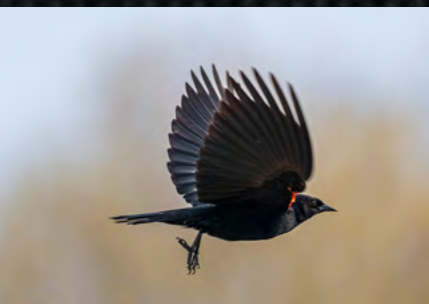


# Javier Frutos

PHOTOGRAPHY

"CHASING STORIES"





# HELLO,



I am Javier Frutos,  
passionate for travel, adventure and nature photography.  
I strive to capture life through the lens in a personal artistic way  
and create iconic images in the process.

Brand and Creative Director, Photo editor and assignment photographer  
at the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and Canadian Geographic.

Some of the locations I've had the opportunity to visit include:  
Most of Canada and North America, Europe, Asia,  
South America, Hawaii and Antarctica.

Here are some insights from my personal experience...



# PRACTICE

...as often as possible



[The Beaver Pond quest]





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Great Egret

f/9 1/2,000 600 mm ISO 1600







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Panorama

f/22 1/5 14 mm ISO 40





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Red-Winged Blackbird

f/7.1 1/1600 600 mm ISO 1600

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Goose

f/8 1/2000 460 mm ISO 2500







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Freezing Rain

f/11 1/800 70 mm ISO 200







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Early morning in Spring

f/7.1 1/1000 390 mm ISO 250







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Cormorants

f/11 1/640 300 mm ISO 640

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Cormorant

f/6.3 1/2500 600 mm ISO 2000

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Geese

f/8.0 1/2500 600 mm ISO 1600

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Otter

f/6.3 1/1600 600 mm ISO 2500







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Female Red-winged blackbird

f/9.0 1/640 600 mm ISO 640

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Blue Heron

f/8.0 1/2500 600 mm ISO 2500







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Goslings

f/7.1 1/2500 550 mm ISO 1000







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Early birds

f/22 1/10 600 mm ISO 100





# BE PREPARED

Something may suddenly happen







British Columbia

Onboard moving train

f/2.8 1/3200 17 mm ISO 100







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Seagull

f/5.6 1/1250 400 mm ISO 64







Wilhelmina Bay, Antarctica

Humpback whales feeding

f/13 1/2500 95 mm ISO 2500

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Beaver Pond, Kanata

Red-Winged Blackbird

f/7.1 1/1600 500 mm ISO 1600







Wilhelmina Bay, Antarctica

Humpback breaching

f/7.1 1/2500 240 mm ISO 640







Florida, USA

Osprey with catch

f/8 1/2000 600 mm ISO 560

Javier Frutos  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Icefields Parkway, Alberta

Avalanche, taken from moving bus

f/10 1/1600 120 mm ISO 5600





# EXPLORE MORE

Your vision. Your photograph.







Ottawa, ON

Try new things

f/21 1/400 21 mm ISO 250







Delray, Florida

“To infinity...” (Artistic interpretations)

f/8 1/2500 24 mm ISO 200







Dana Reserve, Jordan

Be resourceful (iPhone photo)





