilds animals, such as grizzly, cougar, wolf, prior to a trip to the National Parks. The Zoo's natural history can prepare the visitor for the wild adventures in the Banff area.</p> <p>Website is www.calgaryzoo.com</p>
Parks	<p>The city has a large number of urban parks including Fish Creek Provincial Park, Nose Hill Park, Bowness Park, Edworthy Park, the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Confederation Park, and Prince's Island Park. Nose Hill Park is the largest municipal park in Canada.</p> <p>Connecting these parks and most of the city's neighbourhoods is one of the most extensive multi-use (walking, bike, rollerblading) path systems in North America.</p>
Gardens	<p>At 2.5 acres (1.01 ha), the Devonian Gardens is one of the largest urban indoor gardens in the world, and it is located on the 4th floor of TD Square (above the shopping).</p>
Historical Sites	<p>On the occasion of the city's centennial in 1975, Fort Calgary became a public park of 16 hectares (40 acres), spread around the ruins of the</p>

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	<p>original Mounted Police stronghold. In 2001, volunteers completed a replica of the 1888 barracks using traditional methods and building materials. The Interpretive Centre captures the history of Calgary, from its genesis as a military fort to its 20th-century beginnings as an agricultural and oil boomtown. Kids can do time in the 1875-era jail, or dress up as a Mountie. There are a number of interesting videos and guided displays; always in focus are the adventures and hardships of the Mounties a century ago. The rigors of their westward march and the almost unbelievable isolation these pioneer troopers endured now seems incredible. If all this history whets your appetite, cross the Elbow River on 9th Avenue and head to the Deane House. This historic home was built by a Fort Calgary superintendent nearly 100 years ago and is now the Deane House Restaurant (tel. 403/269-7747), operated by Fort Calgary. www.fortcalgary.ab.ca</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Calgary has everything from eclectic neighborhood shopping districts to big box malls.</p> <p>Chinook Centre is one of Calgary's largest shopping centre with more than 200 stores and services. The Bay, Sears, Zellers, Famous Players Paramount Theatre, 3D IMAX.</p> <p>Market Mall with 229 stores is Calgary's largest shopping centre and recently undergoing \$90 million dollars in renovations, Market Mall is the destination for all your fashion and lifestyle needs. Located in the heart of northwest Calgary, it's a bright, open and friendly shopping centre featuring over 200 shops and services.</p> <p>Willow Park Village is a walk-about outdoor mall with more than 60 merchants. Fashion, western, accessories, home décor, leisure, beauty, restaurants.</p>
Markets	<p>The Eau Claire Market (200 Barclay Parade SW; tel. 403/264-6450; www.eauclairemarket.com) was envisioned as a fresh food market modeled after Granville Island in Vancouver. The intervening years have seen it morph into a warehouse for crafts, which could consume an entire afternoon. Some of the stalls and stands here feature imported fabrics and objects from Asia and South America, as well as local artisan-made goods.</p> <p>Calgary Farmers' Market Web Site: www.calgaryfarmersmarket.ca This Alberta-approved market has 100 direct producers covering agriculture, meat, fish, dairy, prepared foods and specialty item vendors, including a food court. Located at Flanders Ave S.W. in Currie Barracks.</p>
Nightlife	<p>If you're looking for a truly western experience, the Ranchmans is the place to be, where you can learn how to line dance every week or jump</p>

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	<p>on the mechanical bull – if you dare.</p> <p>The popular cocktail strips, which reach critical mass around the 17th Ave. SW/4th St. SW axis, are always busy, and on the weekend jam full to near-overflowing.</p>
Casinos	<p>Calgary has several casinos whose proceeds go wholly to charities. None impose a cover. Located across from the Stampede grounds, the Elbow River Inn Casino (1919 Macleod Trail S; tel. 403/266-4355; www.elbowrivercasino.com) is the largest and most central; it offers Las Vegas-style gaming plus a poker variation called Red Dog. It has a 24-hour poker room.</p>

CUISINE	
Food	<p>Calgary has a thriving culinary scene with award winning chefs almost literally on every corner. Of course, they're famous for their Alberta beef – so if a steakhouse is what you're looking for, you have a wide range of options. But it doesn't stop there, the cultural diversity of the city shines through with fabulous Italian and French restaurants, and don't forget the fare at the local pubs.</p> <p>For a specialty dish associated with Calgary to try when were you're in town, try some locally raised bison, elk or venison featured at several Calgary dining establishments.</p>
Beer	<p>Calgary International Beerfest is held in May and is the perfect venue to sample the local beers.</p>
Restaurants	<p>The city has a vibrantly eclectic, cosmopolitan dining scene. As is the case with most things here, a fresh, contemporary take dominates most menus, and the emphasis on organic and local ingredients seems to grow by the day. Don't be shocked to find local bison and elk on a great many menus around town, if accompanied by such cutting-edge culinary trends like molecular gastronomy.</p> <p>The city's most vibrant dining districts can be found either in or on the edge of the city core. The handful of blocks around 17th Avenue SW, between about 8th Street and 2nd Street, and 4th Street SW, between 17th Avenue and 25th Avenue (also known as the Mission) are the most dense eating and drinking destinations in the city. Just north of downtown, Kensington offers an eclectic array of choices as well.</p> <p>Downtown, power lunch spots are the order of the day, and many of them are excellent as well - and particularly useful for before or after theatre-going at the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts, on Stephen Avenue. Here's some suggestions:</p> <p>A Calgary icon since 1980, Buzzards Restaurant is an authentic cowboy restaurant serving genuine Alberta beef and chuckwagon recipes adapted for modern tastes. Their unique concept has attracted local, national, and international attention such as The Financial Times,</p>

