Hay River
Northwest Territories

Visitors guide
For all your accommodation needs

Tastefully furnished apartments with river views in the heart of downtown Hay River.

Lake, beach and harbour views. Northern Lights tours in season.

Historic B&B in Old Town. Perfect for small retreats with boardroom.

For information & reservations
Phone: (867) 874-2233
Fax: (867) 874-2259
www.greenwayrealty.ca
101-31 Capital Drive
Hay River, NT X0E 1G2
The best source of information about Hay River is the Visitor Information Centre. There’s an abundance of written information, along with maps and guides. But the greatest treasures there are the staff. They are local residents who really know the area and can help you find what you need for your Northern adventure. The Visitor Information Centre is on the highway, just before you get to downtown Hay River.

Summer: Open every day 9 am to 9 pm
Winter: Centre is closed.
   Stop by Town Hall
   73 Woodland Drive
   Mon-Fri 8:30 to noon and 1 to 5

Tourist information is also available at the 60th Parallel and at the Enterprise Visitor Information Resource Centre.

useful numbers

Police ............................ 874-1111
Fire ............................... 874-2222
Ambulance ....................... 874-9333
Hospital .......................... 874-7100
Crisis Line ....................... 874-6626
Safe Home ....................... 874-3311
Forest Fire ....................... 800-661-0800
Marine/Air Rescue ............. 800-267-7270
Town Hall ....................... 874-6522
Arena ............................ 874-6502
Pool .............................. 874-6507
Library ........................... 874-6486
Chamber of Commerce .......... 874-2565
Medical Clinic ................... 874-6596
Dental Clinic ..................... 874-6663
Museum ......................... 874-3872
   (summer) 874-3872
   (winter) 874-3539
Golf Clubhouse .................. 874-6290
Travel north.
The air is clean, the water pure and the road wide open.
getting here...

Air Service

When planning your trip to Hay River, you must consider the possibilities of seeing the land from above, as it was seen by the rugged bush pilots who helped build the north.

SCHEDULED FLIGHTS

With regular return flights from Edmonton, you can leave your car, or make your connection from any major city in North America. Following a 1½-hour flight, you’ll be immersed in everything that Hay River has to offer.

Once in Hay River, there are daily scheduled flights to Yellowknife where connections can be found to Inuvik, Whitehorse and other northern destinations.

CHARTER SERVICES

Charter air services are available to destinations throughout Northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. These include opportunities to take excursions for sightseeing or fishing, on the historic float and ski planes that are common to the north.

Highways

DRIVE YOURSELF

A smooth highway connects Hay River to Edmonton and Grande Prairie, this is an excellent way to see the north at your own speed. Perfect for RV’s or tow-behind campers, this driving trip is full of opportunities to view wildlife, camp, fish and see the landscape change from pastureland and prairie to the icons of the sub-arctic landscape, weather-beaten spruce, tall wispy birch trees and an abundance of rivers and flowing creeks.

TAKE THE BUS

Daily service from Edmonton and other points in Alberta makes for a budget-friendly and easy-going alternative to accessing the northern experience.

Once in Hay River there is a full taxicab service, scheduled bus service to some other northern communities, and opportunities to rent a vehicle to help you get around town, or explore the surrounding communities.

ROAD INFORMATION

The Government of the Northwest Territories’ Department of Transportation provides updated daily road reports and information on ferry crossings and winter ice bridges through a toll-free phone service at 1-800-661-0750 or you can visit their web site at www.gov.nt.ca

Distance to Hay River from:
Grande Prairie, AB ...... 769 km
Edmonton, AB ........... 1063 km
Peace River, AB .......... 613 km
NWT/Alberta border .... 118 km
Fort Smith ................. 280 km
Yellowknife ............... 480 km
Hay River plays such a crucial role in transportation in the North that it has earned the nickname “Hub of the North.” It serves as a barge port for the entire Mackenzie River system from Great Slave Lake and down the river all the way to the Beaufort Sea in the Western Arctic. Catch a glimpse of the barges, the tugboats, and the bright red and white Canadian Coast Guard vessels that ply the river, lake and ocean.

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quick Hay River facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact:</th>
<th>What it means:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population in 2006 census:</td>
<td>3,648</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friendly town</td>
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<tr>
<td>July Mean Temp:</td>
<td>High 21.7°C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low 10.8°C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>warm summers</td>
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<td>January Mean Temp:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low -30.5°C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>solid ice for fishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean annual precipitation:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>just enough to keep the rivers flowing</td>
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<td>Mean annual rainfall:</td>
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<td>great snowmobiling</td>
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How does a ‘shore lunch’ with freshly caught walleye sound? That experience is waiting for you right on the banks of the Hay River. With the community’s roots firmly embedded in the commercial fishing industry, the Hub of the North is the ideal spot to begin your fishing adventure.

Spincasters start their fishing fun as soon as there’s enough open water to cast a line. The season lasts all summer long and well into the fall.
FISHING LICENSES
If you are between the ages of 16 and 65, you must carry an NWT fishing license with you every time you go fishing. Licenses are available in a variety of locations within Hay River, 7 days a week.

GO BARBLESS
Anglers in the NWT are prohibited from using barbed hooks. Barbless hooks can be purchased in most places that sell fishing tackle, or you can bend the barbs flat with a pair of pliers.
In the summer, fishing on the Hay River begins shortly after the ice moves out, usually in May, peaks in mid-June and lasts all summer. Walleye is the catch of the day, although it is not uncommon to hook a good size Northern Pike during your expedition.

