

Exploring Alberta's Badlands

Written by Susan Hollingshead
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We watch Canadian Idol which airs during the summer months and one of the 10 finalists, Jaydee Bixby, (who we particularly like) hails from a place called Drumheller, northeast of Calgary. On our map of Alberta, Drumheller looks like it isn't too far away and today with the good forecast in store, it seemed like a good day to head there. Of course Canadian Idol wasn't the motivating factor for heading in the Drumheller direction; it is also in the centre of the Canadian Badlands and happens to be "dinosaur central". (And if Jaydee becomes famous someday, we can also say we've been to his hometown!)

First let me say, maps are very deceiving and secondly, Alberta is one humongous, massive, monotonous, prairie province. My goodness! The rolling, green farmlands go on and on and on into the horizon with the odd farmyard and/or oil rig plonked in the middle. It took us two and a half hours to get to Drumheller, partly because it is so far away and partly because we drove through 19 kilometres of slow-going road construction to get there.

We did stop to take some pictures of the badlands before entering town and we stopped for lunch at one of the few eateries in town before driving around to explore. Drumheller was cool because it is located right IN the badlands and as a result is quite a tourist attraction. That and the fact that so many dinosaur fossils have been found in the area making it a draw to many palaeontologists or budding palaeontologists! We also stopped to explore the Hoodoos, (seen in this picture) other interesting landmarks drawing folks to the area. What fascinated us with them was the fact that we could actually walk around among them to see them up close.

We drove back along a different route that took us through more miles of fields; some with

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pretty, blooming, yellow canola and often dotted with ponds thriving with small ducks. We encountered construction and once again our drive home was slow but it allowed us to stop and watch a large hawk scouting for his/her dinner as he/she sat on a large hay bale. Despite how long it took, we had a nice day and enjoyed checking out some of the area around Calgary. I have posted some additional pictures in Flickr so be sure to check them out!