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	<p>FFWD, Occasions, and Bon Appetit Magazine. The award-winning western décor, along with the authentic cuisine makes Buzzards a destination you are not soon to forget! Personally recommended.</p> <p>Ranchman's: there is no other place so steeped in Alberta Pioneer Western Heritage. Ranchman's is home to the professional rodeo cowboy. Their legacy is displayed in the walls and in the soul of the Ranchman's; a museum of rodeo memorabilia and photographs; Displaying over 90 Trophy saddles of World and Canadian Champion Cowboys. They pride themselves on being a great place to enjoy high quality food in a fun-filled, lively atmosphere at an affordable price. A Family Dining environment until 8pm, and a dancehall after 8pm. They serve up thick steaks, fall-of-the-bone ribs, Hearty Texas Chili and Homemade fixin's all at great value.</p>
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MORE INFO	<p>Stop by one of the Visitor Information Centres to get more information:</p> <p>Calgary International Airport at Arrivals Level Telephone: 403-735-1234</p> <p>Calgary Tower at the base of the Calgary Tower Telephone: 403-750-2362</p> <p>Southcentre Mall ~ 100 Anderson Road S.E., Lower level between The Bay and Centre Court Telephone: 403-271-7670</p>
Brochures	Request a Visitor Planning Guide: 1.800.661.1678
Contacts	<p>Website: www.tourismcalgary.com</p> <p>Tel: 1-800-661-1678</p> <p>Connect with Tourism Calgary on facebook: www.facebook.com/visitcalgary</p> <p>Follow Tourism Calgary on Twitter: https://twitter.com/calgary</p>
Deals	<p>Do you like travel deals? Starting right now (August 2013), Air Canada is offering a special 10% promo code when you subscribe to www.visitcalgary.com here: http://bit.ly/17DFY0J .</p>

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	<p>I have made several visits to Calgary. Some of my personal highlights:</p> <p>The Calgary Stampede (of course!)</p> <p>The Calgary Tower</p>
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Biking in Fish Creek Provincial Park
Fort Calgary
Devonian Gardens
The view of the Rockies on a clear day in the city

The 99th Calgary Stampede – Travel Blog 2011

I'm broadcasting the Travel Shows live from the 99th Calgary Stampede – the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth. And what a show! Here's a normally serious and industrious city of over a million people that just goes nuts for ten days every July in celebration of Cowboy Culture. Everyone wears cowboy hats and boots and is intent on having a good time. Half an hour after flying in, I have my cowboy hat in place and I'm ready to go....

Will & Kate at the Calgary Stampede Parade

A perfect day for a Parade...And to kick things off in right Royal style, we get a glimpse of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Will and Kate to you and me) as they travel the route of the Parade. Then comes a cavalcade of hundreds of floats, marching bands, horses, heroes and more that takes two hours to pass by and is watched this year by 425,000 cheering aficionados – the Will and Kate factor! It's all entertaining fun and a great launch into the first day of the Stampede this afternoon.

Cowboys...

Rodeo – this is how it all began in 1912: cowboys competing in awe-inspiring events of courage and skill based upon their cowboy lifestyle. I'm watching six major rodeo events: Bareback; Bull Riding; Barrel Racing; Saddle Bronc; Steer Wrestling; and Tie-Down Roping. Each one is a breath-taking display of man and beast, where often the horse or bull is awarded as many points as the rider. With \$2 million in prize money to be won, the athletes take the competition pretty seriously. I am fortunate to have the subtleties of rodeo explained to me by a real cowboy: Jim is a Cowboy Hall of Famer who has ridden the broncs to glory in the past and we go behind the scenes to the pens where the riders are released for their 8 seconds of adrenaline rush. As the long evening light fades to twilight, I watch the thrilling Chuckwagon Races, topped off by a rollicking outdoor stage show, "Volte", and fireworks that light up the Alberta sky.

...And Indians

It's heartening to see the First Nations participating as enthusiastically as everyone else in this western party. The Stampede is an excellent way of learning more about First Nations culture. Proud Elders in ceremonial dress add colour to the Parade. In Stampede Park, the Indian Village represents the five tribes of the Treaty 7: the Siksika, T'suu Tina, Nakoda, Piikani and Kainai. Each day they open their tipis to

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visitors and stage performances of dance and song.

Prairie Oysters and Cowboy Sundae

The Calgary Stampede is also a celebration of Western Cuisine. And it's all right here on Stampede Park. Leave all notions of dietary self-restraint behind and just enjoy the fun of heart-clogging creations like "turkey-tini" (a micro turkey dinner in a martini glass); mac and cheese pizza (yummy double comfort food); "Cowboy Sundae" (pretty beef and mashed potato looking like dessert); and doughnut burgers (maple dip, no less). I was tapped to be a Media Judge in the 2011 Stampede Best New Food Competition and so got to try them all. The winner? Kubie Korn Balls – corn fritters with Ukrainian sausage. But my most memorable Stampede cuisine was perhaps at Buzzards Restaurant where I sampled Prairies Oysters – bulls' testicles. They were surprisingly tasty...

Midway Magic

Stampede is so much more than the richest rodeo show. Stampede Park is a vibrant collage of Midway attractions, kids' events, food vendors (don't forget those Kubie Korn Balls), Western art exhibitions (the photography exhibit was inspirational), agricultural attractions (my favourite: a sow with umpteen squealing piglets suckling) and great shows. This year the stars include Kate Perry, Kenny Chesney, New Kids on the Block, Backstreet Boys, Kevin Costner, Sale and Pelletier and even a human cannonball fired across Saddledome Plaza twice daily! Another attraction I find strangely compelling: the World Championship Blacksmiths' Competition. There is such a potpourri of events and attractions here – there's something for everyone...which is exactly what a Midway should be all about

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