RIGHT DOWNTOWN
You don’t have to leave town to experience some great days on the water. Launch your vessel on Vale Island at the Porritt Landing boat launch, rent a canoe and take a leisurely paddle down the river, or simply cast from shore. Whichever way you choose, the experience and the fish will leave a lasting impression.

Some of the most popular spots for local anglers are just downstream from the West Channel Bridge, the docks on Vale Island accessing the West Channel, and just south of the Northern Transportation Company Ltd’s office headquarters on the Mackenzie Highway.

OR JUST AROUND THE CORNER...
The abundance of lakes, rivers and creeks in the South Slave Region offers the opportunities for anglers to enjoy a different experience each time they want to get outdoors. The map below outlines some of the most common fishing spots for local fishermen as well as the types of fish that are commonly caught in that area.

We invite you to use Hay River as your base camp and explore the land. In addition to Walleye and Northern Pike, your trip to Hay River may include landing a trophy Lake Trout, Whitefish, Goldeye, Inconnu or the feisty Arctic Grayling.

If you’re in search of a more remote experience, check out one of the NWT’s many outfitters for a guided fishing tour on the Great Slave Lake, to the Legendary East Arm or other remote locations. There’s something for everyone!

The fish icons on this map show some of the hot spots around Hay River. But your best bet is to stop at a local shop and ask where they’re biting.
be our guests...

Hotels, Motels and Apartment Suites
Hay River boasts plenty of accommodation options for your visit. Newly renovated hotel and motel rooms, beautiful apartment suites or scenic, friendly bed and breakfasts are available. Some hotels even provide discounts for groups and sports teams travelling to the community.

Camping
If it’s the outdoor experience you’re looking for, Hay River and area has campgrounds to suit the taste of the variety of campers that come to visit. Traditionally, campgrounds in the Northwest Territories are open from May 15 to September 15 each year.

STAY OVERNIGHT
Within the town limits, you will find two camping facilities available for the RV or tent campers.

Hay River Territorial Campground – Located on Vale Island near the public beach, this campground provides a playground, trails, shelters, showers, firewood, electrical outlets, washrooms and a dump station. There are 36 sites, and most of them are pull-throughs.

Hay River Golf Club – 10 RVs can be accommodated in stalls at the Golf Course for those campers wishing to make easy access to the amazing Hay River Golf Course a priority. The surrounding forest provides an ideal location for the adventurous camper. Below are some of the campgrounds closest to Hay River.

60th Parallel Campground – Your entry point to the Northwest Territories. This campground boasts a staffed visitors centre, scenic trails, boat launch, showers, washrooms, firewood and a dump station.

Twin Falls Gorge Park – located 50 km south of Hay River at Louise Falls, this campground has scenic walking trails along the Gorge, playground, shelters, firewood, washrooms and a dump station. There are 21 sites, all with power.
MORE CAMPGROUNDS...

Lady Evelyn Falls Park – located just off Highway #1 near the community of Kakisa, this park provides 13 campsites, scenic trails, shelters, firewood, showers and washrooms. There’s a boat launch nearby.

Little Buffalo River Territorial Park – on Highway #6 near Fort Resolution, this campground provides shelters, firewood, boat launch and washrooms.

Sambaa Day Falls Park – this park is a little further away, on Highway #1 about two-thirds of the way to Fort Simpson. It is beautifully perched on the shores of the Trout River and has most amenities.

DAY USE AREAS

There are a number of day use areas, perfect for a day trip from Hay River. Most are maintained by the Government of the Northwest Territories and are located in areas with historical significance.

McNallie Creek Picnic Area – located along highway #1 from Hay River to Yellowknife, this picnic area is complete with walking trails, historical display and washrooms.

Kakisa River – located alongside Highway #1 from Hay River to Yellowknife, this scenic spot provides a great spot for some fishing or just enjoying the outdoors.
How were they formed...

To understand how the waterfalls and the gorge were formed, we have to go back about 360 million years to the Devonian Era, when this area was covered by a warm, brackish inland sea. The warm water supported the growth of an abundance of small plants and animals. As the creatures died, they fell to the sea bottom, forming layers one upon another. This process created the limestone rock formations found here today. Whilst one sea environment produced a layer of hard rock, other layers were softer, and more prone to erosion. Specifically for Alexandra and Louise Falls, the Hay River has cut a deep gorge into the softer layers of rock, but has been resisted by the harder rock, which is where the waterfalls have formed. It’s a great place to find fossils.

It’s easy to understand why the Dene found the waterfalls near Great Slave Lake to be places of spiritual power. The thunder of the falling water, its mesmerizing effects and the beauty cannot be denied.
ALEXANDRA FALLS - The first set of falls you reach as you drive north from the 60th Parallel is a dramatic one (previous page). Located inside Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park, Alexandra Falls boasts a day-use area and great viewing platforms. A hiking trail starts at Alexandra Falls and travels to Louise Falls and Escarpment Creek. In August of 2003, an American kayaker deliberately paddled his craft over Alexandra Falls, and lived to tell about it. At 34.7 metres (114 feet), it was an unofficial world record for kayaking. The impact knocked him out of his kayak and ripped off his helmet. In September 2007 two more Americans became the second and third kayakers to successfully make the plunge. While the first was thrown clear of his craft on impact, the second one over landed right side up in his boat - the first person to successfully stick the landing.

