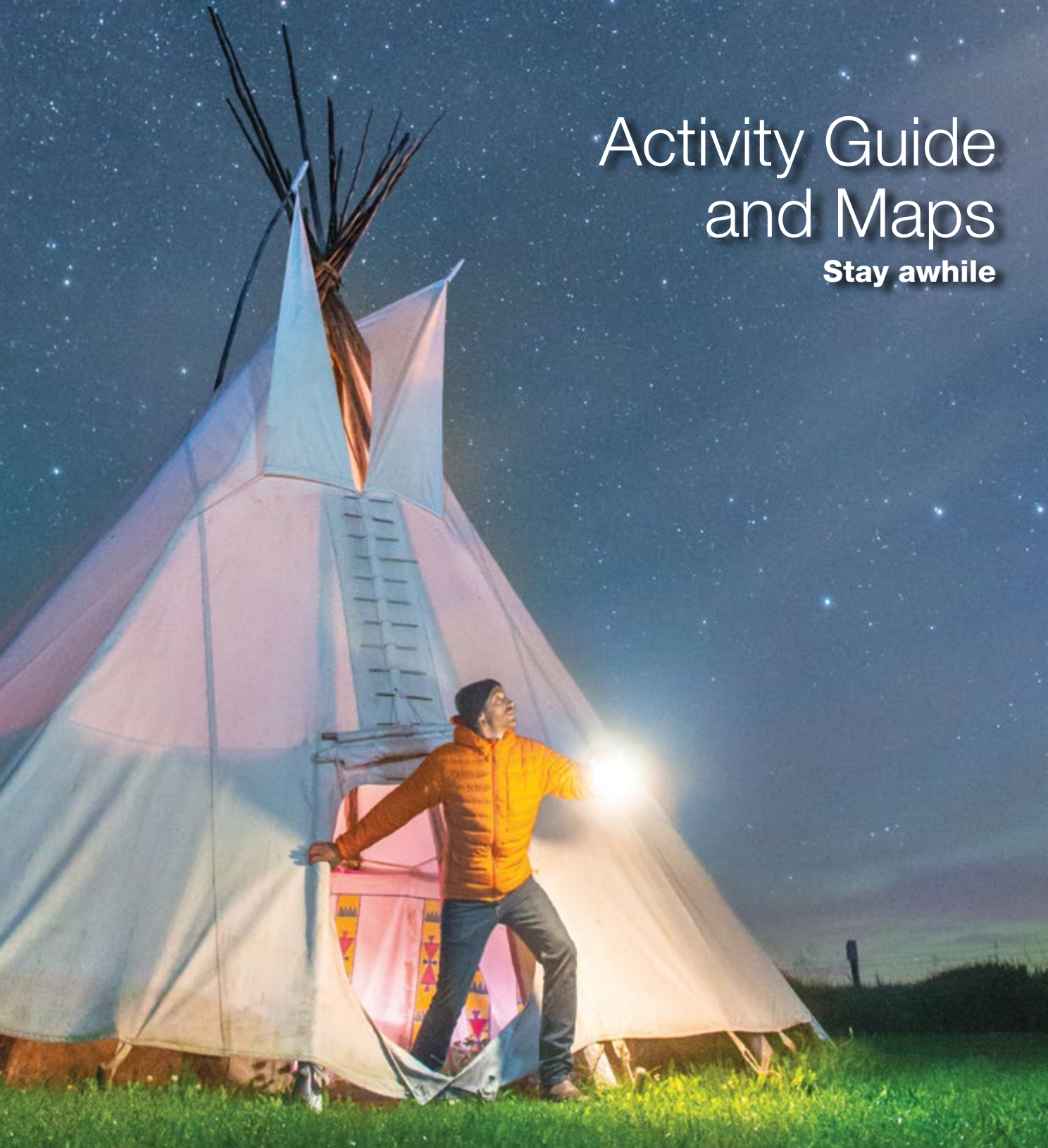




Rocky Mountain House  
National Historic Site

# Activity Guide and Maps

**Stay awhile**



Parks  
Canada

Parcs  
Canada

Canada





## Visitor Centre

392077 Range Rd. 7-5  
Rocky Mountain House  
Alberta, CANADA  
T4T 2A4

403.845.2412

pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca

## Hours of Operation – Visitor Centre & Interpretive Experiences

May 10 to September 7  
Open daily: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