Kanata Beaver Pond

Look up

f/14 1/125 15 mm ISO 400







Kanata Beaver Pond

Look down

f/14 1/320 30 mm ISO 1600







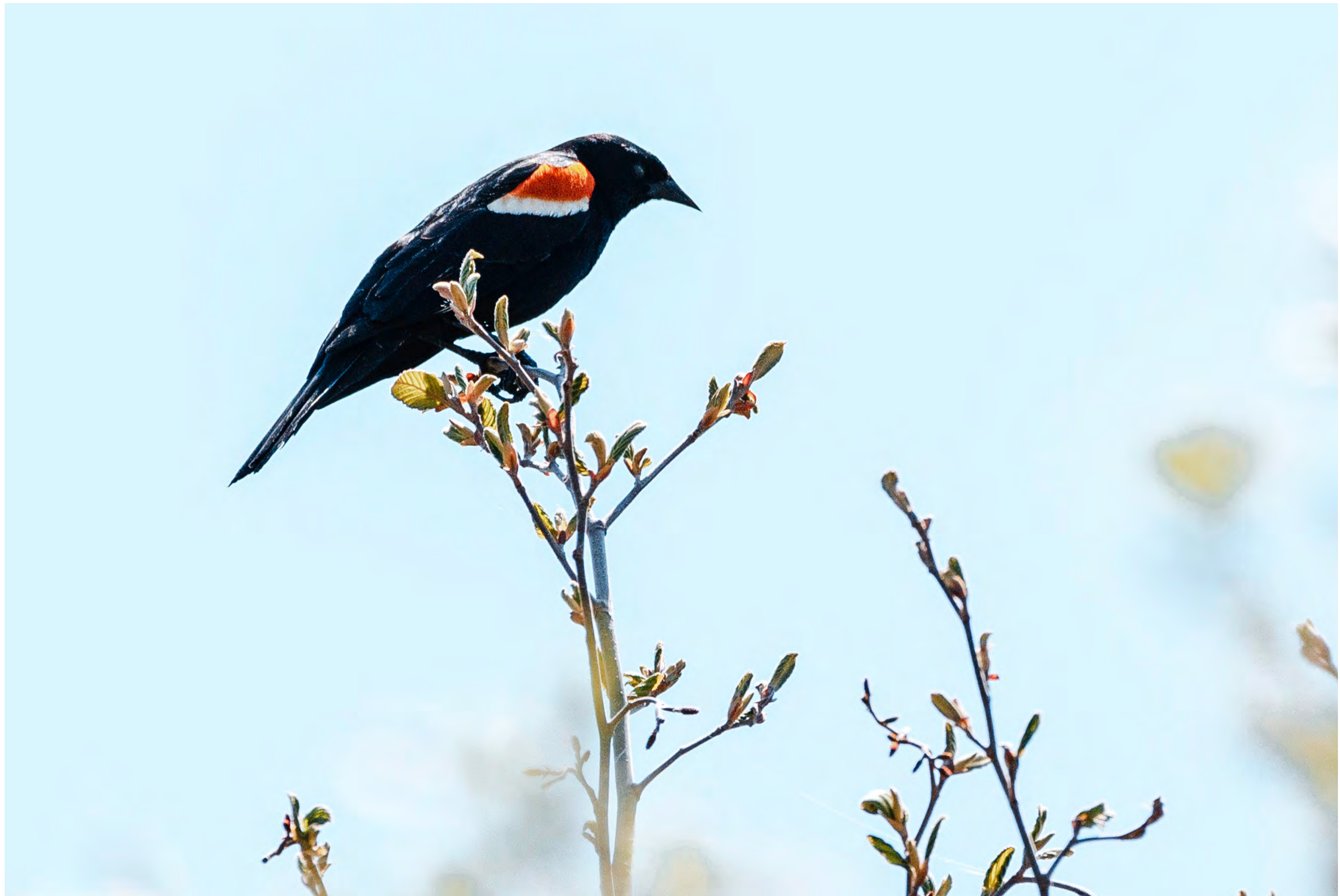
Jordan

Try different angles

f/22 1/60 14 mm ISO 400







Beaver Pond, Kanata

Creative post-production

f/7.1 1/2500 390 mm ISO 1000

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Cariboo Mountains, BC

Different subjects

f/5.6 1/6 340 mm ISO 64







Versailles, France

Composition opportunities

f/29 1/160 44 mm ISO 400





Oahu, Hawaii (North Shore)

Exposure experiments

f/22 5 sec. 14mm ISO 160







Budapest, Hungary

Don't give up

f/8 1/125 28 mm ISO 1100

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY



# HUNT THE STORY

Timing, backgrounds, patience, etc.







Prince Rupert, BC

First light

f/10 1/80 68 mm ISO 500







Dana Biosphere Reserve

Last light

f/5.6 1/250 70 mm ISO 200







Haida Gwaii, BC

Importance of backgrounds

f/5.0 1/1250 22 mm ISO 400







Amman, Jordan

The right time

f/18 1/100 55 mm ISO 140

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY



# HERE AND THERE

Different locations







Antarctica

Reflection

f/8 1/800 35 mm ISO 100

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Antarctica

Drake Passage

f/8 1/2500 24 mm ISO 640

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Wilhelmina Bay, Antarctica

Humpbacks

f/9 1/2000 550 mm ISO 1600







Antarctica

Endless Sunset

f/6.3 1/640 28 mm ISO 640







Fournier Bay, Antarctica

Humpbacks

f/11 1/4000 90 mm ISO 800







Wilhelmina Bay, Antarctica

Weddell Seal

f/5.6 1/2500 360 mm ISO 720







Cariboo Mountains, BC

Summit sunrise

f/14 1/125 14 mm ISO 3200







Saunders Island, Falklands

**Black-browed albatross**

f/10 1/2500 450 mm ISO 1400

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Saunders Island, Falklands

Gentoo Penguin

f/10 1/80 68 mm ISO 500







Saunders Island, Falklands

Gentoos at sunrise

f/18 1/800 150 mm ISO 1250







Broughton Archipelago, BC

Grizzly

f/7.1 1/500 320 mm ISO 1000







Broughton Archipelago, BC

Grizzly

f/5.6 1/400 400 mm ISO 640







Khutzeymateen, BC (Work Channel)

Humpbacks

f/7.1 1/2500 400 mm ISO 320

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Gwaii Haanas, BC

Steller Sea Lions

f/2.8 1/8000 55 mm ISO 800

*Javier Frutos*  
PHOTOGRAPHY





Wadi Rum, Jordan

Desert sunrise

f/5.6 1/800 280 mm ISO 125







Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

Roof tops

f/16 1/200 105 mm ISO 320







Brussels, Belgium

Atomium





Smith Falls, ON

Family Portrait

f/7.1 1/80 105 mm ISO 640





# PUBLISHED WORK







Cariboo Mountains, BC

Canadian Geographic Travel

**Travel**





# ONE HELI OF A HIKE

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S REMOTE CARIBOO MOUNTAINS ARE ONE OF THE HARDEST-TO-REACH WILDERNESS AREAS IN CANADA — UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU'RE A KEEN HIKER WITH ACCESS TO A HELICOPTER

by DOUG O'NEILL  
with photography by JAVIER FRUTOS

“YOU'RE A HELI-HUDDLE VIRGIN, I CAN TELL,” laughs veteran mountain guide John Mellis, who catches my nervous twitch as I and nine other hikers crouch shoulder-to-shoulder within a couple metres of the roaring Bell 212 helicopter, its rotors cutting the alpine air above our heads and kicking up dust into our squinting eyes. The deafening engine and flying dust are at odds with the peaceful mountain scenery that surrounds the helipad at Cariboo Lodge, a remote luxury property located on the southern banks of the Canoe River, about 25 kilometres west of Valemount, B.C. The lodge is one of several operated by CMH Heli-Skiing & Summer Adventures, which is launching its summer heli-hiking program in 2018. I'm here for a test hike.

Mellis, who is also the area manager for Cariboo Lodge, reiterates

the safety instructions he and pilot Jens Gessner shared with our group at the breakfast table that morning. “The closer you are to the helicopter, the safer you are. The tips of the wings can dip down, especially on uneven ground — trust me, you don't want to be there. Stay away from the rear of the helicopter and always approach the aircraft in a crouching position — and hang onto your hat. If your toque goes flying, let it fly. Do not run after it.” At which point my favourite toque goes flying. I do not run after it.

We're about to fly into the Premier Range, a group of mountains in east-central British Columbia that are part of the Cariboo Mountains range, which itself forms the northern end of the Columbia Mountains and contains some of the highest and seldom-seen — much less hiked — peaks in the country. Bounded by the Fraser, Thompson

and Rauch rivers, many of the Premier Range's mountains that are more than 3,048 metres high are named in honour of late Canadian prime ministers (Mount Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at 3,516 metres, is the highest), but you don't think politics when you're here — you think playground. With towering spires of ice and rock, mammoth glaciers, snow-covered mountains, rolling meadows, pristine alpine lakes and waterfalls spilling from 1,000-metre-high cliffs, the Cariboo and Premier ranges are a backcountry hiker's dream destination. And getting to them by helicopter is an experience like no other, at Mellis reminds us.