There’s a full service campsite here.

ESCRPMENT CREEK - This creek at the north end of Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park cascades down the slope in a series of rapids and then a playful spray over the wall.

LADY EVELYN FALLS - About an hour’s drive west of Enterprise is the Kakisa River. This river boasts a great arctic Grayling fishery, but only downstream of the stunningly perfect Lady Evelyn Falls (seen below). There’s a campground here, on the road to the Dene village of Kakisa. Walk from the campground parking lot down to a viewing area, where signs explain the geology. Then follow another trail down to the bottom of the falls and the river’s edge. The falls are curtain-like, and beautiful all year long, even when frozen.

SAMBAA DEH FALLS - About 240 km west of Enterprise, the Trout River flows under the Mackenzie Highway. The territorial park here lets you camp beside one of the most beautiful rivers in the territory. The clear water rumbles through narrow clefts in several sets of falls. There’s good fishing just downstream of the falls, too.

LITTLE BUFFALO RIVER FALLS - This small fall into a picturesque pool is the centrepiece of a day use area, approximately 50 km northwest of Fort Smith. A short distance from the site is the boat launch to the Little Buffalo River. A forest fire burned over much of the land here in 1981, but it has re-grown quickly.

MCNALLIE FALLS - Approximately 30 km North of Enterprise, this little fall tumbles into a small bowl. A small picnic area is situated beside the Mackenzie Highway. There is also a short trail that leads to the 17-meter waterfall. At the viewing platform above the falls, you can find out how the creek got its name and why. Look for the cliff swallows that nest in the walls of the ravine that the falls cascade into.

(For your own safety, please stay on the paths as you walk around the steep cliffs that surround the falls.)
Bordering Hay River, two First Nations bands proudly keep their rich oral, musical and spiritual heritage alive: the West Point First Nation, and K’atlo’dëeche (pronounced “hat-low-day”) First Nation. The values and traditions of both communities provide a strong influence on the town.

**Dene Cultural Institute or Yamozha Kue**
The Yamozha Kue works to preserve Dene culture, and to share it with both Dene and non-Dene seekers. The unique building, located on the Hay River Reserve, blends traditional materials and shapes, with modern convenience. It was designed on the advice of Dene elders. The legends of Yamoria, a figure of importance in Dene history, are told through the architecture. The centre is a nexus for Dene people in the NWT, as well as those in Northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C.

**The Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre**
Watch a drum dance, browse through the art gallery, or learn how to sew your own moccasins. Tourists are more than welcome at this cultural meeting place. Youth from out of town can learn about local traditions daily, at the summer culture program. Activities for elders, such as teas and bingos, round out the SEFC’s programming.

Tourists and residents alike are invited to participate in the festivals hosted by local First Nations:
- Treaty Day - June 11th
- Aboriginal Day - June 21st
- The fiddling and jigging contest, held near Labour Day
- K’amba Winter Carnival held at the beginning of March annually
- Feasts and drum dances, held on a regular basis, are usually open to whoever wants to join in.

Discover the rich culture of the Dene (pronounced “deh-nay”) - the people who have nurtured this land since time immemorial.
CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR - For a wonderful reminder of your visit to Hay River, take home a pair of hand-sewn hide moccasins, gloves, or mukluks. Try on a fringed and beaded vest or jacket. The rich scent of wood smoke will carry you back to your Northern adventure. Hides are still tanned by hand, using techniques as old as history itself. Then, they are decorated with beads, embroidery or tufting in patterns handed down for generations.

MOOSE HAIR TUFTING - Tufting is a painstaking form of embroidery perfected by many women in the Hay River area. Working with infinite patience, the craftswomen shape dyed moose hair into three-dimensional designs on a dark background. Symmetrical flowers are a favorite motif, but younger women are moving ahead with new and powerful subjects.

DRUMS - The drum is the heart of Aboriginal ceremony, beating insistently to propel the age-old steps of dancers. The technique of drum making combines skill with science. Whether a drum is made in the Dene or Inuvialuit style, it is fashioned of rawhide, stretched on a round willow frame and tempered over the fire to have maximum resonance when struck.
K’atl’odeeche First Nation
The Hay River Reserve

Drive down the winding gravel road across the river from town, into the first and only reserve in the NWT, established in 1974. The thriving community of about 300 lives mostly in the New Village, across from downtown Hay River. Some families still live in the picturesque old village, at the mouth of the Hay.

The Old Village
Long before contact, the Dene (pronounced “deh-neh”, and meaning “people” in the Slavey language) used the site at the river mouth for summer fish camps.

In the 1890s’, Chief Chiatlo brought a group to this site, to settle the first permanent village on the Hay River. The Anglican Mission followed, building a church and mission school later that decade. The Roman Catholic Church, trading posts and RCMP swelled the community over the next years.

The picturesque churches still overlook the river at this ancient gathering place.

Most families moved down the river, to the New Village after the 1963 flood washed over the Old Village. Some stayed, in what is now one of the most natural and beautiful neighbourhoods in the NWT.

The New Village
When the Old Village suffered damage during the 1963 flood, energies were directed into developing a new area that would be less prone to flooding.

