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Family Adventure in the Yukon

Canada's Yukon Territory is a great place to take kids for an adventurous vacation full of glaciers, rafting, and more.

By [Judy Koutsky](#) September 8, 2017

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The [Yukon Territory](#), located in the northwestern corner of Canada can truly feel like the last frontier. The territory is the size of California, and while the U.S. state has 38 million people, the whole of the Yukon has 38,000. That's a whole lot of land with few people on it. In fact, most of the topography of the area is boreal forest. Package stunning mountain scenery, the amazing Yukon river, and glacier icefields with plenty of family-friendly activities, such as horseback riding, white water rafting and flight seeing, and this part of Canada makes for one of the world's most unique destinations.

I spent 10 days traveling from White Horse, the Yukon's largest town, to Dawson City, home of the Klondike Gold Rush. A trip here is an amazing journey into Canada's 19th-century gold mining history combined with wonderful wilderness exploration (it's not uncommon to see grizzlies, moose, and elk). A [family trip](#) here in the summer—when there's almost 24 hour of sunlight—is truly an unforgettable experience. Here, the top things to see:

Glacier Flightseeing with Icefield Landing





Traveling at the end of July, I didn't expect to need warm clothes on my visit to the Yukon, but I put on all my layers for my glacier flightseeing excursion. This was hands-down one of the highlights of the trip and worth the expense; if you can save up for one big-ticket excursion, this is definitely worth the splurge. We took [Icefield Discovery Tours](#) deep into Kluane National Park & Reserve (home to the world's largest non-polar icefields). We flew over Kluane Lake (Yukon's largest lake) and took in views of Mount Logan (Canada's highest peak) before landing on the icefield. The remoteness and quietness of walking on top of a glacier in such a secluded area was breathtaking.

White Water Rafting in the Yukon



This full-day rafting trip attracted plenty of families (they take kids 6 and older) and for good reason. The Tatshenshini River is unique in that it's located in the largest preserve in the world—consisting of Glacier Bay National Park in BC, and Tatshenshini Provincial Park, Kluane National Park, and the Yukon Game Preserve. We

spent the day running the river, going over class three rapids, stopping for lunch and swimming breaks. The views of the mountains and glacier-covered valleys were pretty amazing and we saw bald eagles and other wildlife (grizzlies are not an uncommon sight). [Tatshenshini Expediting](#) provides helmets, wet suits, booties, lifejackets and lunch.

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Horseback Riding in the Yukon

As a fan of horseback riding, I was excited to explore the region from atop this majestic creature. I've done [horseback riding](#) at some pretty amazing places, but the views overlooking the Fish Lake Valley and Bonneville Lakes, with the mountain ridge as a backdrop was really beautiful. The three-hour tour is worth (they also offer one and two hour tours), because you get the highest views. [Sky High Wilderness Ranch](#) also offers dog sledding tours in the winter, something I'd love to come back and partake in.

Dawson City

Dawson City is home to plenty of year-round festivals. We happened to be visiting during the summer music

festival, but even if you come during a non-festival time, there's plenty to do in and around this unique northern city. While it may look like a movie set with all its western-looking stores and hotels, it's a Parks Canada Historic Site, filled with plenty of history. In fact, one of my favorite activities in the town, was taking a walking tour with Parks Canada to learn about the colorful history of the Klondike Gold Rush that made the town famous. Some of the town highlights include Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall (Canada's oldest casino complete with

cancan shows). The [Klondike Spirit](#) river cruise is the only paddle wheeler in operation on the Yukon River, was a great way to get more historical information and see the city from the water.

Flightseeing Tour Over the Tombstone Mountains

What was especially interesting about our [Great River Air](#) air tour is that the Cessna aircraft had camera hatches in the rear window, so I was able to fly with the window open for unobstructed views of the mountains and scenery below. We flew over the mining posts and beyond the valleys and forest of the region. Even though the weather was a bit hazy, we had great views of Tombstone Mountain's peak.

No matter what your family's interest—horseback riding, white water rafting, glacier flightseeing, panning for gold or simply taking in the scenery—you'll find plenty of it in the Yukon.

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Judy Koutsky is an award-winning writer and editor and her work has appeared in over 30 publications, including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Redbook, Parents, Scholastic, and Prevention. She writes often about travel, parenting, health, and lifestyle. Follow her @JudyKoutsky or visit her website JudyKoutsky.com.

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