

## B.C.'s Okanagan Valley

Imagine-Canada's only real desert and more hours of summer sunshine per day than Hawaii, Arid brown hills clash with lush green orchards and vineyards. Inset, deep cool lakes that fascinat, with names like Skaha, Kalamalka, Osoyoos,

and Okanagan, The Okanagan Valley in the interior of southern British Columbia is all of these. and the locals plan to keep it that way. City councils in Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton prohibit the growth of any heavy industry in the valley in an effort to preserve the natural beauty of the area.

As well as an agricultural oosis, Canada's Okanagan region is a vacationer's paradise. It's not difficult to see why: kilometre upon kilometre of warm sandy beaches, scenic panoramas around every twist in the road, while fruit, wine, and water a-

And then there's North America's version of the elusive Loch Ness monster. Like the famed Loch Ness, Lake Okanagan is long and just about fathomless-up to 210m (660 feet) deep. So deep in fact, that B.C.'s only floating bridge had to be constructed to connect the city of Kelowna with the western shore.

But Ogopogo is more than a promotional stunt. A sign erected by the B.C. government testifies that the fearsome monster was originally known as "N'ha-a-itk" to the five Indians. When canoeing on the lake, it was customary to carry small animals on board to appease the

Named in jest by the skeptical white settlers, Ogopogo has risen to impress not a few statwart Okanagan locals over the years.

Driving east into the southwestern toe of the valley, a bounty of fruit and vegetable stands greet you with such eye-popping originals as

"Carol the Barrel", The community of Keremens on Highway 3 is the jumping off point for Cathedral Provincial Park, a wilderness area stretching south to the Washington bor-

Should you enter the valley via Highway 3 West, a magnificent panorama unfolds as you wind your way down Anarchist Mountain, Beneath your feet lies Osoyoos and Osoyoos Lake. A beautiful fruit belt fringes the community and ripples off gently into the distance.

With an average rainfall of 20 cm (eight inches) and temperatures as high as 46 degrees C (115F), the area between Osoyoos and Okanagan Falls is unique in Canada. In this spindly toe of the valley you find desert, complete with cactus, sagebrash, and antelope bush.

From Osoyoos to the community of Enderby, north of Vernon on Highway 97, the Okanagan is nearly 160 km (94 miles) end to end.

Skirting Skaha Lake, Highway 97 north of Osoyoos joins with Route 3A from Keremeos, and takes you into the bustling city of Penticion, between Skaha and Okanagan Lakes.

Smack .on the southern fringes of Penticton, the Okanagan Game Farm lies on almost 240 hectares (600 acres) leased from the local Salish Indian reserve. If you're in a hurry, you can see centres in western Canada. Along with its large meeting centre, there's the annual Peach City Festival, the first week in August, followed by the world's largest square dance jamboree

It's no wonder Penticion is

one of the largest convention

Penticton is also home to Casabello Wineries, fast becoming renowned for its fine natural vintages.

Driving north around the clay buttes and bluffs jutting into Okanagan Lake, the town of Summerland beck ons at the tip of a vast orchardland

Among the rolling hills you'll find a B C. Fish and Wildhie Hatchery and a federal government agricultural experimental station. At the "farm", as it is known in the valley, scientists wrestle with sech problems and challenges as increasing fruit yield and eliminating fruit diseases

For a commanding view of the valley, the hike up G Grant's Head Mountain is well worth the energy you pul mio il

Winding on past the communities of Peachland, Westbank and Lakeview, you nass many scenie roadside stops--Okanagan Lake Park, a camper's must, and Squally Point, home base of the clandestine Ogopogo.

Like a drawbridge over a moat, Kelowna's floating bridge reaches out 640m (700 yards), drawing you into the

largest centre in the vattey. Kelowna lies in the midst of sun-drenched beaches and thousands of hectares of orchards and vineyards.