In the four decades since then, the New Village has boomed. With a supermarket, gas bar, band office building, school and gym, community hall, an alcohol/drug treatment center, the Dene Cultural Institute, improved housing and a series of business ventures, K’atl’odeeche looks forward to a bright future.

History continues to be made in the New Village. Negotiations for a Deh Cho aboriginal self-government; public forums on the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project; workshops on language and cultural revitalization all take place regularly at the Chief Lamalice Complex.
events and festivals

Here are a few of the major festivals and events that take place in Hay River on an annual basis, the majority of which are organized entirely by volunteers. For more local events and dates, check with the Visitor’s Centre, or pick up a copy of The Hub newspaper.

K’AMBA CARNIVAL - hosted by the Hay River Dene Band on the K’atl’odeeche (Hay River Reserve). This event happens in early March annually, and includes a variety of traditional activities including dog sled races, axe throwing, tea boiling, moose calling and more. There’s also a talent show and dances.

LOBSTER FEST - The Knights of Columbus host what has become one of the best-attended events each year in Hay River – the Annual Giant Lobster Fest. Created based on the strong east coast influence in Hay River, lobsters are flown in for this annual treat. Traditionally, this event takes place at the end of May.

FISHERMAN’S WHARF OUTDOOR MARKET – from Mid June to Mid September, the Fisherman’s Wharf on Vale Island becomes the Saturday morning destination for both residents and visitors. With a wide array of foods, fresh fish and local artwork on sale, this has quickly become one of the top weekend destination spots in Hay River. The Wharf is open from 10 am – 2 pm each Saturday.

CANADA DAY – July 1st of each year provides the perfect reason to celebrate the culture of our country. Parade, floats, kids activities, and much more. It’s a Great opportunity for the town to come together, and have a little fun in the early part of the summer.

FAMILY PICNIC AND FISHING DERBY - Enter a good old-fashioned fish derby as a part of the Kiwanis Family Day in the middle of July each year.
If golf is your game of choice, then we have the perfect course for you. Whether you play just a few rounds or participate in one of the many tournaments scheduled through the season, your passion for play is sure to be fulfilled.

The Hay River Golf Club, the only grass course North of 60, lies 10 kilometres south of the Town of Hay River on NWT Highway 2. It hugs the shore of the Hay River, and offers beautiful views of the river. The tall, white aspens that line the course perfectly accent the beautiful green of the fairways.

This is a nine-hole course with beautiful fairways and greens and a clubhouse facility, which includes equipment you might need, either for rent or purchase. You’ll find everything you need there whether it’s golf balls or gloves, a long cool drink, a meal, clubs or a place to sit back and relax after few hours on the greens.

Congratulations and thanks are in order to the Hay River Elks Club and many other volunteers whose tireless work keeps both the course and the trails in such excellent shape.
A Unique Golfing Experiences

Golfers are used to obstacles on the fairways. But in addition to the usual water hazards and sand traps, golfers north of 60 have a few other challenges.

Ravens: These intelligent birds enjoy golf as much as the next guy. Their speciality is collecting golf balls. They’re attracted to bright objects and they’ve been known to steal balls left on the fairway too long.

Foxes: A family of foxes at the course has also taken to stealing balls. But unless you’re about to make a birdie, it’s hard to get upset with these delightful furballs.

Bugs: Advances in bug-zapping technology keep the mosquitoes and black flies to a minimum at the Hay River Golf Course, but it never hurts to carry some insect repellent.
Hunting expeditions go on virtually year-round in the Northwest Territories. In this region of boreal forest and plains carved by turbulent rivers, you can take part in one of sport hunting’s most unusual adventures. A Wood Bison safari here is a challenging experience, unlike any other Bison hunt in North America. All bison hunters are required to take along a local guide and take an orientation course and you’ll be glad it’s a requirement. Despite the massive size of these animals, determining the sex can be difficult, and hunters are allowed to take only bulls. Bison hunt success rates are high.

Wolf, Caribou, Black Bear, and Moose are other hunts you can experience with a licensed outfitter near the Hay River area. This is also a great starting out point for Grizzly Bear, Dall’s Sheep and Mountain Goat hunts.

Small game abounds in the Hay River area, and includes several species of grouse, as well as ptarmigan, snowshoe hares, woodchucks, porcupines and squirrels.

**RULES**

To hunt big game in the Northwest Territories you must be a local resident for a minimum of two (2) years, or you must be with a licensed outfitter.

Visitors may hunt small game without a guide. Licenses are $20 for Canadians who don’t live in the NWT and $50 for those from outside the country. Check www.gov.nt.ca/RWED/index.html for info.

In order to hunt migratory birds, such as ducks, geese, coots, rails or snipes, you must first obtain a federal migratory game bird permit and habitat conservation stamp from the post office.
get out in the Snow

Snowmobiling
Over and around pressure ridges and jagged ice on the Great Slave Lake, along the stretches of the Hay River, or out in the forest among the cut lines and wildlife trails, snowmobiles and bombardiers are a common mode of winter transportation for both business and pleasure.

In Hay River you can enjoy all seasons - especially winter, when you can snowmobile 64 km through the Hay River canyons to the spectacular Louise Falls. Pack your machine with you, or rent one when you get here. Either way this is a great mode for being able to explore parts of the land up close and personal.

Take a ride out to Pine Point, a former mining community which is now more of a ghost town awaiting snow enthusiasts with its trees and open areas.