“And when you exit after we land,” Mellis yells, “just go to the appointed safe spot and crouch. Do not rush away from the helicopter until I give the go ahead. Follow our advice and we'll save your arse out here.”

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL 47



THE BELL 212 gently lifts off under Gessner's deft maneuvering, soaring upward through the Canoe River valley until the lodge looks minuscule behind us. Gessner, who learned to fly helicopters during his military training in Germany, has chauffeured hikers and skiers to remote mountain settings for more than 20 years. “Flying in the mountains is a three-dimensional experience,” he explains. “You have to acquire knowledge of the mountains, learn to read the cloud activity of this particular region — which is so different from the flat landscape where I first learned to fly — and understand high and low pressures that can change quickly. And I need to have a good feel for the safest places to land hikers.”

Mellis, riding shotgun in the cockpit beside Gessner, suddenly points directly ahead. North Canoe Glacier. It's colossal. Our flying fishbowl of hikers morphs into a crew of high-altitude paparazzi. We're so in awe of the towering formation in front of us that we don't notice Gessner has started to descend. There's nothing like your first mountain drop-off to appreciate the skill of a helicopter pilot as they land a bulky machine on an area the size of a condo balcony.

Gessner deposits us on a boulder-strewn ledge called the Ninth Hole, a scraggly mess of moss-covered schist rock and quartz overlooking the striated glacier. Just across the expanse of ice and rock is Little Matterhorn peak,

which Mellis estimates to be about 2,500 metres high. There are no trail markers in this wilderness setting, so we put our trust in Mellis, who follows his instinct and his memories, formed during almost 25 years of hiking and skiing throughout the Cariboo. We trek up an incline, skipping over rocks and paddies, then angle

westward through a meadow splashed with red, yellow, purple and white alpine flowers. It's difficult to concentrate on where I'm putting my feet when there's so much to look at. In the distance, I can see the snow-capped peaks of Mount Carpi and Mount Wilbers. Two hours into our first hike and most of us are visibly sweating. Let's lose some layers,” suggests Mellis, his voice carrying over the strong wind that's kicked up. (We've already witnessed the power of his lungs at breakfast when he demonstrated his master yodeling skills). “When I was a young fellow growing up in Vancouver, I wasn't a good student,” he tells us. “I was forever skipping school to spend the day exploring the North Shore Mountains. I'm at home in the outdoors.”

Doug O'Neill (@dougsohill), the former executive editor of Canadian Living, now writes regularly about travel, the outdoors and food. Javier Frutos (@jfrutos, @wanderplanet) is Canadian Geographic Travel's creative director.

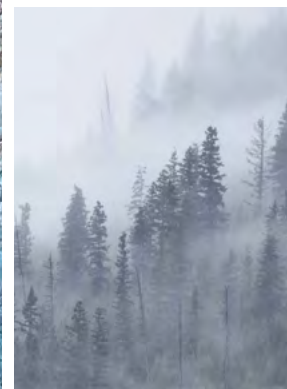


See more of Javier Frutos's spectacular photos of heli-hiking in the Cariboo and Premier mountain ranges at [cangeotravel.ca/photo/cariboo](https://cangeotravel.ca/photo/cariboo).

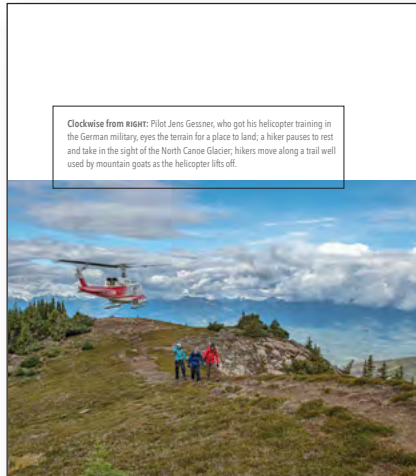
CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL 49



Clockwise from left: Mellis leads a group of hikers past the Zillmer Glacier in an area known as Upper Zillmer; a morning mist shrouds the trees near Cariboo Lodge; Mellis at a spot known as the Ninth Hole, which overlooks the North Canoe Glacier.



CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL 51



Clockwise from right: Pilot Jens Gessner, who got his helicopter training in the German military, eyes the terrain for a place to land; a hiker pauses to rest and take in the sight of the North Canoe Glacier; hikers move along a trail well used by mountain goats as the helicopter lifts off.

While he may not have been a good student, Mellis proves his teaching chops each time we stop during our three-hour morning hike. “Watermelon,” he announces, pointing to a patch of slightly pinkish snow. “Snow? It's called watermelon snow, or sometimes snow algae. It contains a red pigment that makes the snow pink. And it does smell like watermelon, just don't eat it — it'll give you the runs.” An hour later we stop to rest by a turn, a glacier-formed cirque filled with mountain water. Mellis kneels down and scoops up a handful of black mud. “Mineral. Goats instinctively return to this watering hole year after year to get their fix of mineral-rich water. Helps build strong bones.”

THE FOLLOWING DAY we're treated to a series of heli-humps — quick, 15-minute rides that lift us from peak

to peak. At Zillmer Canyon, also known as the Tropics of the Cariboo, the views are spectacular. About 500 metres below our makeshift landing pad is the turquoise water of Zillmer Creek; in another direction, a series of countless waterfalls adorn sheer cliffs. There are jagged ridgelines, huge outcrops of quartz and alpine meadows thick with heather. But Mellis is eager to show us something he has not seen, or hiked on, in almost 10 years: The Adventure Trail.

The steep route is only a few kilometres long, but part of it involves climbing a smooth rock face that most of us are only able to scale because of the metal rungs Mellis pounded into the granite 15 years ago. It's a workout, but it's also thrilling to know that I'm walking where no human has set foot in a decade.

Not bad for a day's hike. @



## PLANNING YOUR MOUNTAIN GETAWAY

CANADIAN MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS has summer heli-hiking programs at three backcountry lodges, each of which offers luxury accommodations, private spa treatments, morning yoga and gourmet meals. Some hiking equipment is provided. For more information on each of the lodges listed below, visit [cmhsummer.com](https://cmhsummer.com).

