

RETALLACK LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

Nelson, British Columbia

The vibrant, bohemian city of Nelson – ranked number one small town arts community in Canada and among the top five in North America by author John Villani in his book *The 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America* – is just an hour’s drive from Retallack. Situated among the Selkirk Mountains on the western shores of Kootenay Lake, Nelson has also earned a reputation as the heritage capital of British Columbia thanks to its beautifully restored period architecture.

If you’re looking for the heart and soul of Kootenay mountain culture, this is the place to visit. Downtown is an eclectic mix of old and new, where charming turn-of-the-century buildings house stylish restaurants, cafés, art galleries, theatres, new-age bookstores, alternative therapists, day spas and organic food markets. And if it all looks a bit familiar, that’s because it probably is – comedian Steve Martin filmed his hit comedy *Roxanne* here in 1987.

Hot Springs

Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort, which features a large lounging pool, 150 foot (45 metre) horseshoe-shaped cave and a stream-fed cold plunge, is situated on the road between Retallack and Nelson. The natural hot springs – known to the Ktunaxa people long before the arrival of the first European settlers – are an excellent place to take a long, relaxing soak as you enjoy the scenic beauty of the Kootenay Mountains. (Locals recommend visiting the pools on a crisp, clear winter’s night with a full moon – it’s said to be an unforgettable experience.) Directly above the hot springs is Cody Caves Provincial Park, where you can take an underground tour through limestone caves sculpted by a glacial stream. The walls of the caves are adorned with spectacular calcite formations such as stalactites, stalagmites, soda straws, waterfalls and draperies.

Nakusp Hot Springs is located near the village of Nakusp, approximately one hour’s drive from Retallack. Another great place to relax, kick back and enjoy the soothing mineral waters, Nakusp Hot Springs is surrounded by dense forests in a narrow canyon carved out by the Kuskanax River. The spacious outdoor pool, which is fed by a naturally heated underground water source, is divided into a large, warm section suitable for swimming and a smaller, hotter area for bathing.

Valley of the Ghosts

One of the world’s biggest silver mining booms occurred in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia in the late nineteenth century. In September 1891, prospectors Eli Carpenter and J.L. “Jack” Seaton discovered a silver-lead ore deposit near the source of Slocan Creek, approximately 25 miles (40 kilometres) from the present-day community

of Kaslo. The following year, boom-towns sprung up in the Kokanee Mountain Range, as hopeful prospectors flooded into the area.

Communities such as Kaslo and New Denver managed to survive the end of the mining boom, but others were simply deserted. (In fact, Retallack itself is named after a long-abandoned mining town that used to stand on the site where our lodge is now situated.) For this reason, the land between Kaslo and New Denver has been named The Valley of the Ghosts. You can still find traces of these former bustling communities, such as old housing foundations and abandoned mineshafts, as you travel between the two towns.

Sandon

The showpiece of the Kootenay region during the mining boom, Sandon was known as the Monte Carlo of North America throughout the 1890s. In its heyday, Sandon was home to over 5,000 people and boasted 29 hotels, 28 saloons, many theatres and opera houses, three churches, three breweries, three sawmills, two newspapers, a soft drink plant, a cigar factory, a schoolhouse, a hospital, a curling rink, a bowling alley and one of the largest red light districts in Canada.

Since the 1970s, a group of volunteers has worked to preserve and restore Sandon's buildings and artefacts – including the Slocan Mercantile Block, which now houses the Sandon Historical Society Museum. Today, Sandon is recognized as a historical site of international significance and attracts over 60,000 visitors each year.

Kaslo and New Denver

Kaslo – sometimes called Little Switzerland due to its picturesque location – is a quaint, artsy mountain town with an abundance of restaurants, cafés, galleries and craft shops. The town is also home to the Japanese Canadian Museum, which documents the internment of Japanese soldiers in the area during World War II, and SS Moyie, the world's oldest intact passenger sternwheeler. Kaslo is best known for its annual jazz festival, which is held on a floating stage by the shores of Kootenay Lake during the August long weekend.

Situated on the shores of Slocan Lake, New Denver is a haven for aquatic sports enthusiasts. The town forms an ideal base for kayaking, canoeing, sailing, fishing, water skiing, scuba diving and swimming. Scuba divers claim that Slocan Lake is one of the clearest and cleanest lakes in southern British Columbia, with many historical artifacts easily accessible. The town's Kohan Reflection Gardens and Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre are memorials to the forced relocation of 22,000 Japanese-Canadians to British Columbia during the Second World War.

Kootenay Lake

Kootenay Lake is the largest natural lake in British Columbia, at approximately 100 kilometres in length and between three and five kilometers in width. It is home to the



world's largest trout, the Gerrard rainbow trout; plentiful populations of Kokanee, a landlocked strain of sockeye salmon; Dolly Varden trout; and a small population of whitefish. In addition to being a world renowned trout-fishing destination, Kootenay Lake is also a popular destination for sailing, houseboat and canoe trips. Be sure to pick up a fishing licence before you begin your adventure.

Lardeau River

The remote and beautiful Lardeau River connects Trout Lake in the north to Kootenay Lake in the south. The river comes alive with around a million spawning Kokanee, or land-locked salmon, during the months of August and September. Gerrard rainbow trout, the world's largest trout, also spawn here from mid-April to mid-May. The river's plentiful fish stocks make it a favourite haunt of grizzly bears, especially towards the end of September. In July, the beautiful blue-green river winds its way through flower-strewn alpine meadows.