



GETTING HERE VIA CARMACKS

Detail description for journey from Whitehorse to Frances Lake

The worthwhile alternative: On the North Klondike Highway (Hwy 2) 180 km north towards Dawson City until Carmacks (2 h driving time). Afterwards 410 km on the Campbell Highway (Hwy 4) east, by-passing Faro and Ross River to Frances Lake (6 – 7 h driving time). **All in all 590 km or 8 – 9 h driving time.** This trip can be completed in one long day, but there are good options for staying overnight along the way (motels, B&B's, campgrounds).

The **North Klondike Highway** between Whitehorse and Carmacks is a well maintained, frequently traveled, paved highway and allows driving speeds of around 100 km/h. *Braeburn Lodge*, halfway to Carmacks, is famous for its tasty cinnamon buns, serves as gas station and offers motel accommodation. Nice stops along the way with campgrounds are *Fox Lake* and the *Twin Lakes*. **Carmacks** is a small place offering services such as gas station, shop and motel. Furthermore, there is a nice boardwalk along the *Yukon River*.

The turn-off to the Campbell Highway is 2 km north of Carmacks in direction to Dawson City. At this location is also the *Coal Mine Campground* with a snack bar directly beside the Yukon River. If you have plenty of time, it is worthwhile not to turn onto the Campbell Highway immediately, but continue 20 km north towards Dawson City visiting the *Five Finger Rapids* (the only rapids of the Yukon River). Afterwards either return to the beginning of the Campbell Highway or continue another 2 km north and take the *Frenchman Road*, which joins the Campbell Highway 40 km east of Carmacks. Along this narrow gravel road are *four nice campgrounds* (Tatchun Creek, Tatchun Lake, Nunatuk and Frenchman Creek). All these campgrounds outside of town sites are very simple equipped (no power and no running water), but very scenic and offering generous sites.

The **Campbell Highway** east of Carmacks is initially paved over a longer distance and later changes to a well-developed and wide gravel road. Depending on actual weather conditions it allows driving speeds of 60 – 80 km/h. The road leads through the remote backcountry and has only light traffic. It can be well traveled in conventional vehicles and is allowed for rental cars and campervans. A four-wheel drive vehicle is not necessary, but a full-size spare wheel is advisable. Break-down service is far and time-consuming to organize (cell phones have only reception within a few kilometres of towns and communities). In dry weather conditions dust formation from oncoming vehicles may reduce the visibility and in wet weather slippery passages may be encountered. Drive carefully. The entire distance from Carmacks to Frances Lake is long. Allow plenty of time. Finally, pay attention to the fact that there is one single gas station along the entire Campbell Highway in Ross River (Faro presently doesn't have one anymore). It is essential to fill up completely in Carmacks, and depending on your return route once again in Ross River.

Faro and Ross River are the only small communities along the way. Both are located 10 km off the main highway and are connected through access roads. **Faro** is a lovely ancient mining town, but offering only minimal services since the closure of the lead-silver-zinc mine. However, we highly recommend the *Blue House Bed&Breakfast* as a possible place to sleep. Faro (180 km east of Carmacks) is about halfway of the entire journey and makes for an ideal overnight stop. An interesting *Visitor Center* with interpretive displays about the ancient mine as well as nice walking trails make a detour to Faro worthwhile. Worth seeing in **Ross River** (230 km east of Carmacks) are the *swing bridge and ferry across the Pelly River*, just north of town. But don't forget the time: A side trip to Ross River, just for filling up the tank, possibly buying a snack and having a short look around takes easily one hour or more.

Along the Campbell Highway are several nice campgrounds, which are also recommended as rest areas: *Little Salmon Lake* (Km 81 from Carmacks), *Drury Creek* (Km 114 from Carmacks, also on Little Salmon Lake) and *Lapie Canyon* (2 km before the Ross River turn-off). East of Ross River the road narrows and gets more winding, requiring slower driving. It leads along the *Pelly River* (with various access points to the river) and over a nice plateau past *Finlayson Lake*. About 200 km east of Ross River you'll finally get to **Frances Lake**. There is neither a town site nor a road house or telephone here, but only an unmanned campground and a few wooden sheds. Don't expect to meet any other people here – except us!

Access to the boat ramp at Frances Lake

The Campbell Highway nowhere leads entirely to the lake, but at one place goes close past it. **About 200 km from Ross River**, at the **signpost „Frances Lake Campground”**, turn off in direction of the lake and drive **1 km STRAIGHT AHEAD** through dense forest to the concrete boat ramp (the access road to the campground proper turns off left again shortly before you get to the boat ramp; do NOT take this turn off). At the boat ramp you can park your car safely and we will bring you by motor boat to the lodge (30 min. ride). If nothing else was arranged, 5:00 pm is our pick-up time at the boat ramp.

Normally we are on time. In case we are delayed, please wait on site. Should you be behind schedule, we normally wait for one hour before we return to the lodge and will come back later in the evening. Maybe we will leave a note on the back side of the boat ramp sign. If you have the opportunity, please announce a big delay as early as possible by phone (1-780-628-5322, leave a voice mail message) or by e-mail (info@franceslake.ca).