### CMH CARIBOOS LODGE

The lodge's 27 rooms come with Instagrammable views of mountains, glaciers and wildlife. Get a pre-hike workout on the property's climbing wall or in its bouldering cave, or rest with a drink by the fire in the lounge, home to post-dinner nightly jam sessions. Two-, three- and five-day heli-hiking packages are available in July and August.

### CMH BUGABOOS LODGE

This 32-room lodge in the Bugaboos mountain range in southeast British Columbia embodies backcountry luxury with its rooftop hot tub, steam room and spa. Guides lead hikers along ridges in the Purcell Mountains and through flower-filled alpine meadows. Three- and six-day heli-hiking packages are available from July to early September.

### CMH BOBBIE BURNS LODGE

The 26-room Bobbie Burns boasts the largest wine cellar of all the CMH remote properties, as well as the option for guests to spend part of their time at the Bugaboos Lodge. Hiking through remote areas of the Purcell Mountains rewards guests with incredible scenery, including views of the Cornet Glacier. Three- and six-day heli-hiking trips are available between from July through the first week of September.

See more of Javier Frutos's spectacular photos of heli-hiking in the Cariboo and Premier mountain ranges at [cangeotravel.ca/photo/cariboo](https://cangeotravel.ca/photo/cariboo).

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL 53





#### WADI RUM, JORDAN

A caravan of camels awaits its riders at sunrise at the Captain's Desert Camp in Wadi Rum, otherwise known as the Valley of the Moon. Here, guest rooms take the shape of plush, carpeted Bedouin tents and visitors feast on traditional *zarb*, which includes the freshest flatbreads, kebabs, salads and dates served under starry desert skies. The sunrise camel caravan, which is led by a Bedouin guide, carries riders out into the echoing vastness of Wadi Rum as the morning light illuminates the famed desert landscape.



Canadian Geographic creative director Javier Frutos (@javier\_wonderplanet) took this shot during a trip to Jordan in October 2019. See more images from his trip at [cangeotravel.ca/mj20/jordan](https://cangeotravel.ca/mj20/jordan).



WINDOW SEAT



BUDAPEST, HUNGARY / JAVIER FRUTOS

"I snapped this image of the illuminated Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest while sailing along the Danube River aboard the *Viking Vilhjalfr* cruise ship," says Javier Frutos. "I remember thinking, 'Spectacular!'"

Share your best travel shots with us on [Twitter](#) (@CanGeo\_Travel) and [Instagram](#) (@cangeotravel) using #cangeotravel.



# PASSAGE OF TIME

STILL LARGELY REMOTE, B.C.'S INSIDE PASSAGE OFFERS A GLIMPSE OF A WILD WORLD WHERE NATURE – FROM GRIZZLY BEARS TO HUMPBACK WHALES – RULES THE DAY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAVIER FRUTOS WITH TEXT BY JAYME MOYE

Prince Rupert is remote. The water is calm, sheltered by the coast and sits just below a rugged forested mountain range.


**BRITISH COLUMBIA'S INSIDE PASSAGE** may be the one place on Earth where you'll spot humpback whales feeding just offshore while a grizzly bear and two cubs forage for muskrats on a nearby beach. By land or by sea, the region surges with life. The area that encompasses the central and southern reaches of the province's coastline runs about 500 kilometres from Port Hardy to Prince Rupert, extending inland to the Coast Mountains.

The water is sheltered by a chain of isles and islands, just west of the continent's edge, which form a natural landward against the pounding Pacific swell. Ocean currents and wind combine to push nutrients from the sea floor to the surface, serving up an all-day organic buffet to the sea's marine residents. Whales, porpoises, sealions and sea otters all flourish here, alongside 50 species of fish and 150 different types of marine invertebrates (at last count).

On shore, the world's largest intact coastal temperate rainforest provides habitat for grizzly bears, black bears, coastal grey wolves, sitka deer, cougar, mountain goats and bald eagles, among thousands of other species of animals, birds and plants. Ancient trees dominate the lush landscape. Thousand-year-old oaks draped in lichen mingle with uncovered 50 metre-tall Sitka spruce. In 2016, the provincial government officially recognized 6.4 million hectares along this route, an area the size of Ireland, as the Great Bear Rainforest, an area that permanently protects 95 per cent of the old-growth trees from industrial logging.

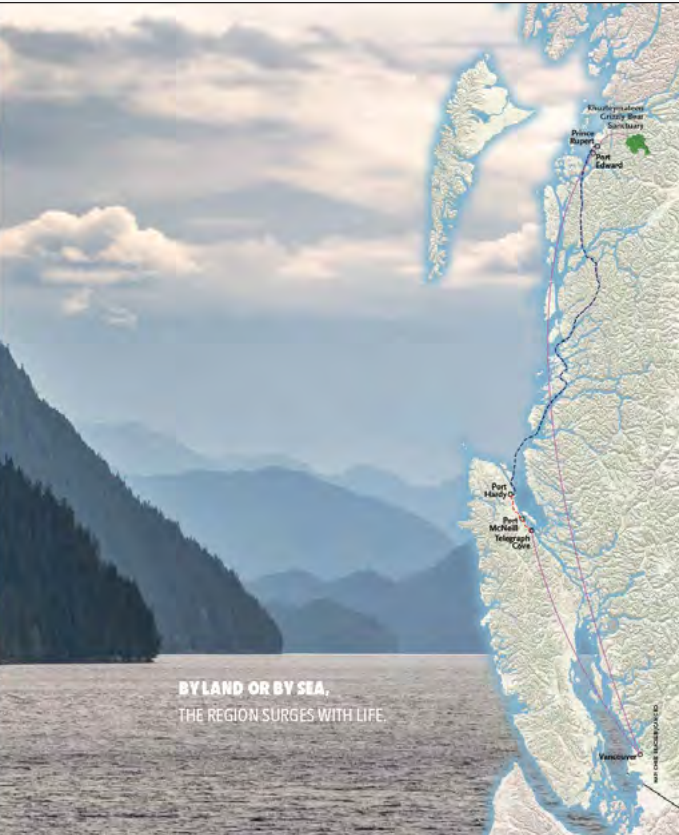
Not only is life plentiful, but it is also unique. In Johnstone Strait, once weighing up to six tonnes, delight happens by leaping – launching their bodies out of the water, then white undersides flashing in the sun. A well-established population of more than 300 orcas ply these waters for salmon, preferably chinook.