September 8 to 30  
Thursday to Sunday:  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

October 1 to May 9  
Closed

## Campground

Township Rd. 392  
Clearwater County  
Alberta, CANADA  
T4T 2A4

403.429.0116

pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca

## Hours of Operation – Campground Office

Mid-May to June 15  
Open daily: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

June 16 to September 7  
Open daily: 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.

September 8 to 30  
Monday to Wednesday:  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.,  
Thursday to Sunday:  
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

October 1 to Mid-May  
Closed

We acknowledge that Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site is within the present-day territory of the Treaty 6 as well as the Métis Homeland. The lands and waters of Rocky Mountain House have been used for millennia by Indigenous Peoples for sustenance, ceremony, trade and travel. We thank them for their continuous stewardship and for sharing the land with us.

Welcome | Bienvenue |  
miyoonakishkatoohk |  
oki, kiitsiksimatsimmoko  
| miyotôtâkewin

The forts are gone, but the stories live on; stories of trade, exploration and competition, but above all, stories of people.

In 1799, the North West and Hudson's Bay companies set up rival posts here on the North Saskatchewan River. During the 76-year history of trade at the site, nine different Indigenous groups visited the area. David Thompson – explorer, fur trader, and renowned map maker – and his wife Charlotte Small, used this post as a base for discovering a pass through the Rocky Mountains.

Today, Parks Canada shares the stories of the many different people who have spent time on the banks of this historic river highway, and protects the archaeological remains of the four trading posts, and lands used by Indigenous Peoples for time immemorial. We are honoured to engage with community partners and Indigenous Peoples who share their stories of today, and breathe new life into the history of this land.

Stay awhile. Let *your* story become part of this place, too.



For up-to-date information  
on the services offered, visit:  
[pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse](http://pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse)



Parks Canada is honored to engage with community partners and Indigenous organizations.

### **Confluence Heritage Society**

Our mission is to preserve, support and promote our Western Canadian history, heritage and culture. We are a non-profit organization that advocates and partners with Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site. We produce the family favourite David Thompson puppet show and work together with Parks Canada and community partners to promote and present special events, including Canada Day celebrations. Stop by our Trading Post Gift Shop located in the Visitor Centre and browse our unique selection of local artisan merchandise.

### **David Thompson and Charlotte Small**

David Thompson was 14-years old when he set out to map the land we now know as Canada. Between 1792 and 1812 he mapped 3.9 million square kilometres, about 1/6th of the North American continent. He first came to Rocky Mountain House in 1800 with his wife, Charlotte Small, using the fort as a base for his trans-mountain travels. His 1814 “Great Map” of his explorations envisioned the Canada to come.

David and Charlotte spent a number of winters here and had their first child at the post. Small was a great partner for Thompson. Raised by a Cree mother and a Scottish father, she was familiar with both Indigenous customs and languages and those of the traders. Unlike many fur traders, Thompson did not abandon his ‘country wife’ when he retired from the trade. Instead, they moved with their children to eastern Canada, were married in a formal church wedding, and spent the rest of their lives together.

David and Charlotte, true adventurers, have been recognized as persons of National Historic Significance (Canada).

### **Métis Local 845**

We are pleased to showcase an authentic mid-1800s Métis Cultural Campsite. Experience life from the Fur Trade, one of the pivotal eras in Canadian history. Share our culture and traditions such as fiddle music, jigging, beading, and the all-important buffalo hunt. Learn the significance of the fur trade, the Red River Cart, and the York Boat. Come visit us soon!