Snowmobile Trail maps have been created by the Town of Hay River to help the recreational rider navigate through the areas surrounding the community.

For those racing enthusiasts, the Hay River Snowcross Race Association plays host to an open Snowcross race at the Hay River Speedway in late November or early December annually.
Cross Country Skiing

Once there’s enough snow on the ground, the Hay River Golf Club becomes the Hay River Nordic Ski Club and instead of wielding golf clubs, people are out on the fairways with cross country skis and possibly a rifle for the biathlon range. The club grooms 15 kilometres of trails, and more than half of that is lighted, allowing skiers to indulge their sport 24 hours a day if they so desire!

The Ski Club organizes a number of events and races throughout the season, providing a beautiful escape for residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors.

Local outfitters rent equipment if you plan on packing light for your trip.

Snowshoeing

An activity with origins in the hunting and trapping traditions in the northern wilderness, snowshoeing allows you to experience a slower pace of wandering and breathing in the fresh northern air, soaking up the beauty of the surroundings. The Ski Club provides an opportunity for snowshoe aficionados to walk on groomed trails.

For those looking for more of a challenge, the wilderness surrounding Hay River awaits. Follow the paths of others or make your own – the possibilities are endless.

Bring your own, or rent snowshoes for your whole family. It will be an unforgettable experience – and a quiet way to enjoy the beauty of the Northern Lights!

Dogsled Rides

No trip to the North would be truly complete without experiencing one of the symbols of the North, the dogsled. For decades, dogsleds were the primary means of winter travel here. Several locals still keep teams for racing, for tours and for the love of it. Races happen here during K’amba Carnival, usually the first weekend in March. Rides are available most of the season. It’s an experience you’ll never forget.
a sports town

BALL DIAMONDS - Slo-pitch and Fastball leagues and tournaments for all ages take place all summer long on the beautiful Hay River ball diamonds, and with the long days you can find residents out on the diamonds until 11 pm having some fun with friends.

B. G. SIVERTZ SPORTS CENTRE - Hay River’s multi use sport and recreation facility houses one full size arena ice surface, a three sheet curling rink, a three lane Indoor swimming pool, a small meeting room, a 200 person community hall and the Recreation Department offices.

HAY RIVER SPEEDWAY - This northern track plays host to the Hay River Speedway Association. Each summer stock car races that bring out fans who thirst for the thrill of roaring engines and drivers navigating tight turns.

MUCH MORE - Hay River is very much a sports-oriented town. A multitude of other sports, from shooting to yoga, are available for athletes of all ages. Call the Recreation Department at Town Hall (874-6522) for more information on local sports and tournaments.
Hay River’s trails offer a wide variety of hiking experiences. For more information on trails in the area, see the map in the middle of this booklet, or, for even more detail, pick up a larger version of the same map, published by The Hub, at the Visitors Information Centre or Town Hall.

Here are some of the most popular:

**OXBOW TRAIL:** Hay River hosts an extension of the Trans-Canada Trail. The Connector runs nine kilometres from downtown to the shore of Great Slave Lake.

A small parking lot and a dock for canoeists is located at the West Channel end of the trail. Canoeists can travel the length of the Snye, a drainage system that winds through the middle of Vale Island. Hikers can follow the edge of the water system for a few kilometres, then turn into the boreal forest, keeping an eye out for birds, rabbits, lynx and other wildlife.

You can step onto this trail at several locations, including 105th St., the corner of 100th St and 102nd Ave., at the Vale Island Bridge, or where it crosses the Mackenzie Highway near the West Point First Nation reserve.

**KIWANIS NATURE TRAIL:** One of the oldest and most well-used trails is the Kiwanis Nature Trail. It starts at the famous purple high school, Diamond Jenness, and follows the edge of the Hay River, turning

see more on following page
hiking trails continued from previous page

to follow the West Channel of the river. It crosses the highway at the Vale Island bridge, then continues following the channel to the lake.

Both of these major trail systems have signage identifying some of the varied flora and fauna you may see during your walks.

SANDY CREEK: Stop off the highway a few kilometres east of the Junction of Highways 1 and 5 (the junction just as you come into Hay River.) There’s a place to park just west of the tiny Sandy Creek bridge. Cross the highway and follow the edge of the creek south. The trail is short, but gives you a close-up look at the work of beavers and their architectural efforts on the creek.

BOY SCOUT’S TRAIL: Enter the bush at the corner of Birch Road and Dean Drive and follow the quad and snowmobile trail. This trail can be damp at times. It eventually connects with the Kiwanis Trail.

LOUISE FALLS STAIRCASE: One of several trails in the Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park. This can be just a short jaunt. From the playground and parking lot at Louise Falls campground, head south along the river. Descend spiral staircase 138 steps to where the water roars over the steps of the fall.

ALEXANDRA FALLS TO LOUISE FALLS: Hikers on this easy 2.2 kilometre walk through the boreal forest on the edge of the Gorge are often accompanied by squirrels and grey jays. But you might not notice your animal friends as you’re struck by the beauty of the river and canyon. This trail continues on, as described below.

LOUISE FALLS TO ESCARPMENT CREEK: This trail follows the river between Louise Falls and the next campground 2.2 kilometres north at Escarpment Creek. Be sure to stop just a hundred metres down the trail to look back for a stunning view of the Louise Falls. The trail pauses at the stunning Escarpment Creek lookout before it descends towards the creek. Here, at the Escarpment Creek group campground, the trail crosses the creek on a footbridge and heads out to the southern border of the park.