One predator that is notably rare in the Inside Passage is people. We tend to connect it to the popular Lower Mainland. Most access still requires a boat or a floatplane, usually both. And so, the scenery remains much as it always has – at least since the last great ice age ended some 11,000 years ago. The cobalt blue waters of the glacier-carved inlets and fiords perfectly reflect the densely forested peaks above. Experiencing the Inside Passage is akin to time travel, back to an era when grizzly bears roamed the border from Washington to Alaska. ©





Clickwise from above: A humpback whale breaches in the Mink Channel near the Charlton-Harris Grizzly Bear Sanctuary; a view of the Inside Passage from aboard the BC Ferries journey between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy; a grizzly bear in the water in the Kluane National Park.

**BY LAND OR BY SEA, THE REGION SURGES WITH LIFE.**





Clickwise from above: A humpback whale breaches in the Mink Channel near the Charlton-Harris Grizzly Bear Sanctuary; a view of the Inside Passage from aboard the BC Ferries journey between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy; a grizzly bear in the water in the Kluane National Park.



Clickwise from top left: A coastal town; humpback whales feeding together in a method known as bubble net feeding; a view of the Inside Passage from aboard the BC Ferries journey between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy; a grizzly bear in the water in the Kluane National Park.

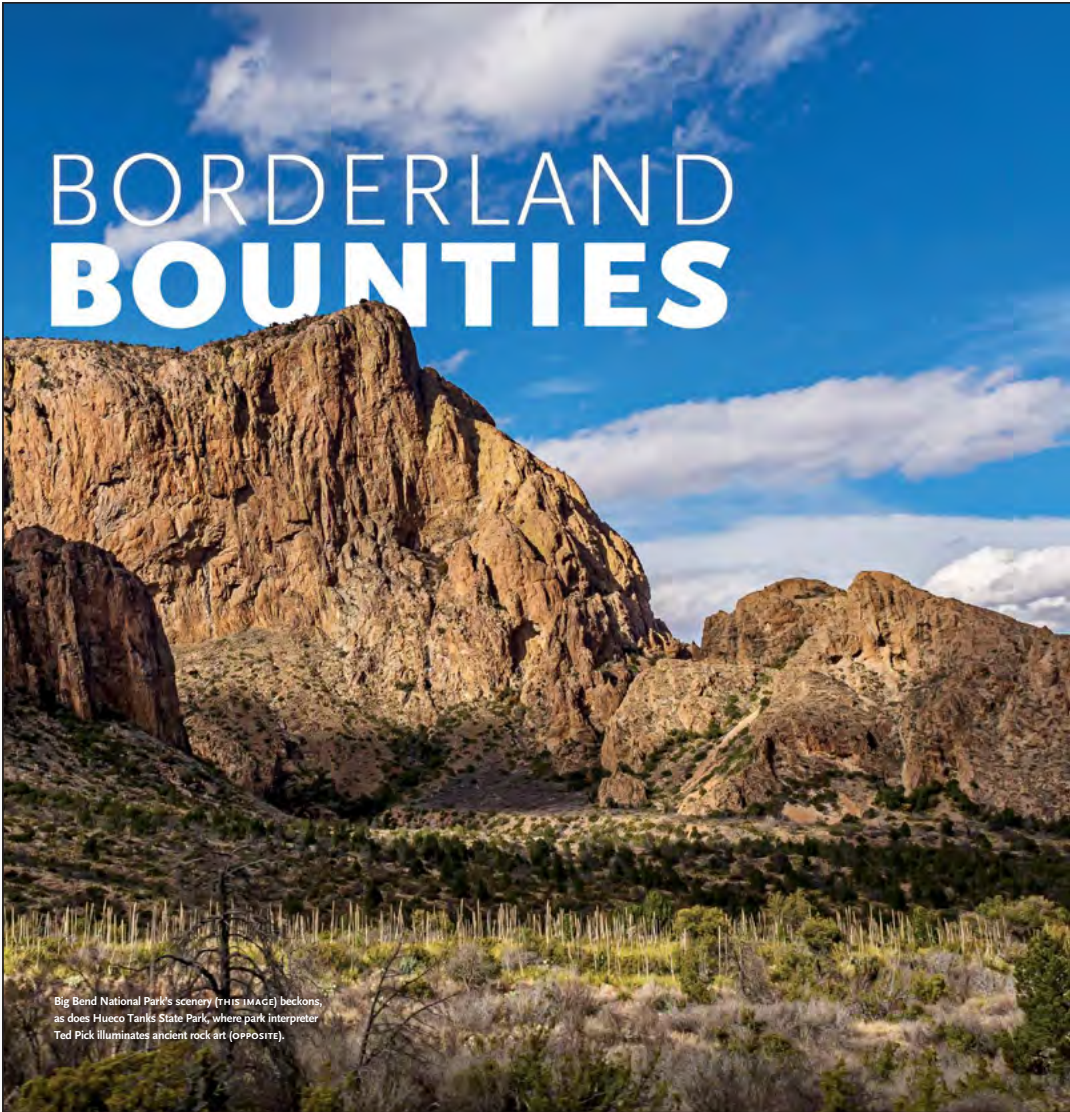
**WHALES, PORPOISES, SEA LIONS AND SEA OTTERS ALL FLOURISH HERE.**



Inside Passage, BC







Big Bend National Park's scenery (THIS IMAGE) beckons, as does Hueco Tanks State Park, where park interpreter Ted Pick illuminates ancient rock art (OPPOSITE).