### **Âsokêwin Friendship Centre**

Âsokêwin means “crossing a bridge.” Our mission is to encourage and promote the well-being of Indigenous people by strengthening individuals, family, and community. Our partnership with Parks Canada and the National Historic Site fosters a culturally-appropriate and safe space to enhance the commemoration of the contributions of Indigenous peoples, their histories and cultures. This partnership enhances the special relationship Indigenous people have with traditional lands of this area.

### **Grandmother Turtle Lodge Society**

Our collaboration with Parks Canada has been an integral part of our ability to create and provide gatherings and ceremonies for our communities. The historic site provides a culturally-appropriate and safe space for people to connect to important teachings, nurture relationships with local Indigenous Elders, and share meaningful experiences with visitors that promote truth and reconciliation.



### Interpretive Experiences

- 1 Blacksmith Station
- 2 Follow the Bison Herd
- 3 Métis Camp
- 4 Play Fort
- 5 Visitor Centre

### Sites of Interest

- 1 Bison Lookout
- 2 Cairn
- 3 Canoe Launch and Brierley Rapids
- 4 Centennial Canoe
- 5 Charlotte Small and Alexander Henry Plaques
- 6 Listening Stations
- 7 Paul Kane Plaque
- 8 War Memorial
- 9 York Boat



### Entrances

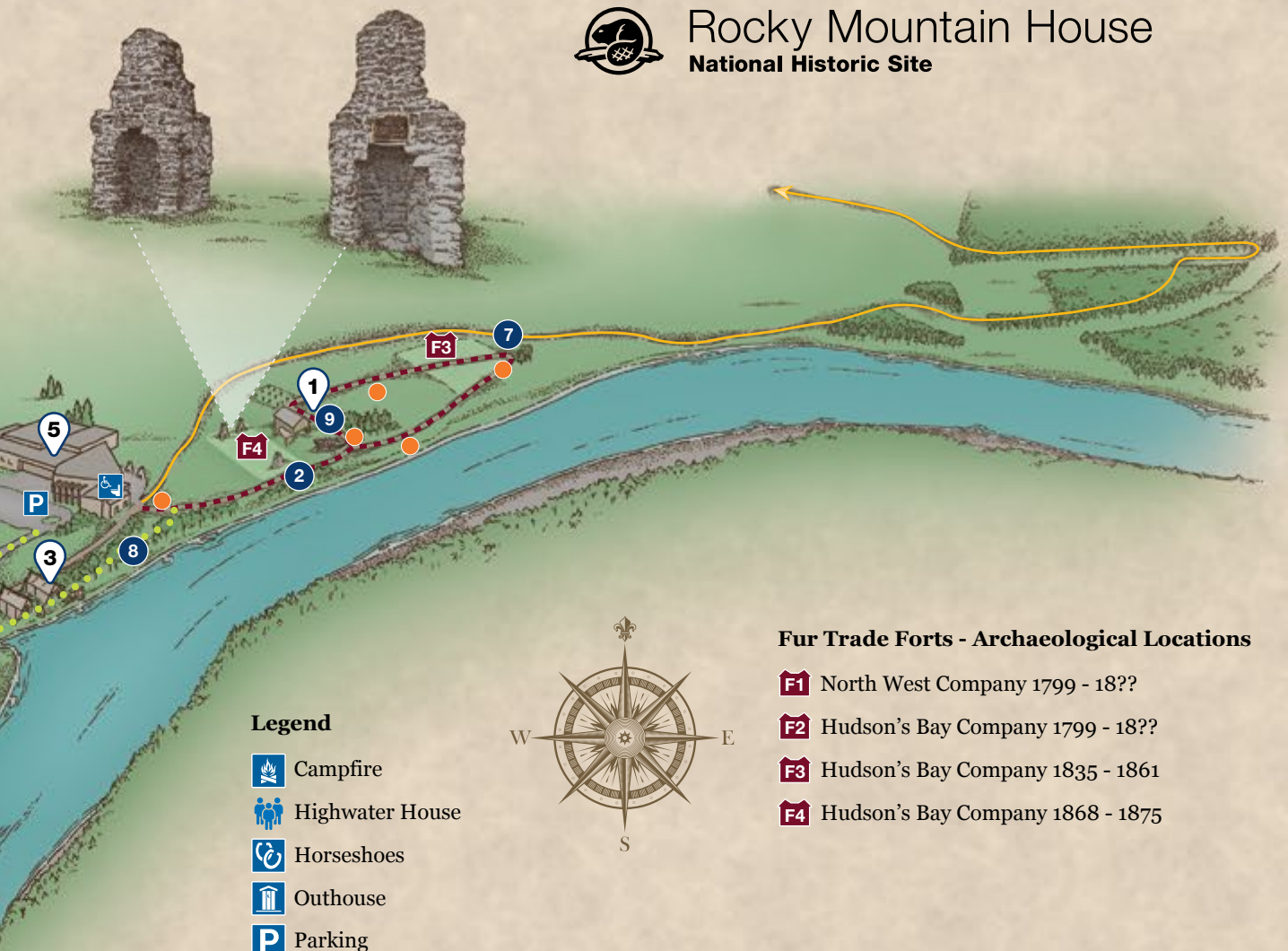
- E1 Visitor Centre Entrance
- E2 Campground Entrance