Vast irrigation has brought an explosion of life to the naturally semi-arid area. In an average year, the Okanagan Valley yields over 136.2 million kg (300 million pounds) of cherries, peaches, apricate, pours bromes and apples. Kelowna packers gather and ship 90 per cent of this Okanagan bounty.

At the southern end of the valley, blossom time begins in early April and ends in the north around the end of May. Harvest time for cherries and apricots runs from early July to early August; peaches are picked from mid-July to late September, prunes and plums from mid-August to late October; pears from late August to late October, and apples from early August to late October

From "pick-your-own" bargains to abundant roadside stands, coming away with Okanagan fruit is anything but difficult!

Connoisseurs and Canadian patriots take note-the quality of Okanagan wines has been rated on par with those of southern France and Germany

Canadian

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Sixty-five percent of the region's wine comes from the Reisling, Foch, and DeChaunae grape varieties. However, recent plantings include true Vanifera strains like the French Pinot Noir and Ga-

may Beaujolais You can step back into Kelowna's past at Pather Pandosy's Mission, Located at the corner of Casoroso and Benvoulin roads, the rustic mission has been restored, as an intriguing reminder of Kelowna's (rugal past, Father Pandosy was Kelowna's founder, and grew the first fruit trees here in 1859.

For the romantic, there's a leisurely tour of Okanagan take on board the sternwheeler M.V. Fintry Queen, dinner included.

Ogopogo can be captured in Kelowna's city park. Or, perhaps more accurately, an irreverent sculpture thereof -authenticity debatable!

and the Okanagan has plenty of extras for the young. There's Bedrock City and Old MacDonald's Farm in Kelowna, Space Trek at Westbank, and the recently opened alpine slide near Ver-

Driving north from Kelowna, those big brown hills drive a wedge between the highway and Okanagan

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under two

departures.

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ka. "lake of 1,000 colours". Kalamalka's mysterious transformations from emerald green to the coolest of blues are as fascinating as they are beautiful. Just before entering Vernon, you can catch an excellent view of Kalalmalka, the valley, the city and the Monashee Mountains beyond.

North of Vernon, you'll find more surprises in the communities of Lumby, Armstrong and Enderby. Every September, Armstrong hosts the largest agricultural fair outside Vancouver--the Inter-

ior Provincial Exhibition. For more information on Canada as a travel destination contact the Canadian-Government Office of Tourism, Ottawa, Canada, K1A 0116.





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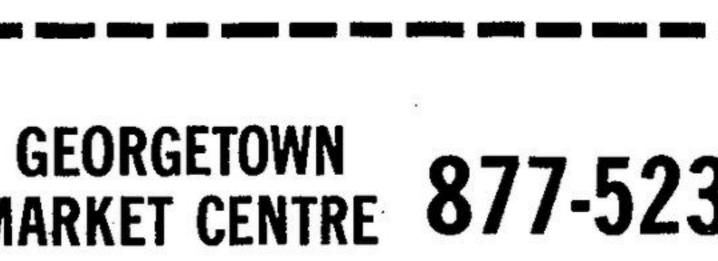
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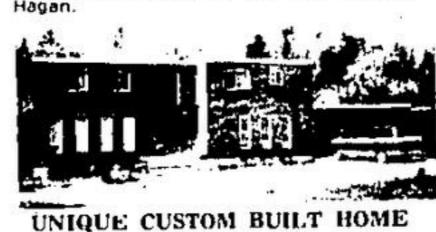
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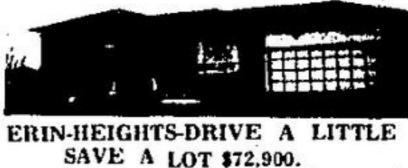
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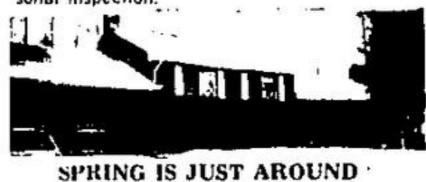


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