# BORDERLAND BOUNTIES

Cherishing the element of surprise in the west Texas desert

BY OMAR MOUALLEM  
WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAVIER FRUTOS

**F**ILLING LIKE A THOUSAND buckets below a leaky sky, the rocky hollows pool with torrential rains and, on warmer days, tiny toads and shrimp. But this is definitely not a warmer day. A week after the first snowfall in years, I have to keep reminding myself that I'm on the Texas side of the Chihuahuan Desert, among bulbous rocks, Gumby-shaped cacti, scrubland and a dense cloud rolling over the low northern mountains.

But there are many surprises to be uncovered in the desert on my road trip along the borderland — via the oft-ignored twin cities El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, across Interstate 10, through character towns and nature reserves. I'm learning that Hueco Tanks State Park is but one.

Hueco means hole in Spanish. Developed as subterranean gas bubbles in volcanic rock, these natural water tanks were exposed to flora and fauna by 30 million years of weathering and erosion. In this semi-arid desert, nomadic people too have appreciated the stone oasis for as long as 12,000 years. "So, back to woolly mammoth days," notes park interpreter Ted Pick as he wrings his sopping hair once we've taken shelter in a cave.

Many tribes made it a temporary home. Except for the Jornada Mogollon, they settled and, thanks to Hueco, and traded until a drought likely ended them 1,000 years ago. They left a gallery of pictographs and petroglyphs, dazzling geometrics, religious murals, deer, dancing people, dogs and



Pick illuminates the roof of a cave known to rock climbers as the Girls of Juárez. There's an intricate rectangular

WEST TEXAS



A climber traverses the "Marlin Reef" in Hueco Tanks State Park.

The Spanish also left their marks, in graffiti, damming and livestock grazing. The most recent inhabitants are rock climbers, who've made the 348-hectare park a global destination.

Since Huecos are also natural rungs, even the tightest horizontal spaces of these mountains are useful to climbing's bouldering subgenre. I watch a young Coloradan contort himself upside down, slip his chalked hands and pointy shoes perfectly into the hollows. He uses every ounce of upper-body strength, crawls spider-like from one side of the cave to another, huffing and grunting all the way, or until collapsing onto a pink foam pad. He's joined by half a dozen strangers that all met in the visitors centre. They're from Arkansas and Wyoming; other climbers come from as far away as South Africa. But where are the Texans?



**MANY TEXANS** REGARD the western region, particularly El Paso, as a cultural wasteland. The closest Dallasites and Houstonites are likely to come is the epic national park Big Bend or the artsy tourist town Marfa (see "Mysterious Marfa," page 48). But they're missing the lively Latino spirit vibrating through the border.

In El Paso, one street, South El Paso, which bristles with markets and Mexican shoppers, leads seamlessly to the Juárez-Lincoln International Bridge. So in addition to mountainscapes, west Texans enjoy restaurants such as Little Diner, a Mexican food institution so legendary it

was once a *Jeopardy!* category. The ingredients and cuisine are purer than the state's standard Tex-Mex. "We have a rule here," she says, showing me a picture on her phone of a massive, rusted green steel box with a charred rupture. "I think it's an old missile." That wouldn't be out of the ordinary. Before it was a ranch or a park, the area was nearby Fort Bliss's weapon range. But rolling over ruins and around rocks, I see no such thing, just prickly pears and sorals, which burst with serrated leaves and single white stalks that from afar look like giant wheat sheaves.

Back on solid ground I take to hiking the Mad Cow Trail we meet Brissia Montalvo, who's been training for the Puzzler all winter. "I found this on the trail," she says, showing me a picture on her phone of a massive, rusted green steel box with a charred rupture. "I think it's an old missile." That wouldn't be out of the ordinary. Before it was a ranch or a park, the area was nearby Fort Bliss's weapon range. But rolling over ruins and around rocks, I see no such thing, just prickly pears and sorals, which burst with serrated leaves and single white stalks that from afar look like giant wheat sheaves.

Back on solid ground I take to hiking



WEST TEXAS



the rugged mountains, where my chief concern becomes rattlesnakes. I'd been forewarned to stay on the trail, where the only "S-word" is snow. And, anyway, there are more than 160 denuded kilometres of trails, leading me 1,700 metres above sea level to overlook three states, two countries and 11,000 square kilometres of epic scenery. Anyone who thinks it's a wasteland hasn't seen it from here. The

Regular contributor Omar Mouallem lives in Edmonton. Javier Frutos is the art director of Canadian Geographic Travel.

spots of oak and juniper, wildflowers, succulents and greasewood amalgamate and reveal the hidden beauty of the desert.

THE LORE OF THE DESOLATE, deadly Wild West can be as repellent as it is romantic, says Tara Poloskey, whom I meet a few days later in the state's most extensive ranges, Davis Mountains State Park. "My friends back home think it's terrifying."

Back home, for the record, is Detroit. But even the biologist was surprised by her desert crash when she first arrived in west Texas a decade ago for university. "It just took a chunk of me," Poloskey, like so

many nomads before, has affinity for the desert's inherent resourcefulness, the way every living creature, including more than 260 birds from both hemispheres, thrives in spite of the harsh conditions. "People would come thirsty or starved, view the landscape, see the oak trees and know there's gotta be water there somewhere," says Poloskey. "The rugged grit that it takes to live here is an adventure."

Take the agave plant, its cone-shaped centre so firm and pointed it will impale anyone so unlucky to fall on it. But its heart can also be roasted or distilled. "You can eat it, drink it, kill with it," she says, rubbing

46 CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL SPRING 2016





Ancient culture, beautiful architecture and breathtaking landscapes.  
Discovering Jordan from north to south.

**Images of ancient sites and biblical stories come to mind**

when we think of Jordan, with Petra, probably the country's most recognized historical site at the top of the list, but we were about to discover a fascinating place and culture. Guided by our Jordanian tour guides Hatem (driver) and Mahmoud (interpreter) we went on a 10-day journey across the country as we visited some of the most unique places like the Wadi Rum desert and the impressive Jerash "The Crossroads of Civilization", just to mention a couple.