### Trails

- Chimney Trail
- ... David Thompson Trail
- Petro Canada Bicentennial Trail
- - - Shared Access Trail



# Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site



### Legend

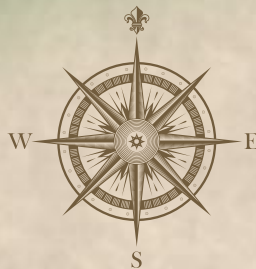
- Campfire
- Highwater House
- Horseshoes
- Outhouse
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Red Chairs
- Washroom

### Camping

- Campground Office
- Métis Trapper Tents
- Tipis
- Trailer Campground
- Trapline Cabins
- Walk-in Tenting
- Dish Washing Station
- Drinking Water
- Firewood
- Food Locker
- Shower

### Fur Trade Forts - Archaeological Locations

- F1 North West Company 1799 - 18??
- F2 Hudson's Bay Company 1799 - 18??
- F3 Hudson's Bay Company 1835 - 1861
- F4 Hudson's Bay Company 1868 - 1875





# Explore, share, imagine

Included with site entry.

## Interpretive experiences

### 1 Blacksmith Station

Blacksmiths crank the blowers and shape iron into useful objects at the hardware store of the 1800s.

### 2 Follow the Bison Herd

Listen to stories of Indigenous Peoples following the movements of bison, and how it is integral to their culture and way of life.



### 3 Métis Camp

Experience Métis culture and traditions such as fur trading, beading, fiddling, and jigging.

### 4 Play Fort

Channel your inner voyageur in this ¼ scale replica of a fur trade fort. Have fun in the children's play area and enjoy the puppet show about legendary explorer David Thompson!

### 5 Visitor Centre



Artifacts and interactive exhibits offer a window into the life of fur traders and Indigenous Peoples. Pick up a souvenir, artisan merchandise, or snack at the Trading Post Gift Shop.



## Kids Activity Books

Ask for a Parks Canada Xplorers Guide filled with exploration activities. For younger kids, ages 6 and under, pick up the Parka Activity Booklet.

## Sites of interest

### 1 Bison Lookout

Catch a glimpse of the small herd of plains bison that came from Elk Island National Park, where most of the world's purebred plains bison originate.

**Note: These are wild animals.**

**Do not enter the bison paddock.**

### 2 Cairn

This cairn commemorates the site's designation in 1926 as a National Historic Site of Canada.

### 3 Canoe Launch and Brierley Rapids

Start your non-motorized river adventure, or watch thrill-seekers test their canoeing and kayaking skills on the Brierley Rapids.

