

B.C. Backbone Adventure Route

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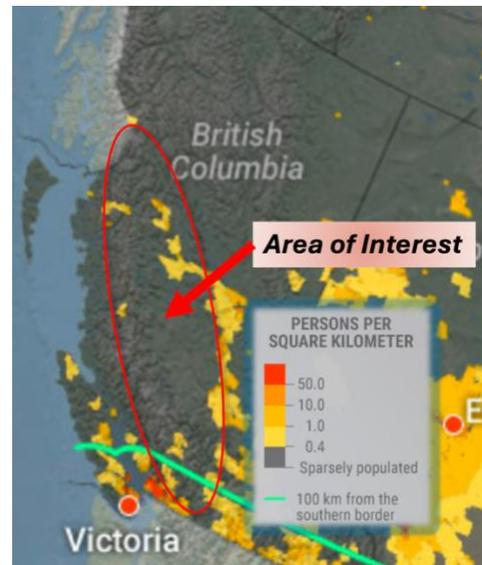
Route Overview

Why

The BC Backbone Adventure Route is a volunteer created motorcycle backcountry travel route. It's an adventure backcountry motorcycle route originally conceived by GrizzLee (Lee Krueger) of RubiKon Adventures in the same spirit as the [Back Country Discover Routes](#).

This project began to take shape about 7 years ago. As more solo moto trips were taken into British Columbia bush and even extended into the Yukon and NorthWest Territories it was desired to create as much of a continuous off-pavement route as possible. The country covered in this route is more remote and vast than any of the BDR routes developed in the lower 48 states. It passes by and/or through many Provincial parks, preserves, vast ranch lands and native reserves.

To get a sense of the isolation, the main population of Canada is about equal to that of California (90% of the Canadian population is within 160 km of the United States Border). Most of the human population is focused in major cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, etc. The Provinces of Ontario and Quebec are the most populated and are considered the economic engine of Canada. Canada's large north is not arable; therefore, traditional farming and ranching are not possible. Thus, the farther north one travels, the less people are encountered. To give a sense of scale, British Columbia (BC), has about 13.7% of Canada's total population. With a population of less than 6 million people and a land mass that is about 3.5 times larger than California, 1.5 times the size of Texas and 4 times the size of the United Kingdom. Most of the population in BC is concentrated around the metro Vancouver area and Victoria on Vancouver Island. BC has additional factors that have stifled population growth, that is the tremendous number of mountains found in this province. A vast, impenetrable range of glaciated high mountains line its Pacific Coast, and the expansive Rocky Mountains line its eastern border. High plateaus and mountain foothills filling the gap in between. As a result, there is a high density of diverse wildlife here. Wildlife that is rarely encountered in the lower 48 states (or nonexistence) is a common sight in this country.



It is for these reasons alone (low population, remote mountain terrain, wildlife, vast forests, etc.) that have cultivated the best moto expedition travel conditions found anywhere in the western hemisphere. As such, this is a guide for others to experience and learn about the north in a fashion unlike any other place in North America. This route will touch upon

lowland rain forests, high upland grassy plateaus, steep canyons carved out by glacial floods, native culture, true cowboys on huge ranchlands and historical landmarks of both geographical and human origin.

This route is **more than** about riding a motorcycle and camping. It is hoped to educate others that may follow to experience the wonders of nature, culture, geography and history. The concept of proper ethical travel will always be promoted throughout. Leave only footprints as the saying goes, respect the people, their lands and the wildlife you encounter as we are only but visitors in their home. As such, the motto of *Riding Respectfully* will be in the forefront of the route description throughout this document.

Climate/Weather

The BCAR Backbone route passes through 3 distinct climate regions.

The northern part of the route, Terrace, Gingolx, Kispiox, etc. are in near coastal climate regions meaning they are typically mild in temperature, but much wetter. But don't be fooled. Cold northern marine air can make for a wet and bone chilling experience.

The interior such as the Nechako, the Chilcotin Plateau and Lillooet regions are subjugated to drier and more extreme heat due to the coastal mountains blocking moist westerly air flow. However, these regions experience dry cold winters and all 4 seasons. But when it rains, it can pour buckets. In the summer, there is usually no such thing as a drizzle. It's either raining with thunder and lightning or it's not. Not usually much in between.

