

Driving the Klondike-Kluane Loop

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Piloting a small Cessna over the mountains and glaciers of [Kluane National Park](#) ^[1] is the best job ever. I envy how Marie Young spends her days flightseeing over green tracts of spruce and up-up-up to a bird's-eye view of the world's largest non-polar icefields, then circling where the air is thin.

Below is a snowy landscape splashed like thick icing onto cake. Magnificent rivers of ancient glacial ice are part of a continent that is still slowly drifting. In the distance is the summit of Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak.

Prospectors of the crazy 1898 Klondike Gold Rush tackled the forbidding Kluane Mountains. To them, these ice-shrouded pinnacles were obstacles to conquer *en route* to hills they dreamed were dripping with gold nuggets. Many never made it.

Fast forward to modern times and a driving tour of the Yukon's scenic [Klondike/Kluane Loop](#) ^[2] beats the months of slogging with heavy packs endured by the gold seekers. It's still a bit of a journey — 1,435 km (892 miles) of stirring vistas along three of the North's great roadways: the Alaska Highway, Top of the World Highway and Klondike Highway.

Think of the Yukon and you think of wilderness. *Everywhere.*

For fishing guide Allan Hansen, a day of boating on glacial-fed [Dezadeash Lake](#) ^[3] is dusk to dawn trolling and casting for lake trout, grayling and whitefish. And between tugs on the line, he gets the binoculars out to look for moose, bears and bald eagles along the shoreline.

After miles and hours of wilderness in stunning browns and greens, we start to think "we have got to be getting somewhere soon." And suddenly, we're there: [Dawson City](#) ^[4], the most northerly community on the route.

In the frantic days of the Gold Rush, a town of 30,000 sprung up on this wedge of frozen swamp, right at the joining of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers. And then, just as suddenly, as dreams of gold riches evaporated, Dawson City was again near deserted. For most of the miners there was nothing

but hardship and expense.

Today, wooden boardwalks line the dirt streets and colourful storefronts are testament to a past based on a fleeting golden wish. Brave and adventurous visitors sip a [Sourtoe Cocktail](#) ^[5]. Gamblers try their luck at [Diamond Tooth Gerties](#) ^[6]. And those that crave a shot of authentic Klondike history panhandle for gold, visit an eight-storey [mining dredge](#) ^[7] and touch the past at the [Dawson City Museum](#) ^[8].

Suggested Tweet: @ctccct/They say "there are strange things done 'neath the midnight sun" in the Yukon.

Article courtesy of the Canadian Tourism Commission.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Kluane National Park: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/yt/kluane/index.aspx>

[2] Klondike/Kluane Loop: <http://travelyukon.com/things-do/scenic-drives/klondike-kluane-loop>

[3] Dezadeash Lake: <http://www.daltontrail.com/yukonfishing.htm>

[4] Dawson City: <http://www.dawsoncity.ca>

[5] Sourtoe Cocktail: <http://www.sourtoecocktailclub.com/>

[6] Diamond Tooth Gerties:

<http://www.dawsoncity.ca/klondikeattractions/diamondtoothgerties/>

[7] mining dredge: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/yt/klondike/natcul/natcul-dn4.aspx>

[8] Dawson City Museum: <http://www.dawsonmuseum.ca>