



GETTING HERE VIA CARMACKS

Detail description of the 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, past 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&Bs, campgrounds).

The **North Klondike Highway** between Whitehorse and Carmacks is a well maintained, frequently travelled, paved highway which allows driving at 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 *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 of Dawson City. At this location, there is also the *Coal Mine Campground* with a snack bar directly beside the Yukon River. If you have plenty of time, it is worthwhile to make a trip 20 km past the Campbell Highway junction to see the *Five Finger Rapids*, the only rapids of the Yukon River. Afterwards, either return to the start of the Campbell Highway or continue another 2 km north and take *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) which are very simply equipped (no power and no running water), but very scenic and generously sized.

The **Campbell Highway** east of Carmacks is paved all the way to Faro and then turns into a well-maintained gravel road which allows driving at about 50 – 70 km/h. The road leads through remote backcountry and has only light traffic. It can be easily travelled in conventional vehicles and is allowed with rental cars and campervans. Four-wheel drive is not necessary, but a full-size spare wheel is advisable. Roadside service is often far away and hard to organize, as cell phone coverage is only available near towns and communities. In dry weather conditions, dust from oncoming vehicles may reduce visibility and in wet weather, slippery passages may be encountered. Drive carefully and always consider the possibility of oncoming traffic around blind bends. The entire distance from Carmacks to Frances Lake is long. Allow plenty of time and be aware that there are only two gas stations along the entire Campbell Highway, in Faro and in Ross River. It is essential to fill up completely in Carmacks and once again in Faro or Ross River.

Faro and Ross River are the only small communities along the way. Both are located 10 km off the main highway and accessible via access roads. **Faro** is a lovely old mining town, which offers only minimal services since the closure of the zinc-lead-silver mine. However, we highly recommend the *Valley Bed & Breakfast* as a possible place to spend the night. Faro (180 km east of Carmacks) is about halfway through the entire journey and makes for an ideal overnight stop. An interesting *Visitor Information Centre* with interpretive displays about the former 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 Faro or Ross River, just for filling up the tank 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* (1.5 km before the Ross River turn off). East of Ross River, the road narrows, becomes more winding and requires slower driving. It leads along the *Pelly River* (with various access points to the river, especially at the *Hoole River* bridge) 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, just 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 doesn't lead directly to the lake, but offers access to a short road that will connect you to it. **About 200 km from Ross River, at Km 172 from Watson Lake**, just past the **bridge across Money Creek**, on your left-hand side you'll see a **signpost for „Frances Lake Campground“**. Turn left (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 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 take you by motorboat to the lodge (a 30 min. ride). Unless otherwise 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. We may also 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 (1-406-206-4396, leave a voice mail message) or by e-mail (info@franceslake.ca).

Make sure to **get up-to-date road information** before heading out in a Yukon Visitor Information Centre or online at www.511yukon.ca. Especially backcountry roads can be closed for one or several days due to storm damage or forest fires.