**Note: Class III+ water rapids.**

### 4 Centennial Canoe

To honour Canada's 100th birthday in 1967, an epic 5000-km canoe race from Rocky Mountain House to Montreal took place along this historic voyageur route. This is the actual canoe paddled by team Alberta.



### 5 Charlotte Small and Alexander Henry Plaques

Charlotte Small came to the area in 1800 with her explorer husband, David Thompson. Of Cree-Scots background, she played a valuable role in the fur trade and is recognized as a National Historic Person. Alexander Henry was a fur trader and explorer. His journals are one of the best records of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century fur trade.



For up-to-date information on the services offered, visit: [pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse](http://pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse)



### 6 Listening Stations

These interpretive story stations can be found along the Chimney Trail and the David Thompson Trail.

### 7 Paul Kane Plaque

Paul Kane was a famous Irish-born Canadian painter, who spent time at Rocky Mountain House in the late 1840s. Dedicated in 1952, this plaque commemorates Kane as a National Historic Person.

### 8 War Memorial

This monument honours the men and women from the Rocky Mountain House region who served in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and the Afghan War.



### 9 York Boat

All aboard! Hop into a replica York Boat and imagine the three-month voyage to Hudson's Bay with your cargo of furs destined for England.

## Fur Trade Forts – Archaeological Locations

### F1 North West Company 1799 – 18??

Established in 1799 by the Northwest Company, this was the first trading fort in the region. Named Rocky Mountain House, the fort served as the company's main base of operations, hosting notable map maker David Thompson. This fort was in use until the Northwest Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. Notice the archaeological pits where the fort once stood.

### F2 Hudson's Bay Company 1799 – 18??

This fort, named Acton House, was built by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1799 and located only 35 metres away from the Northwest Company's fort. It gives you an idea of the extreme rivalry between the two fur trade companies. This fort was used until 1821. The volumetric iron bars show the historical size of Acton House.



### F3 Hudson's Bay Company 1835 – 1861

In 1835, the Hudson's Bay Company replaced Acton House with this unique fort named Rocky Mountain House. This post saw hard times as the fur trade lost popularity. Abandoned in 1861, it burnt down in 1865.

### F4 Hudson's Bay Company 1868 – 1875

Facing dwindling fur trade markets, the Hudson's Bay Company made one last-ditch effort to keep the area's fur trade alive. In 1868 the company built its grandest-ever fort, double the size of its predecessor. Unfortunately, this was not enough to keep business running, and in 1875, Rocky Mountain House closed for the last time, marking the end of the fur trade in this region. The twin chimneys are the only remaining structures from the fort.





# Bookable experiences

## More to explore

Dive deeper into stories of this place and book a hands-on experience. Supplies included with program fee. Advanced reservations required. **403.845.2412 | [pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca)**



### Black Powder – A Real Blast!

Learn how hunting tools and weapons evolved from throwing knives to flint lock muskets to the canon. Try your hand with these tools, and witness the blast of a cannon.\* (2 hrs. Max. 25 people)



### Blacksmithing

Crank the blower to a red hot fire. Work alongside a trained blacksmith to create a rustic hook, dinner triangle, or nail.\* (2 hrs. Max. 10 people)



### Dream Catcher Workshop

Learn the traditions around this Indigenous custom and create your own beautiful dream catcher. (2 hrs. Max. 25 people)

### Equipped Camping

No gear? No problem! See page 11.

### Hudson's Bay Satchel

In this workshop, you will take a Hudson's Bay blanket and transform it into your own beautiful wool satchel. (1.5 hrs. Max. 10 people)



### Traditional Games

Indigenous games teach essential skills like observation, intuition, and hand-eye coordination. A great workshop for youth groups or as a team building exercise. (1.5 hrs. Max. 20 people)

### Memories await

Book Highwater House year-round for your wedding, family reunion, meeting, or special event.