The region to the south, Harrison Lake, Pemberton, etc. are considered more lowland Alpine type climates. Cool thick forests with glaciated mountains can make one shiver in the rain or drizzle.

Because of the mountainous geography of BC, the topography is of extreme variation, especially in the northern and southern portions of the route, there are many microclimate regions. Precipitation is strongly influenced by the lay of the land. Weather forecasting is tricky because of this and the fact that there are fewer weather stations covering a much larger geography than what is found in the US.

There is really no generalization that can be made about the weather in British Columbia, except that it can range from miserable to glorious on any given week. You should be prepared for everything. In the summer and fall, coastal BC can have sunny and comfortable weather, but the weather can also be extremely wet and cold! The arid plateau, on the other hand, can be hot in the summer and in the late afternoon experience severe rain showers. In the early summer and fall, there can be huge temperature swings. Cold, frosty nights combined with hot afternoons.

It is imperative that you come prepared for any type of weather conditions, including cooler temperatures and heavy rain, during this adventure! This route will take about 12 days to complete (including the ride back south). So, plan for weather.

Geography/History

The geography of British Columbia is the most varied of anyplace in North America. The province is almost four times the size of the United Kingdom and larger than every state in the United States state except Alaska. It is bounded in the northwest by Alaska, directly north by Yukon and the Northwest Territories, on the east by Alberta, and on the south by the U.S. states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana. The province is dominated by mountain ranges, among them the Canadian Rockies, but it is dominantly ruled by the Coast Mountains, Cassiar Mountains, and the Columbia Mountains. There is, as you will discover, volcanic activity as well.

British Columbia is rich in natural resources, extensive forests which include coastal rain forests with huge trees and inland conifers such as pine, spruce, etc. which invite the timber industry. Precious minerals such as gold, silver, bauxite, copper, natural gas are abundant here and along with it the boom-and-bust industries associated with them. Then there is numerous, glaciers, lakes and rivers that make up for the hydro power industry. The lands were carved and shaped by several ice ages where glaciers formed and retreated time and time again causing massive flooding, carving out the land. The grasslands of the arid plateau region are perfect for cattle and horse ranching. Because of the remoteness, geographical location to the coast with high mountains, clean lakes, rivers, lush forests, the fisheries and wildlife thrive here. It is not hard to see why the native people thrived here as well. Their culture is strong and entrenched in tradition. Compared to the history of European Anglos in the United States, white man was more of a recent visitor in the north.

The uniqueness of the natural geographic topology, the indigenous culture and diverse wildlife make British Columbia for one of the most interesting Adventure Riding regions in the world.

Best Time of Year

The BCAR - Backbone route is best ridden from early June thru mid-September. The route can be done in late May, but note, that roads may not have had time to dry out and some stream/river crossings maybe deeper than normal. The northern section is in a temperate rain forest. It can be colder and wetter in May and September.

Ethics of Back Country Travel

Riding motorcycles off-road is dangerous. In fact, riding motorcycles in general is dangerous. There are some common-sense safety rules that every rider, regardless of skill and experience, are expected to follow when travelling this route. Things can go wrong quickly as we all share the road with everyone else, including other riders, vehicles, logging/mining trucks, wildlife, etc. British Columbia is Bear Country. You will be camping in the bush and bear safety protocol is needed. Carrying and knowing how to use bear spray is **highly recommended**. You will not need a gun for safety, so it is **highly advised** to leave it at home.

Notes When Traveling into Canada

Firearms

Firearms are strictly controlled in Canada and any visitor bringing a gun into the country must declare it in writing at the border via a Non-Resident Firearm Declaration form prior to entry. A fee must also be paid at the Port of Entry. Handguns and assault rifles are prohibited but it is possible to import a sporting rifle or shotgun intended for hunting. Any illegal or undeclared weapons will be seized and never returned, and Americans crossing the Canadian border with a gun must have a "valid purpose" for importing the firearm (e.g. hunting). Americans who are declaring a firearm at the Canadian border are guaranteed to undergo intense scrutiny and likely to have a background check run.

