

NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK

NAHANNI CANYON KINGDOM - TEN DAY VIRGINIA FALLS CANOE



FOURTH CANYON, CANADA'S DEEPEST RIVER CANYON,
NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK AND UNESCO WORLD
HERITAGE SITE. CRE ARCHIVES

Nahanni National Park Reserve
named a "Must-See Place" by
National Geographic!



TRIP DETAILS

Virginia Falls to Nahanni

Butte: Approximately 240 kilometres (150 miles) with an elevation drop of 396 metres (1,300 feet)

SKILL LEVEL

Class II-III whitewater

RENDEZVOUS POINT

Fort Simpson Airport, NWT

DURATION

9 River Days

TRIP TYPE

Canoe

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 – MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN & CANYON FLIGHT

This is the first date listed for your trip. Your journey north from your home will be a refreshing departure. You will fly over the largest expanse of wilderness in the world with stunning views on cloudless days, pass through quieter and friendlier airports and generally begin to immerse yourself in the wilderness experience that is about to unfold.

You will be met at the airport and taken to a pre-trip orientation where lunch will be served (if you arrive prior, please make your way to your accommodation).

There will be a chance for last-minute questions concerning clothing, gear, packing and other details. You will also have time to transfer your gear into our river bags. You can leave unrequired items at our base/warehouse.

After loading our supplies and gear into the aircraft we begin one of the major highlights of the adventure: the

upriver flight. Flying over the majestic Nahanni Range and Ram Plateau, a visually-stunning panorama unfolds in front of our eyes. You want to be sure to have your camera on your lap! Past participants have stepped off the plane declaring, “If the trip finished now, I would have my money’s worth!”

Following supper in camp at Virginia Falls, your guides will provide further briefing with the techniques for living comfortably along the river. A short hike and last look at the stunning scenery before bed will remind you that you are in one of the most scenic places on the planet!

DAY 2 – VIRGINIA FALLS (NÁIŁCHO)

The culinary delights for which we are famous are once more whipped up by our talented guides. This is a day for exploring and photographing the area around Virginia Falls, nearly twice the height of Niagara. The vast expanse

of the falls captivates photographers and hikers with a tireless display of powerful drama. Keen and fit hikers may undertake an all-day expedition to the top of Sunblood Mountain for an excellent view of the surrounding area. Others can enjoy exploring the expansive area overlooking the brink of the falls. Your guides will lead a canoe skills session where everyone will receive one-on-one canoe instruction.

DAY 3 – PAINTED CANYON

After breakfast, your guides will complete the portage of camp equipment. Participants are asked to portage their own pack 2km to the “put in” below the falls. Most of this portage is on a boardwalk and downhill. Lunch is served on the cobble beach below the Falls.

Following a safety talk, we load the canoes and begin our descent. Leaving the roar of the Falls behind us, we

will ride high on the waves through the Painted Canyon. The excitement continues with our passage through the Figure Eight Rapids. We will find our camp close to the mouth of the Flat River. Throughout your journey, our knowledgeable guides will be sharing cultural and ecological interpretation, allowing you to immerse yourself in the Nahanni culture.

DAY 4 – THE GATE & PULPIT ROCK

We drift past the confluence of the Flat River and then enter Third Canyon, the walls of which loom 1,200 metre above our heads. This 40-kilometre canyon is created by the river slicing through the mixed strata of shales, sandstones and limestones of the Funeral Range.

We camp halfway through this canyon near The Gate, a 100 metre-wide gorge where the walls tower 460 metre above us. At the end of the day,



SLUICE BOX RAPIDS ABOVE VIRGINIA FALLS (WE DON'T RUN THIS!) NOEL HENRICKSON PHOTO

you can sit back and enjoy the scenery in the comforts that are the hallmark of our journeys.

DAY 5 – DEADMEN VALLEY (DAHAHTTH'I)

In the morning we do a short hike to the top of The Gate and are awarded a magnificent view of Third Canyon and Pulpit Rock. We then move on through Second Canyon and to the top of Deadmen Valley.

DAY 6 – INTO THE CANYON KINGDOM

After drifting by Headless Creek, we continue on to Sheaf Creek. Here R. M. Patterson and his partner Gordon Matthews wintered in 1928. We will then scout the rapids of George's Riffle.

These big waves are at the western entrance to First Canyon. We will camp near its end at Lafferty's Canyon with views of some of the hundreds of caves in the area.

DAY 7 – LAFFERTY CANYON

We spend the day hiking up Lafferty Creek Canyon to experience the sculpted rock of the Chasm of Chills. On a warm day we will enjoy a swim in the pools!

DAY 8 – KRAUS' HOTSPRINGS (TUŁETŞĚ)

After the waves of Lafferty's Riffle, we take a quick dip in Kraus' Hotsprings before bidding farewell to the canyons and entering the braided channels of The Splits.

Here a broad valley is revealed and the surrounding mountains, ridge piled upon ridge, form a dramatic contrast to the enclosure of the canyons. Lush boreal forest bordered by steep ridges form a "storybook" setting and provide a sanctuary to moose and bison.

DAY 9 – GREAT DENE WALL & NAHANNI BUTTE (TTHENÁÁGÓ)

Stopping in the village we will have an opportunity to see this traditional community (population approx. 120).

Remote yet surprisingly modern, a stroll into town provides insight into a culture far removed from most of North America. We will then board a Nahanni Butte River Taxi and be shuttled 15 kilometres down to meet our shuttle van on the shores of the Liard River. We then travel by road to Fort Simpson. You will need to book accommodation for this final night in Fort Simpson. The group can meet for dinner (not included) at a restaurant in town for a final farewell meal and goodbye to your guides.

DAY 10 – HOMEWARD BOUND

This is the last day listed for your trip. After a relaxing morning and time to look around the village of Fort Simpson, you will board your



homebound plane with a load of fond memories and a relaxed and renewed spirit!

Please note: The above is a tentative agenda and has been designed with much thought to capitalize on the most scenic and exciting parts of the river while making time on other sections. Your guides will adjust the schedule to make the best use of river and weather conditions. We adhere to the departure regulation system of the park which works to ensure that all river travellers have the same wilderness experience.

Under certain conditions (weather, forest fire, plane availability and upriver conditions), it may be necessary to make our upriver flight soon after arrival. On the other hand, we have occasionally found ourselves waiting for safe flying conditions. In any event, we will have supper and find ourselves camped in Fort Simpson or on the shores of

the Nahanni. If we are required to overnight in Fort Simpson you are welcome to camp or take a hotel room (at your own cost).

Hotel costs and meals while in Fort Simpson are not included in the expedition fee.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks are included from the pre-trip meeting until the final river meal. Any other meals off the river are your responsibility.

A wetsuit or drysuit is mandatory on this canoe expedition. Wetsuits are available free of charge for all canoes guests.

SUGGESTED READING

Your guides will carry a small reference library that will include field reference books. Following are some books for winter reading:

Nahanni – River of Gold... River of

Dreams by Neil Hartling

Nahanni – The River Guide by Peter Jowett & Neil Hartling

Nahanni by Dick Turner

Wings Over the North by Dick Turner

Dangerous River by R.M. Patterson

A Naturalist's Guide to the Arctic by E.C. Pielou

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