

FRI 26.8.

## ALBERTA



**Motto:** *Fortis et liber (Latin)* - "Strong and free"

**Capitol:** Edmonton

**Tree:** Lodgepole pine

It was a lovely morning. Not cold at all, and sunny. This place really looked more like a paradise to us.



*I visited this good looking golf course, which was next to our camping field, or rather a part of it.*



*Driving north the first Canadian village we had stopped at was called **Radium Hot Springs**.*

With approximately 800 people and situated in the East Kootenay region of British Columbia, it is informally and commonly called **Radium**. The hot springs were named after the radioactive element when an analysis of the water showed that it contained small traces of radon which is a decay product of radium. The hot springs complex offers two large pools for bathing.



At Radium we exchanged our USD into CAD, and it was rather a surprise when the bank clerk, young woman, spoke Slovak to us. VP had a short chat with her.



Also, I met and talked to two cyclists-Chris from Devon, England and his Dutch girlfriend, who were doing a 12 months tour of USA; today, when everything can be found on internet even these people have a link on this address.

I posted my last postcards to CR from the local Post Office, and we bought a pass to 3 NP in Canada at 49.30CAD.

Shortly after leaving Radium, when we had stopped to take pictures of some river scenery, I noticed this cyclist sitting on a bridge concrete railing and having a meal. He was an American and his name was Chris. His meal was a tortilla with some tin and vegetables. Christ was a good laugh! I enjoyed talking to him, and once again, his greeting was "Have a good day."



As we continued towards our next destination-Lake Louise- we went through some marvelous landscape: rivers, mountains, trees, flowers, simply nature in its best.

We had stopped several times to take pictures. If it were not for VP who was always in a hurry (because of his ambitious travelling plans), I would have enjoyed stopping for a cup of tea. Making it and drinking it in the middle of this wilderness.

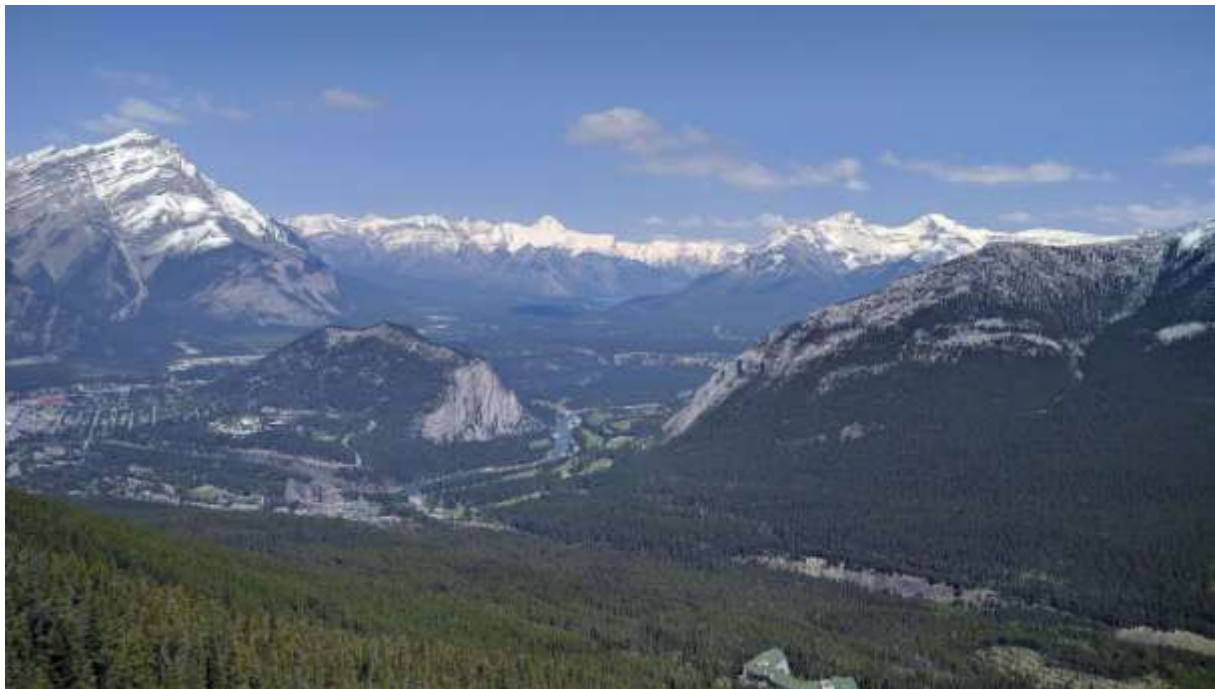


Our today's location **Lake Louise** is situated in the middle of **Banff National Park**, in the Canadian Rockies. The picture below is from this vast and gorgeous nature reserve.

It is Canada's oldest national park, established in 1885 in the Rocky Mountains. The park, located 110–180 kilometers west of Calgary in the province of Alberta, encompasses 6,641 square kilometers of mountainous terrain, with numerous glaciers and ice fields, dense coniferous forest, and alpine landscapes.