Criminal History

If you have any criminal history, including a DUI or DWI conviction, you will likely need special permission to enter Canada. Even if you were caught drinking and driving a long time ago, you may be considered criminally inadmissible and **denied entry** at the Canadian border.

Note that Canada and the US have reciprocity agreements regarding laws, e.g., speeding, drunk driving, trespassing, etc. Any infractions/criminal activity that occurs in Canada will go on your US driving and/or criminal record. This includes trespass and infractions given out by First Nations officers as well. Please be respectful and obey Canadian laws and customs.

Use of Drones in Canada

Drones can be useful tools for traveling in the bush. First and foremost, they can show a view of the country that cannot be seen on the ground, offering fantastic panoramas of the countryside. Secondly, they can be a great aid to scout the route and road conditions ahead.

With that stated, drone pilots must follow the rules in the Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs). Part IX – Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems contains most of the rules that apply to drones. You should read these regulations in full before you fly your drone for the first time.

Drone pilots must carry a valid drone pilot certificate and only fly drones that are marked and registered. The rules are somewhat like those found in the United States, perhaps even a little stricter; however, laws are subject to change. So be sure to visit the [Government of Canada Website](#) for current rules and regulations.

Furthermore, flying a drone in a provincial park is usually a big no-no. Many first nations, private landowners have rules as well. Please respect the rights and privacy of others. **Do not harass wildlife**, that is never cool nor ethical. Not following laws, could mean facing serious penalties, including hefty fines, confiscation of your drone, banishment and/or jail time.

To have an enjoyable, safe and pleasant experience It is vitally important to abide by the Canadian laws, rules, customs and the three **R's** noted here (**Ride Right, Ride Smart, Ride Respectfully**). Failure to do so could involve injury/death and/or compromise access to this wonderful country not only for you as an individual, but for the rest of us fellow explorers/adventurers/visitors.

Ride Right

“Ride Right” means to always ride on the right-hand side of the road. Cutting corners and riding on the left in low visibility areas can be a recipe for disaster. Riding right decreases the chances for head-on collisions. Big trucks cut corners, aggressive ATV's, campers, hunters, and other motorcycles show up unexpectedly. Sometimes without consideration of others travelling the road. So please do your part to stay safe in the backcountry.

Ride Smart

“Ride Smart” covers many aspects of riding. Before tackling any remote backcountry excursion, riders should know exactly what they are up against such as weather, local ordinances, terrain, remoteness, wildlife, private land/reserves, etc. Furthermore, a well-maintained bike with proper riding gear, tools, safety gear ([see recommended Packing List](#)) and fuel range expectations are essential. It is recommended, that one do a daily inspection (evening camp) of their bike and gear for loose parts/fasteners, leaks, broken/cracked parts, etc. Check tire air pressure, oil and water levels. It is wise to make this a daily habit on any ride and avoid surprises out in the bush before trouble ensues.

Know the weather before leaving and check on it daily when possible. The BC weather forecast isn't as reliable as the US based NOAA weather forecast data. Thus, it is important to be prepared. This is no country to ride in when it has been raining hard or even for extended periods. The country was once covered by several thousand feet thick ice sheets. The glacial deposits here are silty and are much different than most places. Not only is it slippery (very dangerous), but it can also gum up your chains and wheels. Most locals don't venture out, even in 4WD vehicles when the roads turn greasy. Furthermore, because of the remoteness of the route, you may not see others for a few days.

Review the route daily and know what to expect when before passing through each section. You will be riding be through native reserve lands and private ranches. Encounters with the locals and wildlife will most likely happen. Be courteous and respectful. The people out this way are very helpful and friendly to outsiders. Heed their advice on road conditions and closures. Local knowledge out here is more valuable than forestry websites. Don't rely solely on your GPS. Electronics can fail. Best to travel with a friend and a separate phone gps app and with back up maps (*Highly recommended that riders obtain copies the [BC](#)*

Back Roadmaps as a backup. See notes in the resources section of this document regarding maps and websites).

Riding gear. Expect warm weather during the day and cool to overnight frost. Rain can be encountered at any time and should be expected in the northern parts of the route as it passes through temperate rain forests.