SHORE WALK: Follow the road that turns west immediately before the West Channel bridge to the Lake. Walk along the shore for as long as your legs will hold you or until you have to decide whether to turn around or swim across Six Mile Creek and keep going.

“Love this country.”
- Wayne & Linda
  Bastrop, Texas

“Very nice town and super friendly. We’re loving the NWT.”
- Jill & Kevin
  Red Deer, Alberta

“Great town! Lots of sunshine!”
- Tom Budgell
  St. John’s, Newfoundland

“Came back after two other visits. We love Hay River!”
- Tom & Barb
  Long Prairie, Minnesota

www.hayriver.com
THE PURPLE SCHOOL - Diamond Jenness Secondary School, located in downtown Hay River is a must for visitors to see. DJSS was designed by architect Douglas Cardinal, built in 1971 and coloured purple at the choice of the students of the day. It is named in honour of western Arctic explorer Diamond Jenness.

INUUKSHUK - Though it may seem out of place in the boreal forest, this stone symbol was built in 1978 when the Arctic Winter Games were hosted by Hay River and Pine Point. The Inukshuk is an Inuit marker/symbol used to identify places of prosperity, traditionally for good hunting, fishing, etc. and its use dates back thousands of years. This Inukshuk reminds all of us of the huge land to which we belong and of the other aboriginal people who are part of the North, the Inuit.

THE HAY RIVER HERITAGE CENTRE - The old Hudson Bay store situated on Vale Island was donated to the Hay river museum society by NTCL and has been developed into a heritage display center. The building opened on July 1, 2000 and has been growing in collections and historical artifacts since then. The history of Hay River and this area of the NWT is rich in both human and natural events. The museum society has created displays, and exhibits to capture the stories and history.

NTCL SYNCHRO LIFT - Shipping is the raison d’etre of Hay River, and Northern Transportation Company Ltd. does all the water transport, with a system of tugs and barges that travel from Hay River down the Mackenzie River and into the Arctic Ocean. Many Arctic communities get fuel and other large goods just once a year. The Synchro Lift is a massive dry dock that lifts tugs and other ships out of the water for the winter.

COAST GUARD BASE – Responsibility for keeping the vital Mackenzie-Athabaska and Arctic Coast waterways safe for navigation lies with the crews and ships of the Hay River District of the Canadian Coast Guard. Though more than a thousand kilometres from the ocean, this base is busy during the short shipping season, maintaining more than 3,000 navigation and shore aids. The office was moved to Hay River in 1962. Three ships and a helicopter are based in Hay River. The office also handles marine communications, oil spill response, and government wharves.
For new paddlers, or those looking for a single day of fun, the flat waters of the Hay River form a leisurely route through a stunning, sub-arctic forested channel. Local outfitters will drop you and your rented canoe off, so you can enjoy a worry-free time on the river or the lake. An idyllic day trip is to paddle (or drift) from Paradise Gardens to Vale island. The outfitters will even pick you up at the end of the day. Or make it a short afternoon paddle with a trip from the Highway 5 bridge.

This is also a great shoving-off point for a trip on the Nahanni.

The town is a superb place to start – and end – your on-the-water adventure. In 2003, one man even kayaked over the Alexandra Falls! We don’t recommended this, and neither does he.

Whether you like pedal power or the throaty roar of an engine, you’ll find the perfect terrain for riding. Most local hiking trails are also suitable for cycling in the summer, so see the hiking section on Page 25. Those on all-terrain vehicles will find thousands of kilometres of untamed terrain in a land criss-crossed with seismic cutlines.
A set of binoculars and a good bird book are all you need for hours of fun spotting Hay River’s birds.

We’re on a major flyway, so 90 per cent of the NWT’s 247 known species of birds are migratory.

Birds fly to the NWT from as far away as South America, to take advantage of the vast boreal wetlands. Many birds breed only in the arctic and sub-arctic.

The most common bird in Hay River is the **Raven**. Known affectionately for destroying garbage bags and eating food out of the back of trucks and campsites, the intelligent black birds are huge and loud. Don’t let them intimidate you. The jokers appreciate it when you ‘caw’ back at them. **Ptarmigan** are most commonly seen in the winter. The white birds with puffy feathered feet sit on the highways, and are not afraid of vehicles. Be aware of ice if you choose to swerve around them.

Ruffed and spruce **grouse**, both known as “chicken” to locals, are good eatin’. They taste like commercial chicken, only richer and more flavourful - especially over a campfire. See the pages on “hunting” for licensing information.

**Local birds include:**

- Northern pintail
- Common and king eider
- Ruddy duck
- Common nighthawk
- Whimbrel
- Sanderling
- Thick billed Murre
- Great Blue Heron
- Mourning dove
- Belted Kingfisher
- Golden eagle
- Merlin
- Gyrfalcon
- Osprey
- Ruffed grouse
- Spruce grouse
- White-tailed ptarmigan
- Red-throated loon
- Whooping crane
- Water pipit
- Boreal chickadee
- Common raven
- Swamp sparrow
- Gray jay
- Varied thrush
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Double-breasted cormorant
- Northern flicker
- Hairy woodpecker
- Horned grebe
- Boreal owl
- Great Horned Owl
- Barred owl
The town of Hay River is situated directly in the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) viewing belt.