The Icefields Parkway extends from Lake Louise, connecting to Jasper National Park in the north. Provincial forests and Yoho National Park are neighbours to the west, while Kootenay National Park is located to the south and Kananaskis Country to

the southeast. The main commercial centre of the park is the town of Banff, in the Bow River valley.



Banff National Park has a subarctic climate with three ecoregions, including montane, subalpine, and alpine. The forests are dominated by Lodgepole pine at lower elevations and Engelmann spruce in higher ones below the treeline, above which is primarily rocks and ice. Mammal species such as the grizzly, cougar, wolverine, elk, bighorn sheep and moose are found, along with hundreds of bird species. Reptiles and amphibians are also found but only a limited number of species have been

recorded. The mountains are formed from sedimentary rocks which were pushed east and over newer rock strata between 80 and 55 million years ago. Over the past few million years, glaciers have at times covered most of the park, but today are found only on the mountain slopes though they include the Columbia Icefield, the largest uninterrupted glacial mass in the Rockies. Erosion from water and ice had carved the mountains into their current shapes.



Banff National Park is the most visited Alberta tourist destination and one of the most visited national parks in North America, with more than three million tourists annually. Lake Louise, a hamlet located 54 km northwest of the town of Banff, is home to the landmark Chateau Lake Louise at the edge of Lake Louise, which was named after the Princess Louise Caroline Alberta (1848–1939), the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria, and the wife of John

Campbell, the 9th Duke of Argyll, who was the Governor General of Canada from 1878 to 1883.

We arrived at Lake Louise camp shortly after midday, and judging from hundreds of visitors around us, we knew we would be in trouble with finding a campsite. At the entrance gate to the camp our fears were confirmed – all sites were fully booked. Begging just for one night, our luck smiled at us once more, yes, for one night, there was a site at CAD 25.00. With all comfort – hot showers, electricity, even an electric fence to keep the wild animals out. As soon as we had marked our site with a label, we had a quick bite to eat, and left without any delays for **Lake Louise**.



VP became upset that there was no place to park at the main car park and said, that he wanted to get out rather than drive back and look for an empty space along the road, which could have been 1-2 km. So, I stopped the car and let him go. I then drove back to the village, looking for a place at a roadside, until I found a gap to park my car.

I picked my backpack, food and drink, walking boots and walking stick and went back to lake, where there were hundreds of tourists. I chose

the longest trail leading to **Plain of Six Glacier Teahouse**. First I followed the **Lake Agnes Trail** as far as **Mirror Lake** then I turned left towards **Six Glacier Plain**.



*Mirror Lake*

I arrived to Plain of Six Glaciers quite exhausted, and as there was a teahouse, I thought I would have a cup of coffee. However, they wanted 9 CAD for a cup, so I gave it a miss and drank my water. On the way back I followed the same trail as I came on my way to here. But after about half an hour, I found out that it was a mistake, I was walking much too high and still climbing while below me I could see some walkers walking along a much easier trail leading to the shore of Lake Louise. So at a nearest possible way I took a short cut (being fully aware of bears I made noise with my walking sticks, as the trick with a plastic bottle filled with stones was not possible). This short cut trail was descending very steeply down to **Lake Louise Lakeshore Trail**. When I got onto this trail walking became much easier. My mistake was walking without a map.



*The Plain of Six Glaciers Tea House*

This tea house was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1924. The idea was suggested by Edward Feuz, a CPR Swiss Guide, as a rest stop for guests on their way to the Abbot Pass Hut. The main structure is a two-story stone building surrounded by wooden verandas that serves as the tea house. Three surrounding cabins that were built in 1927 once served overnight guests but now only house staff. The CPR invested \$2,500 to build the establishment and licensed it to the Feuz family for operation. When the CPR began to sell or demolish all of their backcountry lodges in the 1950s, they hung on to the tea house until 1960. The tea house is now owned and run by Joy Kimball. Along the lake I could hear some ominous noises, similar to bangs given by aircrafts when breaking a sound barrier, but this sound was coming from the ground. People, including myself, stopped and looked at the glacier, as that was the cause of the noise- melting and breaking.



*On the way to the Plain of Six Glaciers Tea House (taking the upper trail)*

The trail itself was pretty tough to do and on my way back I made a bad turn, so it became even longer. I reckon I walked 14 km / 4.5 hours. When I came to our car, VP was not there, so I went back to our camp on my own. It was about 6 p.m. and VP came about 1 hour later. In the meantime I had a shower and cooked myself a meal. It was a hard day for me. We went to bed at about 8.30 p.m.

### **Lake Louise**



The emerald colour of the water comes from rock flour carried into the lake by melt-water from the glaciers that overlook the lake. The lake has a surface of 0.8 km<sup>2</sup>.

The nearby Lake Louise Ski Area, formerly known as Lake Louise Mountain Resort, offers amenities for alpine and Cross-country skiing, as well as heli-skiing and snowboarding. The lake



can be used for ice fishing and ice skating in winter, while the surrounding area offers settings for snowmobiling, dog sledding, snowshoeing and ice climbing.

