

# Cowley and Crowsnest Pass

## Rural Canada At Its Best

London - Karen Dabrowska



بينشر كريغ: يمكن جمع النزهة إلى جانب النهر مع وجبة طعام خفيفة في المخيم.  
Pincher Creek: a stroll along the water's edge can be combined with a picnic at the camp site.



مقهى الذكريات: يجمع الفن والآثار والأكلات الخفيفة.  
Memories tea-room: combining unique art, antiques and high tea.

Name: Cowley. Population: less than 300. Location 133 miles south of Calgary, ensconced between the Rocky Mountains and the Alberta foothills. No shops, no school, one restaurant open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night only. Small yes, boring definitely not.

The only place for tourists to stay is St Joseph's Inn, once a Catholic Church which was saved from demolition by a Calgary doctor and turned into a holiday home, lovingly cared for by Wendy Murfin, who has lived in the village all her life.

Like all the small towns in the area, Cowley

played a role in the development of Canada. Today visitors are greeted by wind plant generators with huge turbines, 24 – 43 meters high. Cowley Ridge Wind plant, was the first commercial wind plant in Canada. The Canadian Pacific Railway was largely responsible for the influx of settlers and businesses. A bridge was constructed over the Oldman River in 1899, then two hotels: the Cowley and the Alberta Hotel were built. A school followed in 1908 and the village grew: churches, a bank, a number of shops and Pettits' Restaurant did good business. The Hutterites, a Christian sect, arrived in

1926. Today the community runs a farm with an annual turnover of \$4 million and has a flourishing poultry business as well as extensive vegetable gardens. Visitors are welcomed and Marilyn Gross is only too happy to explain the community's religious beliefs and the daily routine free from the stress of modern life.

For tourists Cowley is an ideal home base from which to explore the must-see's in the area including CVC Farms located on the site of a Peigan Winter camp. Cindy Sinnott has the largest selection of southern Alberta's bird feeders and accessories. ➤



Wendy Murfin: cares lovingly for St Joseph's Inn.

وندي ميرفن التي تهتم بسانت جوزيف إن.

Guided walking tours start from her rustic barn and she provides visitors with a check list of 70 birds they might see, among them the pileated woodpecker, the purple finch and the ring-necked pheasant.

Cindy is recovering from the latest flood of the Oldman River which has not been completely tamed by the dam completed in 1991 – the most recent attempt to irrigate areas where crops cannot be grown. The area is also a favorite with outdoor sportsmen whose boats, fishing lines and windsurfers can be seen throughout the summer.

As its name implies, Heritage Acres nearby focuses on antique farm machinery. A grain elevator is still standing.

The Three Rivers Rock and Fossil Museum, with fossil bones, starfish and coral from all parts of the world, collectors shells, and gemstone carvings is another must see.

Pincher Creek is the largest town in the area offering year-round recreational opportunities: windsurfing, boating, water skiing, camping, hiking, kite flying, fishing and berry picking popular in summer. Winter is the time for downhill skiing at Castle Mountain Resort, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing along with hunting and ice fishing.

Tourism is the town's fastest growing industry the major attraction being the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village. Cabins, the

school house, the church and other buildings with thousands of artifacts make time travel to the days of the pioneers a reality. Waterton Lakes and National Park, with breath-taking scenery and the magnificent Prince of Wales Hotel where a scrumptious high tea is served with pastries and cakes, is nearby.

Lebel Mansion, which started life as a hospital, has been restored by the Allied Arts Council and turned into an art gallery and cultural center. In the public library the charming staff are only too happy to allow visitors to send emails home - free of charge. Pincher Creek also has many charming restaurants including Denise's Bistro whose logo 'a taste of heaven' is no exaggeration especially when it comes to iced coffee. The Memories Tea Room is the place for antiques, unique art and collectables from around the world.

On 29th April, 1903, 30 million cubic meters of limestone crashed from the summit of Turtle Mountain, buried the town of Frank. The tragedy is recounted in a remarkable audio-visual presentation In The Mountain's Shadow at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre.

Hillcrest is also a town with a tragic past, the site of Canada's worst mine disaster. In 1914 an underground explosion killed 189 workers. Coleman is the last town in Crowsnest Pass



دورات الهواء في محطة كهرباء كاولي ريج، أول محطة هوائية تجارية في كندا.

Turbines at Cowley Ridge Windplant, the first commercial wind plant in Canada.

before the British Columbia border 15 km away. It once had a newspaper which won a Pulitzer Prize. The publication closed in 1970. But before saying good-bye to Alberta don't forget to call in at Twin Bute: with one café and one community hall its even smaller than Cowley and serves the best Mexican food in the province.

Getting There: Fly with Air Canada or Transet Airlines to Calgary. After two or three days of sightseeing in this modern city take a Greyhound Bus to Cowley or hire a car and drive through Alberta's endless wheat fields.

### Where to Stay:

Cowley: St Joseph's Inn. Contact Wendy Murfin 403-628-3027 [www.saintjosephs.ca](http://www.saintjosephs.ca); [wmurfin@shaw.ca](mailto:wmurfin@shaw.ca)

Bellevue. Angler's Ridge. Contact Wendy Meerveld 403-564-4898 [www.anglersridge.com](http://www.anglersridge.com); [anglersridge@telus.net](mailto:anglersridge@telus.net)

Coleman: A Safe Haven B & B. Contact Alannah & Dan Stepa 403-563-5030 [www.asafehaven.ca](http://www.asafehaven.ca); [asafehaven@shaw.ca](mailto:asafehaven@shaw.ca) ■