- Rustic cabin design with a wood stove.
- Fully equipped kitchen, tables, and seating for up to 50 people.
- Projector screen, projector, and sound system.
- Patio with additional seating and views of the North Saskatchewan river.



\*Ages 16+. Participants must have their own footwear with CSA approved protective toe cap.

### Drum and Song

Gather around the campfire with a local Indigenous drummer and story teller. Have an open dialogue in this informal educational opportunity, sharing in an authentic cultural experience. (1.5 hrs. Max. 25 people)



For up-to-date information on the services offered, visit: **[pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse](http://pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse)**



# Hiking and biking trails


Ten kilometers of nature trails weave in and around the site. Follow in the footsteps of Indigenous Peoples, fur traders, trappers, and legendary explorers David Thompson and Charlotte Small.


## ----- Chimney Trail

This trail circles through the archaeological remains of two Hudson's Bay Company forts dating to 1835 and 1868 (where the fort's original chimneys still stand). Enjoy stories and interpretive panels at the listening stations.

0.8 km loop

 Easy trail

 30 minutes


 15 minutes


## ..... David Thompson Trail

Follow along the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to the oldest fort sites, including the first fort built by the North West Company in 1799. Discover historical anecdotes and sounds at each listening station.

3.2 km loop

 Easy trail

 90 minutes


 30 minutes


## — Petro Canada Bicentennial Trail

Trail between the National Historic Site and the Town of Rocky Mountain House, winding through aspens and old growth forests with scenic views of Clearwater County.

5 km one way

 Easy trail

 2 hours


 40 minutes


## -. Shared Access Trail

This paved trail between the National Historic Site and our Campground is used by hikers, bikers, dog walkers and Parks Canada vehicles. Share the road!

1 km one way

 Easy trail

 20 minutes

 10 minutes

### Keep in mind:

- Bring water and extra layers of clothing.
- Use sunscreen and insect repellent.

### Picnic area

**Local Tip:** Try the 'Day Use Area' with picnic tables, a campfire pit for cooking, a horseshoe pitch, and a volleyball court. It is located 25 meters NW of the Campground Office.



### Your Red Chair moment

#parksmemories





# Parks Canada accommodations

## Stay awhile



• Firewood available for purchase. **NO outside firewood permitted.**

• Volleyball court.

• Check-in: 2:00 p.m. Check-out: 11:00 a.m.

Campground Office & Information: 403.429.0116 | [pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.rockyinfo.pc@canada.ca)

Reservations: 1.877.737.3783 | [reservation.pc.gc.ca](http://reservation.pc.gc.ca)

## Heritage Camping

### Métis Trapper Tents

- Sleeps up to 5: double or twin beds.
- Wood floor, table, and chairs.
- Fur Trade Camp Kit: bison hide, period cooking kit and utensils, blow tube and flint/steel fire-starting kit, bannock mix, trapper's tea, spices, oil, and soap.



### Trampoline Cabins

- Sleeps up to 6: 1 double pull out bed, and 4 sleeping mats in the loft.
- BBQ, table, chairs, cookware, utensils, mini fridge, induction burner, microwave, and lighting.



### Tipis

- Sleeps up to 8: sleeping mats.
- Wood floor, table, and chairs.
- Fur Trade Camp Kit: bison hide, period cooking kit and utensils, blow tube and flint/steel fire-starting kit, bannock mix, trapper's tea, spices, oil, and soap.



For up-to-date information on the services offered, visit: [pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse](http://pc.gc.ca/rockymountainhouse)



# Front-Country Camping

## Trailer Campground

- Unserviced trailer sites.  
Trailers and RVs up to 8 metres (27').



## Walk-in Tenting

- Community picnic shelter.
- Foot access only (50 m). Park in designated area.



## Equipped Camping

No gear? No problem! Tackle the great outdoors with a fully equipped camping kit. This experience includes a camping orientation session, 6-person tent (set up), sleeping pads, sleeping bags, cooking stove with fuel, and lantern.





# Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

Memories await.



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