The adventure takes us all across Jordan from north to south, visiting the ancient northern Decapolis city of Gadara where we admired vistas of the Sea of Galilee and Golan Heights in Israel territory, walking in the vibrant national capital Amman, to experience floating on the Dead Sea in the lowest point on earth, or riding a camel at sunrise at the Wadi Rum desert to soaking the breeze in Aqaba at the Red Sea in the most southern part of the country. All this, not to mention the delicious food and friendly people all across the country.



A local woman walks at The Amman Citadel which buildings are from the Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad periods.

**Amman**

The journey started at the St. Regis Amman Hotel situated in the in the upscale 5th Circle district, and one of the most luxurious in all Jordan, where every night at the lobby, a glass of champagne is offered to guests as the bottles are opened with a sword following the St. Regis tradition; if you like to be pampered, a personal butler will take care of all your needs during your stay.

Amman has a lot to offer from splendid restaurants with traditional Arabic and middle eastern food to the Citadel where you can admire stunning views of the city and the Archeology Museum, the Roman Amphitheater and the buzzing streets and markets of downtown Amman.

Delicious middle eastern food, fascinating ancient history and out of this world landscapes

**From Amman to Jerash and Gadara**

The next day we drove to Jerash, about one hour drive north of Amman, this place has had human occupation for more than 6,500 years, and is now known to be one of the best-preserved Roman ruins in the world. Once we entered the old city we realized this place was bigger than what we thought as we spent half of the day walking around the remains back from Neolithic times, as well as Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad civilizations, followed by a traditional lunch at the Lebanese House restaurant in Jerash,



The Citadel hill is one of the seven hills (Jabal) that originally made up Amman



Mohamed, our guide and interpreter at the Citadel historical site in Amman.



The upscale St. Regis Bar at the hotel offers a great selection of cocktails and cheese on impressive gold mosaic to admire while your drink is prepared.



The South Theatre is one of the biggest Roman theatres in Jerash, dating back to the 1st century



Lunch at the Lebanese House Restaurant a 10-minute walk from Jerash's centre, offers freshly baked bread and hummus is not to be missed.



A young Syrian refugee harvest olives close to the town of Irbid in northern Jordan

**Mount Nebo and Madaba "the city of mosaics"**

We continued our journey driving 30km from Amman, along the 5,000-year-old Kings' Highway to Mt Nebo, one of the most memorable places in the Holy Land. Mt. Nebo is where it is believed that Moses was buried and probably the most revered Holy site in Jordan, at the top we admired – as it's believed Moses did, the view of the Jordan River Valley, the Dead Sea, Jericho and Jerusalem.

After a short drive we arrived to the city of Madaba, home to the famous 6th -Century Mosaic Map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Best known for its spectacular Byzantine and Umayyad mosaics, ending the visit with a traditional lunch always starting with hummus and freshly baked pita bread.



The Madaba Map mosaic, is the oldest cartographic representation of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, at the Byzantine church of Saint George in Madaba, Jordan.

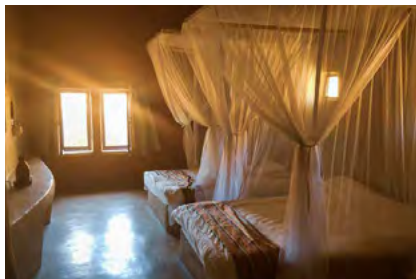
**Feynan EcoLodge**

We travelled to the heart of the Dana Biosphere Reserve mountains, where a couple of 4x4's was waiting for us to take us through the desert to our next overnight stay at the Feynan EcoLodge: an experience made possible by a partnership between EcoHotels and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, a Jordanian NGO devoted to the protection of the Kingdom's finest natural landscapes. Right before we arrive to the lodge we were greeted with tea at the top of a hill to admire the desert sunset.

After dinner we went to the roof top to stargaze and have a cup of tea before sleeping in our candlelit rooms. The next morning, we walk to meet a small Bedouin family where under a tent we shared tea and traditional bread cooked inside the desert sand.



A couple enjoys the sunset view at the top of a hill in the Dana Biosphere Reserve



The morning light fills the guest room at the Feynan EcoLodge, situated deep in the heart of the mountainous Dana Biosphere Reserve



Al Khazneh "The Treasury" appears right at the end of the narrow gorge in Petra.



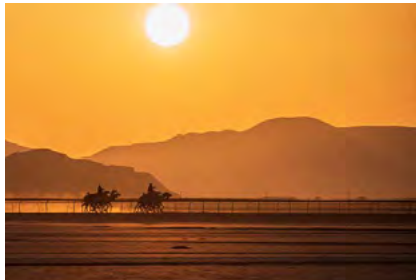
First light at the Wadi Rum desert during a camel ride



One of the open lounge areas at the Captain's Desert Camp.



The Wadi Rum, has been a location for many movies "The Martian", "Gladiator" and "Star Wars" just to mention a few



A couple inside their camels to a meeting point to start their day at the Wadi Rum desert.





*Taking the best roadtrip to  
a complete new level.*

**I**t's well known the **Icefields Parkway** in Banff National Park is probably one of the best scenic drives in the world, it goes through the spectacular Canadian Rockies from Banff to Jasper, Alberta. But what a better way to experience it than staying at a comfortable lodge with gourmet meals and going on a couple of mountain adventures. Now this is possible at the newly renovated Glacier View Lodge situated right in front of the Athabasca Glacier.

The trip started in Banff, where we took a couple of hour drive around Lake Minnewanka loop road, a beautiful drive along lakes and mountains. It didn't take long before we had our first wildlife encounter, in just about an hour we spotted numerous deer, big horn sheep and elk right beside the road. The day ended taking the Banff Gondola up to the Sky Bistro for a delicious dinner experience with panoramic views right on the summit of Banff's Sulphur Mountain.



A Big Horn Sheep walks on the road side at Two Jake Lake, located just 10-minute drive from downtown Banff.



Downtown Banff at sunrise.



The Sky Bistro at the Banff Gondola summit on Sulfur mountain, offers a fine dining experience and breathtaking views.



Moraine Lake is just minutes away from Lake Louise.



Vire of the Icefields Parkway, one of the ultimate road trips in the world.

