

RED DEER REVEALED

Heritage Walking Tours of Red Deer

SELF GUIDED TOUR 3

First Impressions of Red Deer

The wide, sweeping path of Ross Street has been a destination for visitors since the arrival of the railroad in the 1890s. In Red Deer's early days, the street was peppered with hotels, cafés, entertainment, and businesses – things that people couldn't find in the surrounding area.

Start your tour at the Canadian Pacific Railway Station and learn more about the highlights for visitors in years gone by. As you go, visit the ghosts of the renowned bronze ghost collection and enjoy the beautiful Veterans' Park, with its Cenotaph dedicated to Red Deer's fallen soldiers.

Arriving By Train

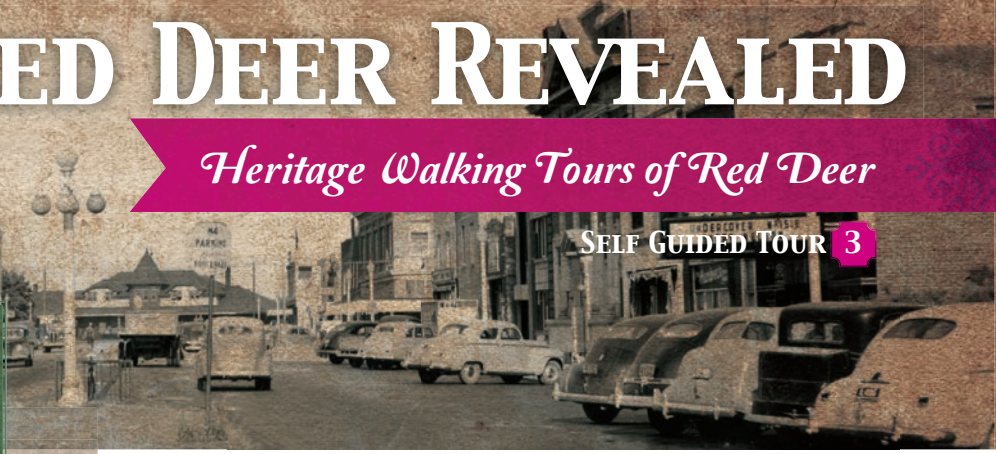
"Next stop, Red Deer!" For train passengers, this phrase would evoke eager anticipation. Whether these visitors were passing through or staying a while, arriving in Red Deer was often an exciting part of their journey.

Stepping off the train and onto the platform, people could look east along Ross Street – the entrance to the city. There were hotels and cafés, movie theatres and businesses. As the biggest commercial centre between Calgary and Edmonton, Red Deer was a draw for many people.

As you travel along Ross Street, you'll see the locations of these early attractions and enjoy a snapshot of an early visit to Red Deer.



Departure of the 187th Battalion, 1916; P-61-12



Looking west down Ross Street, ca. 1950s; P2831

1 Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Station

Perhaps people were coming – arriving in town full of dreams and expectations. Or maybe they were going – heading off to war or unknown destinations. The CPR Station was filled with activity and emotions, whether excitement and joy or, sometimes, uncertainty and sorrow. The station is an important and nostalgic thread in the fabric of Red Deer's history.

Image: Departure of troops, ca. 1914-17; P3203



2 Buffalo Hotel

Travellers in Red Deer's early days would often find shelter at the Alberta Hotel, later known as the Buffalo. Some visitors literally left their marks here: when a new bar was built for the hotel in 1965, demolition crews found messages written by early settlers on the wooden walls.

Image: Alberta Hotel, ca. 1909; P1872



3 Club Café

In 1929, George Moon and Charlie Chuck bought the second-hand store at this location for \$6,000. Then they spent \$20,000 renovating it to become the Club Café. The popular café was a draw for visitors, with people coming to enjoy the atmosphere and a good meal.

Image: Club Café, ca. 1969; N1282



4 Brumpton Store

Robert Cutsworth Brumpton constructed this building in 1892 to house his general store, which sold food, clothing, and housewares. In 1909, female visitors would have been relieved to take advantage of Red Deer's first public washroom for women – only at Brumpton's Store!

Image: Demarchais Plumbing & Steam fitting, ca. 1908; P115



5 City Hall Park



This park has been a gathering place for residents and visitors since 1901. For decades, the park was used for recreation, with summer baseball games and winter skating. In 1949, an ornamental park was developed,

creating a peaceful oasis in the downtown.

Image: Hugh Gilchrist and Mayor Harvey Halladay in the park, 1955; mg 306-2-12-89

6 Old Court House



Visiting Red Deer could mean going to the court house – for business, jury duty or other reasons. In 1930, the Government of Alberta wanted to construct this building in City Hall Park, but City Council vetoed the decision. It was a contentious issue for an election year, so Premier

John Brownlee visited Red Deer and worked with Council to establish this location for the court house.

Image: Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1968; A948b

7 Capitol Theatre



This building was an entertainment hot spot for decades. Starting in 1929, people came here to enjoy the bowling alley. Nine years later, it was renovated to become the Capitol Theatre. Patrons would

line up eagerly, waiting to see the latest films in the most modern movie theatre in town.

Image: Capitol Theatre, Library & Archives Canada, ca. 1950s; PA119486.

8 Farthing Block



For some visitors, getting their pictures taken would have been the highlight of the trip. In an era when cameras were uncommon, photographers like Hugh Farthing offered an important service. Farthing's studio in this building was a place for people to create lasting keepsakes.

Image: Elks Stampede Parade, 1947; P789

9 Home Grill

The first building here was the North West Mounted Police headquarters, built in 1891. Sadie Collins bought and demolished that building in 1936 and built her new café, the Home Grill. In 1947, she sold her café. The new owners renovated and renamed it the Ritz Café.

Image: Home Grill, ca. 1947; P217



10 Peacock Inn

John and Mary Konopaki had a flair for the restaurant business. The couple worked at the Club Café before opening the Peacock Inn here in 1948. A visit from Colonel Harland Sanders of KFC fame changed their destiny. While they continued operating the Peacock Inn, they also became owners of 10 other restaurants, including seven KFC stores.

Image: Courtesy Konopaki family, ca. 1960s