It can be seen most of the year, except when long summer days make the sky too bright. Spectacular displays are commonplace between late August and October and again in February and March.

The mysterious Aurora Borealis is a major attraction for visitors to the Hay River area. To best view the lights head just out of town or down on Vale Island, away from town streetlights. Don’t forget your camera.

Scientists explain that the lights are an electrical discharge powered by a generator composed of solar wind and the earth’s magnetosphere, hovering 100 to 200 kilometres above the North Pole. This can create as much as a trillion watts of power.

The Dene explanation is that you are in the presence of spirits.

To enhance your already spectacular experience, take a Bombardier ride with one of the local outfitters and view the lights from the middle of the vast Great Slave Lake.
a photographer’s dream...

Whether you are an amateur or a professional, Hay River is inspiring through a lens. Capture your travelling companions on film or disk, as they fish, hunt, canoe, dance a jig, or pose beside the Inukshuk.

Or, turn your eye to the beauty surrounding the town. Snap photos of the waterfalls in summer or in winter. Photograph the endless ice on Great Slave Lake, or the tiny bloom of a hardy wild rose. Seek out the blue jays and foxes which visit inside the town limits.

A good selection of film, both traditional and digital, is available in town, and the library offers a wide selection of local photography books which illuminate the photographic possibilities.
The modern communities we see today, lying on the east and west banks of the Hay River as it flows into Great Slave Lake is a far cry from what the scene would have been 800 years or so ago, when Slave Dene of the area chose sites at the mouth and a little up-stream for summer fish camps.

Archeological and traditional evidence show usage by the aboriginal people of the area of these pleasant and convenient sites. Dene tradition also records that the Hay was used as a travel-way by the Dene of the Meander River and Assumption areas of what is now northwestern Alberta.

‘Modern’ history records visits to the area on the east bank, today’s K’atl’odeeche First Nation Reserve, from the early 1800’s, though no permanent settlement took hold until 1892-93, when Chief Chiatlo brought a group to settle here, building log cabins and bringing dairy cattle around the southwest end of Great Slave Lake from Fort Providence.

Chiatlo asked for missionaries to join his people and the Anglican Church sent in Rev. Thomas Marsh in 1893. A church, residential school and nursing station became part of the settlement in the ensuing years of the last decade of that century. The Anglicans were Joined by the Roman Catholics, and by the 1930’s, not only was commercial fishing beginning to take hold, but a Hudson Bay post was established as were continued on next page
other trading ventures. By the late 1930’s, some people were living on Vale Island, on the west side of the river.

By now, too, aircraft travel had changed the isolation of northern settlements. World War II brought lasting and immense change when the U.S. Army Engineering Corps built a gravel runway on Vale Island, part of their staging process for the building of the Canol Pipeline.

With the end of the war, more attention was given to the commercial fishing potential of Great Slave Lake and more and more businesses and residents moved to the community which was developing on Vale Island, now the site of Old Town.

In the early 1960’s, Cominco took up its option for development of the lead-zinc deposits at the site of the former Pine Point Mines, 60 miles east of Hay River. The mine development was contingent upon a rail line being built; this was duly done, finishing in 1964 with a branch line to Hay River.

As well, in 1962, Canada Coast Guard selected Hay River and its abundance of good harbour/docking areas in the small delta, as main base for their operations stretching from Saskatchewan and Lake Athabasca to the Arctic coast.

In 1959, Northern Transportation Company Limited (NTCL) had moved its main operations to Hay River. With the completion of its synchrolift and maintenance facilities by 1973, as well as the establishment of local bases for major trucking companies, Hay River had indeed become the transportation ‘Hub of the North’.

In 1963 an event occurred that changed the physical growth of Hay River and its future development. Rampaging ice and water devastated Hay River during the river break-up causing serious damage. Houses were upside down, big boats were floating loose in the streets, and telephone poles were down. People were getting around by boats, canoes or anything that they could find.

In 1949, an all-weather road was completed from Grimshaw/Peace River and Hay River became the first major community in the Northwest Territories to be linked year-round by road to southern Canada.

This devastating flood with its extensive damage turned out to be somewhat of a paradox, as it led to a boom in the development of Hay River. It allowed the community to reorganize and take on added dimensions to the present day town, which continues to grow and thrive.

At the decree of the federal government, a new townsite was established on the mainland, west bank, today’s ‘New Town’.

The Town of Hay River was first incorporated in 1956, and is today, one of only six tax-based communities in the NWT. At the outset, the municipal boundaries included the Old and New Villages on the east bank.

The present municipal boundaries of Hay River extend to just south of Paradise Valley, about 28 kilometres south on Highway 2; these boundaries about those of the settlement of Enterprise. The west and north boundaries are formed by the south shore of Great Slave Lake to the west side of the mouth of the Hay River.
With Hay River, the natural hub of the north, as your starting point, you have full and easy access to many wonders of the north including:

**TWIN FALLS PARK** - One of motorists’ favourite first-stops in the north can be found on Highway 1, also known as the Waterfalls Route. Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park is a short distance from the highway service community of Enterprise. At the Twin Falls Park, a groomed walking trail connects spectacular, up-close views of Alexandra Falls and Louise Falls, as well as the steep gorge faces that line the Hay River.