Tools. Carry the basic tools, tubes, plugs, hardware, etc. to do quick emergency sideroad repairs. Never leave home without these.

Emergency Beacons and first aid. Carry either a Personal Locator Beacon or some sort of satellite emergency contact device (There are many excellent GPS tracking devices available on the market today). Always carry a basic first aid kit as well.

Be mindful of the weight of your gear! It's amazing how much "stuff" some riders will bring with them on long backcountry trips. Some of the sections on the BCAR route can be challenging and VERY remote. Having a lighter load and a lighter bike can make riding a lot easier and more enjoyable. The saying, less is more applies here. If riding with a group, it's a good to divide up resources, such as tools, maps, tow straps etc. to save on weight.

You will encounter livestock and possibly wild horses. Please note that livestock in the road can be dangerous. Slow down and give them a wide berth. Horses, especially like to veer left or right suddenly without warning.

Ride Respectfully

Remember, we are visitors to this land. We are passing through homes/ranches and for many, this is their means of existence. This includes both wildlife and people. Please do not harass animals or even feed them. Practice "leave no trace" when camping. That also means, obeying posted speed limits, honoring "No Trespassing Signs" and leaving gates as you found them (leave open if open, close if closed).

This country is not an ORV park. Do not ride off road. This is a big no-no out here. The plateau country is arid and fragile with huge sections of grasslands (protected from motorized travel). Not only can tracks take years to heal, but they also invite others to follow. Much of this country is native lands/parks/or cattle reserve and riding off the main road can lead to trouble with the 1st Nations people, ranchers, private landowners and the authorities. All leading to reduced access, fines and even banishment

Additionally, please leave no graffiti, stickers or trash out here. If you want to leave a mark, create it digitally with pictures and memories to share with your friends and family. Or better yet, post a ride report of your adventure to share with others.

Keep your speed in check. The RCMP (BC provincial police force) are usually merciless when it comes to issuing speeding tickets, especially to US licensed drivers. Up to 15 km/h over the speed limit is often tolerated but above that, paying a fine is almost certain. Excessive speed can have consequences in other ways as well. Always read the road as there are numerous and unexpected obstacles on this route. The terrain varies from rocks, ruts, slides, sand, mud, wildlife, etc. and can appear quite suddenly with little to no notice.

There's a saying that goes *"I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow-creature; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."*

Unit Conversions and Currency

As this is Canada, all distances will be published in km. Below are some useful conversion factors. Typical measure of fuel economy in Canada is liters/100km.

1 km = 0.621372 mile

1 mile = 1.60934 kilometer

1 liter = 0.264172 US liquid gallon

1 US liquid Gallon = 3.78541 Liter

1 Miles per Gallon = 0.425144 Kilometers per Liter

1 Kilometers per Liter = 2.35215 Miles per Gallon

1 Miles per Gallon = 235.215 Liter per 100 Kilometers

1 Liter per 100 Kilometers = 235.214 miles per gallon

Please note that USD to Canadian dollar varies on any given day. If using a credit card from the United States (or elsewhere), please check with your provider to see if there are any foreign transaction fees when using a Credit Card in Canada. Some providers charge a percentage of the transaction amount as a transaction fee. Many institutions calculate the transaction fee based on the exchange rate the day of the transaction, while others may calculate the fee based at the closing billing date. However, many credit unions wave this fee or reimburse users of all transaction fees. It is worth checking on this to save hard earned money for farkles and gear, rather than making bankers rich(er).

Note the Canadian \$1 coin is called a loonie and the Canadian \$2 coin is known as a toonie
All other coins, bills, etc. are self-explanatory.



It is also a good idea to get Canadian cash once entering Canada. Many places along the route (campgrounds, lodges, reserve stores, etc..) may not

be able to process credit cards as there is limited to no internet access out in the bush. Don't expect cellular phone service out there as well. Also note, many providers of services out in the bush have been known to provide a substantial discount for cash. Just saying 😊 It is worth asking.

More Upon Route Release

Coming Soon

Life is too short ...

**GET OUT THERE!
OR
GET OUT OF THE WAY!**

