

Yukon River Canoe Adventure

One of the classic Yukon journeys is a canoe or kayak trip on the Yukon River. Days spent paddling, camping in tents and eating by the campfire under the midnight sun, along with a unique combination of wildlife viewing, beautiful mountain vistas and gold rush history make this a truly memorable wilderness experience.

Duration

8-19 days

Season

Mid-May to mid-September

The Experience

Beginning in Whitehorse, this river trip travels through Lake Laberge, the historic Thirty Mile, Carmacks, Five Finger Rapids and Fort Selkirk before ending in Dawson City. Local tour operators offer fully inclusive guided tours, providing canoes/kayaks, camping and safety gear, meals while on the river, shuttle transportation to/from the river and pre and post tour accommodation.



Whitehorse

Steeped in culture and history, Whitehorse is a contemporary city with a vibrant arts community, world-class attractions, and top-notch tourism services. It offers the amenities of a big city, with an endearing small-town vibe.

Sightseeing

- S.S. Klondike
- Yukon Transportation Museum
- Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre
- Kwanlin Dün Culture Centre
- Old Log Church Museum
- Whitehorse Trolley
- Whitehorse Fish Ladder
- Miles Canyon
- Yukon Artists at Work Gallery

Whitehorse to Carmacks

All guided Yukon river trips begin and end in Whitehorse. Depending upon the option chosen, guests will be taken by shuttle bus to the put-in for their journey. At the end of the trip, they will be shuttled back to Whitehorse.

Put-ins for Yukon River trips are either in downtown Whitehorse or slightly further down river. From here, the river heads north to Lake Laberge, made famous by Robert Service in his poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee."

Paddling along the shoreline of the lake there are plenty of excellent day hiking opportunities before reaching the section of the Yukon River known as the Thirty Mile near Hootalinqua.

Hootalinqua was a popular gathering site for trade and visiting between the Tlingit, Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone people.

When gold was discovered in the region, Hootalinqua became a supply point for the miners and a Northwest Mounted Police post was also built here. The roadhouse and telegraph office are still standing along with the remnants of other buildings. Nearby is Hootalinqua Island, final resting place of the steamship "Evelyn."

Further along the river is the derelict Cyr's gold dredge - a product of true Yukon ingenuity it was made from a stripped-down caterpillar tractor, a car motor and various other home-made parts.

The town of Carmacks is the halfway point on the journey. It was named after George Carmacks, one of the original discoverer's of gold that launched the Klondike Gold Rush. The town has services including a campground and general store and is the only place to resupply until reaching Dawson City.

Suggested Itinerary Planning

Whitehorse to Dawson City
735km/460 miles
approximately 17 days

Whitehorse to Carmacks
320km/200miles
approximately 8 days

Carmacks to Dawson City
415km/260 miles
approximately 9 days

Should the journey end in Dawson City, we recommend spending two days before heading back to Whitehorse by car, shuttle or plane.

Experience required

Guided Yukon River trips are suitable for people with no paddling experience.

A River with History

From prehistoric times until the late 1950's when all-weather roads were first built and air travel became common, the Yukon River was the region's highway for settlement and development. At its peak in 1898, the Klondike Gold Rush saw nearly 30,000 gold seekers in 7,000 boats travel the Yukon River from Bennett, B.C. to the goldfields near Dawson City.



Carmacks to Dawson City

Not far from Carmacks is the famous Five Finger Rapids which are one of two rapids on the entire route (Rink Rapids is the other).

A little further along the river is Yukon Crossing. Winter travel from Dawson City to Whitehorse was initially along the frozen Yukon River. Increased traffic led to the replacement of the traditional dogsled with horses but travel on the ice was hazardous. The building of the Overland Trail in 1902 shortened the trip by 160 km. The wagon road crossed the Yukon River at MacKay's Roadhouse, using either horse-drawn sleighs or ferries. "McKay's Crossing" eventually became Yukon Crossing.

Roughly halfway between Carmacks and Dawson, on an island at the confluence of the Yukon and Pelly rivers is Fort Selkirk - a former Hudson Bay trading post and traditional land of the Selkirk First Nation. Now a designated Historic Site, Fort Selkirk is a wonderfully preserved reminder of the historic communities that once thrived along the Yukon. The final stop on the journey is Dawson City.

Dawson City

An official National Historic Site, Dawson City still evokes the heartbeat of the greatest gold rush in history, with its boardwalks and vintage false-front buildings. First Nations cultural experiences and wilderness adventures are also part of today's Klondike experience.

Sightseeing

Dawson City Museum
Discovery Claim National Historic Site
Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site
Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre
Robert Service Cabin
Jack London Museum
Diamon Tooth Gertie's

Activities

Parks Canada tours, Gold panning at Free Claim #6, Klondike Spirit cruise along the Yukon River



Other Yukon canoeing adventures: Bonnet Plume, Snake River, Wind River, Big Salmon River, Teslin River