The Lake Louise Ski Resort is the first stop on the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup circuit, and the only place in Canada where this event is held. The event, also known as the **Lake Louise Winterstart World Cup**, is described by Alpine Canada as "Canada's highest-profile alpine ski race", and attracts high-profile downhill skiers from around the globe - such as four-time World Cup champion, Lindsey Vonn. The races began at the resort in 1980 and have run consecutively since 1993, and is one of the select few that hold both the men's and ladies speed events on the World Cup circuit and plays host to the first World Cup downhill and super-G races of the season.

*Lake Louise is: (a) Hamlet; (b) Lake; (c) Chateau*



*An interesting picture from this location: Wildlife overpass just before the hamlet Lake Louise*

Up till now I had driven 6358 km.

SAT 27.8.

It was rather cold that morning once again, which was no surprise, as the camp is 1600 m above sea level. According to records, Lake Louise experiences a subarctic climate. Annual snowfall averages 3.3m and winter temperatures reaching below  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  have been recorded. Summers consist of frosty mornings and crisp, cool days. Snow can occur in any month of the year.

We left Banff National Park and headed for Yoho National Park to see **Takakkaw Falls**, so back again to **British Columbia**. The highest point of this fall is 302 metres from its base, making it the 45th tallest waterfall in eastern British Columbia.



"Takakkaw", loosely translated from Cree, means something like "it is magnificent". The falls are fed by the Daly Glacier, which is part of the Waputik Icefield. The glacier keeps the volume of the falls up during the warm summer months, and it is a tourist attraction, particularly in late spring after the heavy snow melts, when the falls are at peak condition.

We had arrived rather early, so it was quite easy to find a place for parking (which in about two hours later was a lot more difficult).

As usual, we had taken different trails. VP preferred to stay at the river level, while I decided to walk up the opposite mountain to "The Magnificent" and see the Daly Glacier, its water supplier.

From the car park I walked along the stream as far as to Whiskeyjack Lodge, and then followed the Ictail trail, some 2.6km upwards. From Takakkaw Falls to Whiskeyjack it was 1.1km, so all together I had walked  $3.7 \times 2 = 7.4\text{km}$ .



*As I climbed on the opposite mountain, gradually I could see more and more of the Daly Glacier*





*"Have a good day!" The mother was carrying a baby, or was it another dog? I had forgotten*

Today, after all those lovely days, we had experienced rain, so, our waterproof became useful after all. I was back at our car before VP came, and cooked myself a soup. Talking about cooking, I had been using our gas-cooker every day (morning/evening), but my friend was not that fussy, and the only time he would be interested in using it was when temperature dropped below zero, when he'd have hot tea. So, he did virtually no cooking and ate his food cold.



*Driving west we stopped at Emerald Lake in the Canadian Rockies*

The **Emerald Lake** is located in Yoho National Park and is the largest of Yoho's 61 lakes and ponds, as well as one of the park's premier tourist attractions. A 5.2 km hiking trail circuits the lake, the first half of which is accessible to wheelchairs and strollers. During the summer months, canoe rentals are available; in the winter, the lake is a popular cross country skiing destination.

Due to its high altitude, the lake is frozen from November until June. The vivid turquoise colour of the water, caused by powdered limestone, is most spectacular in July as the snow melts from the surrounding mountains.

All trains, both in US and Canada, were always immensely long, and although they were often pulled by more than three engines, they moved very slowly. It was not uncommon that the engine driver waved to onlookers (like us).



Late afternoon our main business was to look for the nearest camp. And more often than not, that game was testing our nerves. And from time to time we did have an argument about it, as our opinions might differ. But as soon as we settled down we were fine again, because as I said, our bed-time was always early, and once we got inside our sleeping bag, we were gone.



That evening we found two forest camps at Loop Brook, both were empty, damp and dark, and rather close to each other. So very quickly we chose one of them, as the darkness was falling very fast. To our surprise, another camping party arrived next to us. It was a young family with two little children. Behind their car they towed a little caravan.

The man was Swiss born with his Canadian wife (they met in Ireland) and their two small kids were 3 years old boy and 1.5 year old girl. In the log cabin (see the photo) there was a fire-place, and as it was damp and raining I thought let's have a fire. Swiss

man showed me how to make a fire without kindling wood; he used his larger size Swiss knife making splits into a log side (just like a hair-comb). I also noticed that in the wood shed there were several bits of birch bark and that should be easy to make a fire with! So, using few pieces of birch bark I lit the fire in the wood burning stove and then put on the wood prepared by Johnas (Swiss chap). We all had a lovely evening sitting around the fire while it was raining outside. I was telling him about Einsiedeln, Switzerland, where 40 years ago, I went for a cross-country skiing race (he knew the place, so did his wife). He opened a bottle of excellent Canadian red wine MERLOT CABERNET 2013 (Produced by Winery A Tribute to the Okanagan Valley, BC VQA), and we all had a most enjoyable evening! Camp at CAD 15.00 including the firewood.



We had done 6581 km so far.