

# CALGARY SINCE 1883 HERALD

## **Spring breakaway: Some fun destinations for the whole family - - near and not so far; [Final Edition]**

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So you completely forgot to plan a spring break jaunt, or discovered, much to your

horror, that flights to Los Angeles now cost about \$1,000 per person non-stop, never mind the fact hotels close to Disneyland were booked up eons ago.

Fear not, poor planner.

Spring break may commence in just one week, but there are still fun-for-the-whole family ideas, with availability, close to home and over the border in B.C.

We've rounded up a selection that fits into a day, weekend or fills up the whole week.

Around town

Where: The Calgary Zoo

If you haven't seen that spindly legged bundle of cuteness known as Richard the baby giraffe, you'd better get down to the zoo before he grows another foot. Better yet, sign up for Behind the Scenes with Giraffes, running April 1 from 1:45 to 3 p.m., for a close encounter with these fascinating African animals. Program cost is \$30 for adults and \$20 for children, call 232-9300.

What Else: Check out the zoo's other new arrivals. The South American building (formerly home to the primates), now houses two 20- year-old Andean condors, the world's largest flying birds. Over in the African Savannah, two eight-month-old ostriches -- the planet's largest non-flying birds -- joined matriarch ostrich Lucy in January.

There's More: The zoo's annual Easter Eggstravaganza takes place April 6 and 7, with egg painting, live entertainment and animal touch tables set up around the grounds. Go to [calgaryzoo.ab.ca](http://calgaryzoo.ab.ca).

Where else: TELUS World of Science

Check Out Kidstuff: Great Toys from our Childhood, an interactive exhibit that opened in February. It features classic toys from the '60s and '70s, such as Mr. Potato Head and Twister, and even has a life-sized Chutes and Ladders game that guests can step into and play on.

"Most of our exhibits are geared towards kids . . . but this is the one the parents get excited about," says Jennifer Laraway. Go to [calgaryscience.ca](http://calgaryscience.ca).

Kid Factor: Lions, tigers, bears and toys earn parent points among the toddler and grade school set.

## Weekend wander

Where: Edmonton

OK, the City of Champions traditionally has not been a spring break destination . . . until now. That's because it's morphing into the City of Celebrities from March through May, when movie stars Leslie Nielson, Ray Liotta and Chris Kattan arrive to film Christmas in Wonderland at West Edmonton Mall.

Kid Factor: While Mom coincides shopping with star gazing, Dad and the children can hit eternal kid pleasers Galaxyland, Ed's Rec Room, the Ice Palace and World Waterpark for their fill of rides, games and slides.

Package: The on-site Fantasyland Hotel has a Spring into Fantasy package that's valid Sunday to Thursday through June 28. Room rates start at \$149 a night and include two mall attraction passes and continental breakfast for two.

Go to [westedmall.com](http://westedmall.com) or [fantasylandhotel.com](http://fantasylandhotel.com).

## Island time

Where: Vancouver Island

It's not tropical, but at least Vancouver Island is surrounded by water. It's also actually experiencing spring during Calgary's spring break, as evidenced by the multitude of tulips on display at Butchart Gardens. But this visit, go beyond the garden and beaches.

What: **Horne Lake** Caves Provincial Park. Located inland of Qualicum Beach, a two-hour-plus drive north of Victoria, the park offers a guided Spelunking Adventure through its network of caves and marble passageways. The three-hour tour is designed for children aged eight and up. It departs daily at 1 p.m. and costs \$54 for adults, \$45 for children under 12. Go to [hornelake.com](http://hornelake.com).

What Else: Also near Parksville is [Morningstar Farm](http://MorningstarFarm.com), home of Little Qualicum Cheeseworks and a Calving Festival that runs through April 15. Call ahead to book a \$5 tour. Or, just show up and view sheep, goats, pigs and mini horses in the Kritter Korner; maybe watch one of the 60 expecting cows give birth; or learn about cheese making. The farm is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Go to [cheeseworks.ca](http://cheeseworks.ca).

There's More: Forget marine life. You may be on an island, but Victoria is also home to the Victoria Bug Zoo, a kid-magnet that showcases live creepy-crawlers from tarantulas to scorpions. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Go to [bugzoo.bc.ca](http://bugzoo.bc.ca).

Kid Factor: What tot or teenager isn't captivated by caves or critters?

Logistics: Direct flights from Calgary to either Comox or Victoria are about \$350 including tax. Alternatively, drive to Vancouver and take the ferry.

## Ski sojourn

Where: Silver Star ski resort near Vernon, B.C.

With its mining town-era main street and colourful Victorian architecture, Silver Star's main village is quaint. Being contained mid-mountain and boasting only ski-in/ski-out accommodations also makes it family friendly. What's more, the resort has consistently good spring conditions and 3,065 acres of terrain for all skiing abilities.

**Kid Factor:** Silver Star's renowned ski school will have tots and teens carving turns in no time. The resort's day care takes kids aged six weeks to five years old. If the progeny tire of the mountain, they can visit the tube park, ice skate on a frozen pond, cross-country ski or snowshoe. The resort also organizes regular family events, from movie nights to outdoor bonfires.

**Deal:** Stay at least three nights in select Silver Star properties and receive one free child lift pass per adult pass purchased. The deal is good through April 8 and some restrictions apply. Call 1- 800-663-4431 and quote 8B.

**Logistics:** Drive from Calgary or fly in to Kelowna. The resort offers a regular shuttle service between the airport and the village, a trip that takes just over an hour.

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Day trip

Where: Drumheller

An Alberta badlands hike may be a possibility, but a wander among four life-size Albertosauruses is a guarantee at the Tyrrell Museum.

The dino museum officially opens its new Cretaceous Alberta gallery April 5. It's a recreation of what the province looked like 70 million years ago, complete with tropical plants, dino sounds in the distance and a pack of Albertosaurus models so lifelike, their legs even bear scars.

**What Else:** The Nexen Science Hall opened last fall. There, kids as young as toddlers can learn the basics about fossils through interactive displays. Ice Age Mammals, a travelling exhibit that features a three-metre-tall mastodon skeleton and displays on climate change, runs until September. Fossil casting will be available on Easter weekend (sign up in advance).

**Kid Factor:** Young children may balk at the beasts, but their sense of dinosaur curiosity usually wins out, says Brandy Calvert, the museum's marketing manager. Kids of all ages go nuts for the Lords of the Land exhibit, where the theropods (a.k.a. meat-eaters), as well as their victims (the skeletons lying in death poses) are located.

The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, go to [tyrrellmuseum.com](http://tyrrellmuseum.com).