



Have Bike, Will Travel

The Bears in BC

by Alisa Clickenger on January 21, 2011 at 05:19AM



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Normally I'm always up for an adventure. But I'd been back on US soil a scant two weeks from my South America trip, and I was a bit road weary. The weather had just cleared in the West, and now my boyfriend, Edward, was eager for a road trip of his own. He wouldn't settle for a small one, either, nope, he wanted to ride to Alaska. ALASKA!

I was wooed, bamboozled and schmoozed with visions of two-wheeled glory. Hot springs, a few glaciers, great scenery, etc. To tip the scales he threw in the bears. Knowing I'm a big nature lover, yes, he said, I will get to see bears. Who can resist cuddly, fuzzy, salmon-eating bears?

I suppose it's a good thing I never actually opened a map before agreeing to go along. I didn't realize it is about 2500 miles of riding to get to Alaska. And that's just to the state border! That like riding almost across the continental USA, just to start your riding vacation. Oh well, what's 2500 miles to a gal that's just ridden 25,000?

We left Idaho and made it to the Canadian border in a day and a half. It was exciting to see big horn sheep in the mountains as we descended to the night's destination, Radium Hot Springs. A mountain resort town that obviously grew around the draw of the hot springs, the city and the springs share the same name.



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Settled in at the campground, there were bear signs everywhere. Great! Bears! How to camp in bear country, how to dispose of your food in bear country, what to do if you see a bear, what to do if you are attacked by a bear. Um, wait. Did I really want to be that close to bears? Unlike car campers, we did not have a "safe haven" to lock ourselves into should the bears come knocking.

Clever guy that he is, Edward took my focus off the bears by suggesting we go have a nice relaxing evening at the hot springs. It was a pleasant distraction. The hot springs themselves are the largest in Canada, and give a nice soak at 103 degrees Fahrenheit. The scenery is spectacular, nestled in a narrow chasm with the Kootenay mountains rising precipitously right in front of your eyes.

The bears were re-remembered back at the camp site. Edward gathered up all our foodstuffs and hung them in a tree. And when we brushed our teeth, he suggested we spit closer to the neighboring campsite than to ours. Finally, I got a lesson in bear spray. In the close, dark of the tent, when you are terrified by a bear, try not to shoot this stuff into your own eyes. Great. I slept fitfully with dreams of hotel-ing it for the rest of the trip.

With no bear scares in the night, the next morning we stopped in town for a gas station breakfast. Omelets, coffee and juice for both of us totaled \$32 US. Yikes! Filling up the fuel tanks cost us another almost five dollars per gallon. Ouch! Welcome to Canadian pricing. Long gone were my cheap-as-heck days riding in third world countries. So much for my visions of hotels, even the cheap ones were going to be beyond my budget!

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About The Author

Alisa Clickenger (aka MotoAdventureGal) is riding her dream. Calling it her "Year of Motorcycle Vagabonding," she's quit her job, has rented out her home and business, and is riding through Latin America in the name of freedom and adventure. You can follow Alisa's adventures from the road her column, *Have Bike, Will Travel*, which runs weekly on RumBum.com.