After an overnight in Banff at the perfectly situated **Mount Royal Hotel** we woke up to a late Spring snowfall which is not rare this time of year in the mountains, we drove north to Lake Louise as our first stop and despite the snow and overcast skies it will always be the iconic Canadian postcard scene. A few kilometres after we stopped at Moraine Lake, a glacial lake situated up in the mountains and after a couple of roadside stops to admire the views, we arrived at the **Glacier View Lodge**, a newly renovated hotel offering an all-inclusive glacier experience including, gourmet meals, exclusive tours on the Athabasca Glacier and at the **Columbia Icefield Skywalk** and guest rooms overlooking glaciers and mountains.



Moraine Lounge at the new Glacier View Lodge hotel offers spectacular views of the Athabasca glacier.



Private evening tour on the Athabasca Glacier onboard the Ice Explorer part of the all-inclusive experience at the hotel.



The Athabasca glacier seen from the Glacier View Lodge.



Evening tour on the Athabasca Glacier onboard the Ice Explorer part of the all-inclusive experience at the hotel.



Columbia Icefield Skywalk private tour.

We were received with a champagne reception at the Moraine lounge followed by the Ice Explorer tour on a Athabasca Glacier where we walked on xxxx year old ice and then finished the day with glacier-view dining at Altitude restaurant in the lodge. The last day before driving back to Banff we visited the Icefield Skywalk on a private tour before it opened to the public as part of the all-inclusive experience.

**Top 5 not to be missed:**

1. Sky Bistro at the Banff Gondola summit.
2. Drive the scenic roads just minutes from downtown Banff.
3. Stop for a walk on many of the lakes along the Icefields Parkway.
4. Champagne reception at Moraine Lounge at the Glacier View Lodge
5. Columbia Icefield Adventure tour

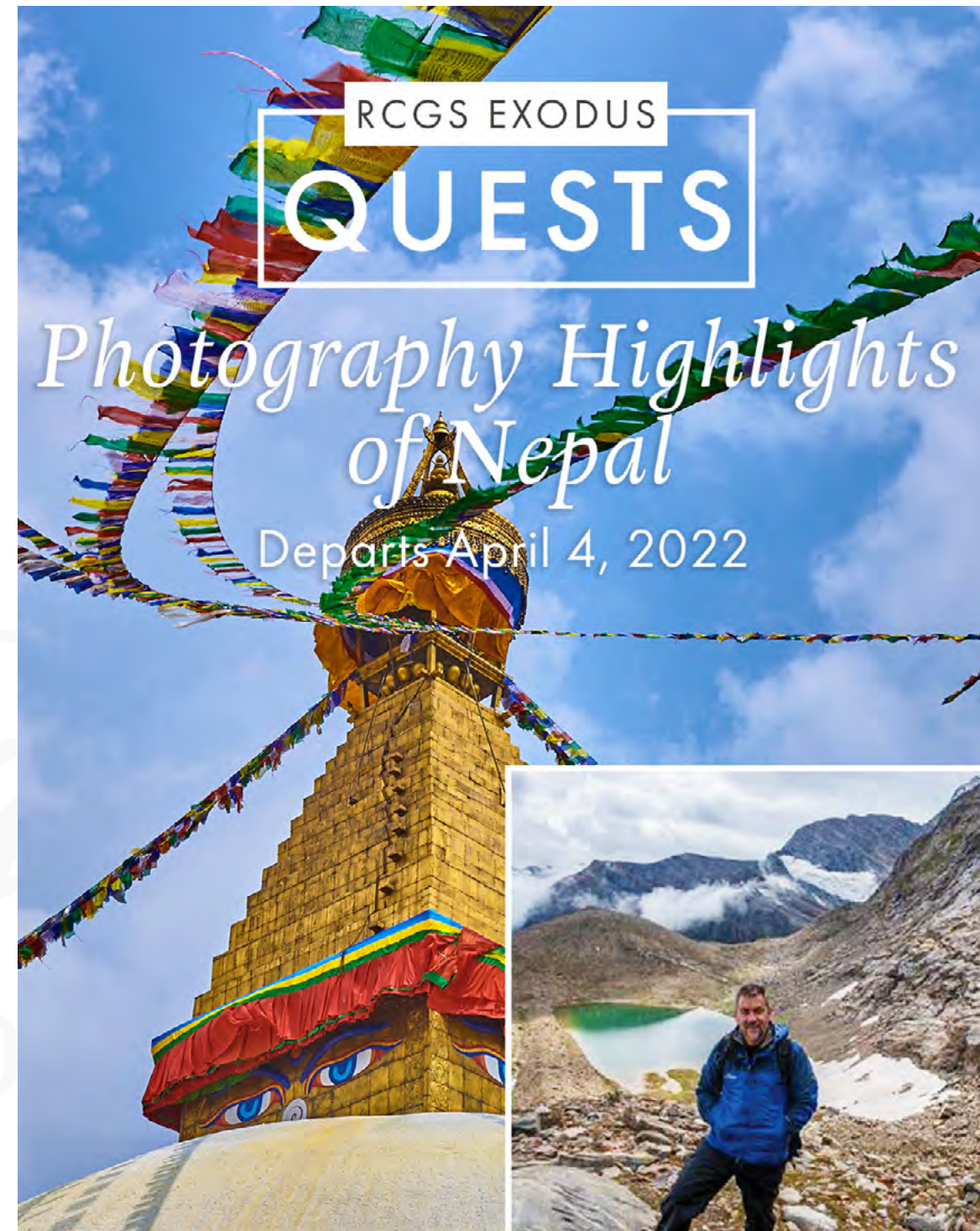


# GEAR

(at present time, 2021)

Cameras	NIKON Z 6II BODY NIKON D750
Lenses	AF-S NIKKOR 500mm f/5.6E PF ED V NIKKOR Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S NIKKOR Z 14-30mm f/4 S SIGMA (C) 150-600mm f/5-6.3 SIGMA 24-105mm f/4
Accessories	FTZ MOUNT ADAPTER TELECONVERTER TC-14E Z TELECONVERTER TC-1.4x  Manfrotto 290 dual Tripod Benpro Aluminium Monopod Manfrotto Travel Camera Backpack Nikon Premium DSLR Backpack





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Thank you!



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