**FORT SMITH** - Turn at the junction just outside of Hay River onto Highway 5 and travel the 333 kilometres (268 miles) to Fort Smith, home to pelicans and world class kayaking. Part of this road is gravel. Along the way, you’ll pass through Wood Buffalo National Park, the largest park in the country and home to the largest herd of wild bison in the world. Watch for them along the road, and be prepared to wait if they don’t feel like moving off the highway. View whooping cranes and other waterfowl at the Salt Plains lookout. If you like snakes, you’ll love the annual cycle of the red-sided garter snake. They spend a long winter hibernating underground in the karst limestone sinkholes that underlie this region. In the spring, the snakes emerge en masse from their hibernaculum (nest). They writhe together in ‘matting balls’, before they disperse into the surrounding marshlands for the summer.

See more highway destinations on next page.
KAKISA - West on Highway 1 is Kaki-sa, a tiny Dene village on the shores of Kakisa Lake. The river flowing out of the lake drops in a beautiful curtain over the Lady Evelyn Falls on its way to the Mackenzie River. There’s a nice campground at the falls, and great fishing spots for arctic grayling.

YELLOWKNIFE - The territorial capital is a five-hour drive around the Great Slave Lake, crossing the mighty Mackenzie River at Fort Providence, by ferry in summer, and by ice road in winter. There are services in Fort Providence, as well as a campground, motel, craft shops and tours. Keep travelling north through the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary, where you’re almost sure to see the giant wood bison on or near the highway. Drive carefully – they’re awfully big!

THE DEH CHO CONNECTION - One of Canada’s great driving adventures, the Deh Cho loop links the Mackenzie, Liard and Alaska Highways. It cuts a huge loop through Northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Northern British Columbia. Discover a long, lost world — rich in the lore of trappers, traders, miners and goldseekers, who stampeded through these parts not so long ago. The Deh Cho (an Aboriginal term for “big river” and the name for the Mackenzie River region) is a classic 1,800-km circle tour that follows the mighty rivers first canoed by the North’s earliest inhabitants. Since the Deh Cho Connection is one big circle tour, you can begin anywhere. Many start in Grimshaw, which is Mile Zero of the Mackenzie Highway. Or start in Dawson Creek, Mile Zero of the Alaska Highway. There are many side trips, and Hay River is a natural spot to rest and refuel both your gas tank and your soul.
at home in the woods

Hay River is nestled in a taiga plain sub-system, of the great Canadian Boreal forest. Expect to see a swampy, rolling landscape with endless reaches of short, thin trees. This ecosystem boasts the most diverse plant life in the territory.

Trembling aspen
White birch
Alpine fir
Balsam poplar
Lodgepole pine
White Pine
White and black spruce
Tamarack

The wild rose:
On the nature trails surrounding Hay River, the Rosa acicularis fills the forest with its pink blossoms. It is traditionally used on bee stings, by the local Dene. In the autumn, the bright magenta rose hips can make a lovely tea.
Sip a latte, shop for souvenirs, spend a day on self-care, re-stock your RV’s mini-fridge, or treat yourself to a dinner out in the largest NWT centre South of the lake: downtown Hay River.

Relax after a long drive or flight at one of the town’s many coffee shops. They’re great places to meet friendly people and find out what’s happening around town. And, let’s face it, it’s cold a big chunk of the year; here, so we do coffee right!

Find the perfect gift for friends and family back home at one of downtown’s many gift shops. From moccasins, to made-in-the-Arctic tea, to t-shirts, sculpture and gift soaps, you’re sure to bring home a one-of-a-kind memory.

Three grocery stores plus seasonal fish and produce stands help road-tripping guests go that extra mile. All foods that are normally available in the South are available in Hay River. Specialty items can usually be ordered through the stores, and local delicacies, including fresh fish, are available. A drug store with full pharmacy will handle your health with care.

A great pick-me-up for travellers can be as simple as a haircut. Hay River’s salons and barber shop offer professional service and up-to-the-minute style. Manicures and pedicures, massage, reflexology, cosmetics and tanning make this town feel 10 times its size.

Restaurants feature local cuisine, such as whitefish and caribou. Other tastes include upscale dining, Chinese food, weekday lunch and Sunday brunch buffets, subs to go, and a multi-cultural spread every Saturday in the summer, at Fishermen’s Wharf.

Whether you left home without a toothbrush (we’ve got those), or want to find a once-in-a-lifetime Northern treasure, Downtown Hay River is worth the trip!

**Service clubs**

Hay River is home to branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, Kiwanis, Elks, Rotary, Lions, Toastmasters and more.

Check the Hay River Phone Directory, available at your hotel, the Visitor’s Centre, Town Hall or the Hub newspaper office for current contact numbers.
Hay River Ski Club & Golf Course 15 km
Paradise Valley 24 km

Snowmobile Trails
To Point Roche
And Enterprise (55km)
Start at Speedway
See Town of Hay River Snowmobile Map

Kátlod’eeche First Nation
(Original town site)

West Point Canoe Dock & Skating Trail

West Channel Fishing Village
(New Village)

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ISLAND A

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The Soaring Eagle Friendship administers the following programs:

• Aboriginal Urban Youth Summer Opportunities Program (AUY SOP)
• Annual Youth Hunting Trip
• Tutoring Class
• Cultural Activities
• Family Activities
• Elder’s/Senior’s Activities
• Volunteering in the Community
• Food Bank
• Special Events
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