

Kate & Jim's Travels with Charles

Episode # 11 – Bye Bye B.C., Hello Alberta

The drive from Penticton was a long one. We wanted to get as far away from the B.C. fires as possible. But that wasn't easy.

From
Sicamous...



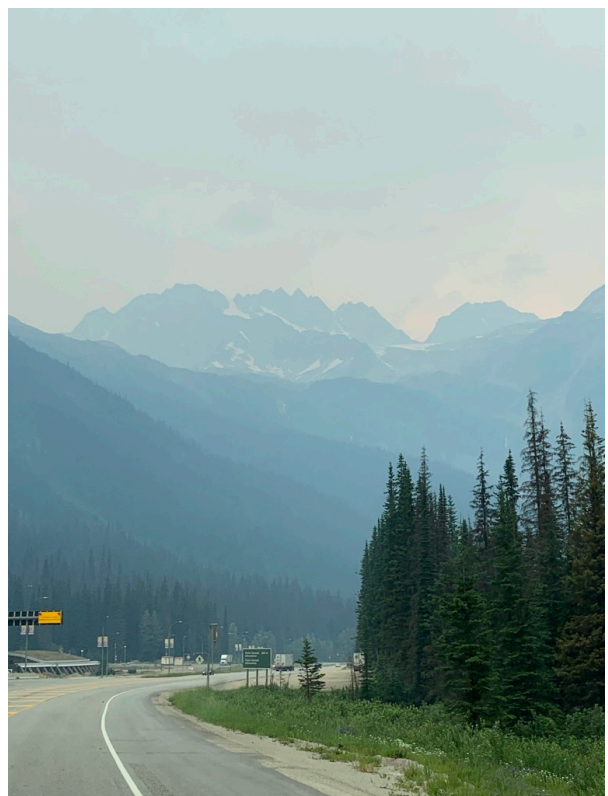
... to Malakwa ...



... to Revelstoke...



... and into Glacier
National Park ...



We drove by fires,
or through the
smoke created by
them.

Not only was it sad
and distressing, it
was also terribly
disappointing that
we were driving
through some of the
most spectacular
territory in the
country and we
could barely see it.



We finally settled in Golden
for the night, where there
was still smoke, but it
seemed to be receding.

And the blaze that evening,
came from the setting sun.

The next day, we sadly said goodbye to B.C. and entered Alberta. Our first stop was to say hello to Field for our friends Scott White and Peter Fenton.



Although the fire hazard had dropped, the smoke was still giving us different views than we'd hoped for. But still beautiful, if haunting.



Peter and Scott had told us not to miss Bow Lake. Well, there was no way we could've missed it. With the combination of sun, cloud and smoke, we happened to catch these breathtaking moments.





As we drove toward Silverhorn, the skies started to clear a bit, and we considered staying in one campground we'd seen on the map.



But somehow it didn't feel so welcoming.

So we pressed on.

More stunning beauty at Waterfowl Lakes.





And then the landscape started getting more and more dramatic.



And then we got to the beginnings of the North Saskatchewan River. It's awe-inspiring to realize how many hundreds of kilometres it will travel as it snakes its way to Edmonton, through Saskatchewan and all the way to Lake Winnipeg





Seeing the glaciers on the mountaintops off in the distance was a reminder of where we were headed. Up. Into to Columbia Icefields country.











And it started getting cold!

We found out there had been a blizzard there that morning.

The week before it had been 35C!





We wondered just how thick that ledge of ice was at the top of that mountain and concluded that it must be several metres deep. And then we wondered how much deeper it was a few decades ago.

Along with colder air, those glaciers create wonderful waterfalls like Tangle Creek. We could've watched it all day.

Of course, Jim got lots of video, and later edited the footage to some perfect accompaniment that will be posted just after this one.





We had thought we'd spend the night "free camping" right near Tangle Creek.

But then we discovered we could stay overnight in the parking lot, right across from...



... This. It was just a plain old parking lot. But the view beat the hell out of what you see beside a Walmart.



And the food wasn't bad either.

It was a chilly night, with the temps going down to close to zero (and we still hadn't figured out how to get the furnace working).

But how many people can say they slept in the Columbia Icefields?



The next morning, we bundled up and walked across the parking lot to get our morning coffee at the highest Starbucks in Canada.



We looked around us and realized how lucky it was that we took all our pictures of the glaciers the day before. Overnight, the smoke had rolled in, and everything looked like this:



Once again, we were glad we had seized the day.