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## Making Fresh Tracks

Tour operator Fresh Tracks Canada is dedicated to helping travel agents create unique journeys

By [Judy M. Zimmerman](#)



Fresh Tracks Canada can design custom tours for clients, including a visit with polar bears. // © 2013 Thinkstock

### The Details

**Fresh Tracks Canada**

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[www.freshtrackscanada.com](http://www.freshtrackscanada.com)

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After studying Fresh Tracks Canada's brochure, I opted to book a two-day trip with Rocky Mountaineer's luxurious Goldleaf Service from Vancouver to Banff with an overnight stay in Kamloops. A Fresh Tracks Canada agent promptly sent me a detailed description of three conveniently situated hotels that satisfied my limited budget, and I was pleasantly surprised to find delightful room upgrades with beautiful views at both hotels.

Guests who opt for Rocky Mountaineer's Goldleaf service ride on the top floor of a two-story coach. The train's glass upper dome is unobstructed, offering an awe-inspiring view of passing scenery and wildlife. Just down a spiral staircase is Goldleaf's dining room where gourmet breakfasts and lunches are served to guests. Menus include local specialties and a list of award-winning Okanagan Valley wines.

The first day, we went through the semi-arid desert in British Columbia's interior and, the following day, we traveled past emerald green, glacier-fed rivers and lakes and the looming Canadian Rockies.

Guests who book the less-expensive, new Silverleaf Service ride in a single-level dome with oversize windows and receive hot entree options and wine served at their seats.

For Fresh Tracks Canada clients who are coordinating their rail journey with other independent travel plans in Canada, cost is not a factor.

"The price is exactly the same, whether a client purchases a ticket through Rocky Mountaineer directly or through Fresh Tracks Canada," said Kimberly MacAulay, vice president of sales and marketing for Fresh Tracks Canada.

Nancy Dery, manager of communications for Rocky Mountaineer, encourages the use of wholesalers.

"Travelers who want an ultimate vacation where the Rocky Mountaineer is a part of their itinerary will benefit the most from booking with a wholesaler such as Fresh Tracks Canada," she said.

I met Fresh Tracks Canada CEO and owner, John Parker, at a media event in San Francisco last spring and, after chatting with him, I discovered that his company of 20 employees, based in Vancouver, B.C., is well-versed in just about every type of travel in the country.

Fresh Tracks Canada offers a range of itineraries from train journeys through the Canadian Rockies and grizzly bear tours at remote mountain lodges to exploring the Arctic onboard a tundra buggy and viewing polar bears.

"We know Canada better than any other travel company," said Parker. "Our inside knowledge and attention to detail is what makes us special. Fresh Tracks Canada specializes in planning unique, tailor-made vacations. We can customize anything in Canada — any activity, any transportation — quickly and affordably."

Fresh Tracks Canada is not only an easy choice for travelers, but the tour operator is also dedicated to working with travel agents.

"Agents can tell us what their clients are looking for, and we'll put it together for them," said Parker. "We can also offer promotional ideas for their target audience."

More than 90 percent of Fresh Tracks Canada's clients come from the U.S., Australia and the U.K. Almost all prefer to travel independently rather than on group tours, with arranged guided and day tours when requested.

"On most of our multi-adventure trips, it's the contrast of experiences that makes it exciting," said Parker. "Clients may include a self-drive tour through Eastern Canada, an extreme heli-hiking tour, a casual canoe adventure in a glacier-fed lake or hiking at a fly-in lodge. Family holidays and fly-drive vacations are a growing niche for us."

Other niche options include garden tours with locals in Victoria, riding a rickshaw on a gourmet tour of Old Quebec or a yacht cruise to the Queen Charlotte Islands or Great Bear Rainforest.

In addition to iconic hotels such as the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Fresh Tracks also books guests at luxurious boutique hotels, rustic mountain lodges and some of the Maritime's most treasured historic inns.

New this year are eco-adventures such as a nature walk along rugged cliffs, savoring a lobster bake on the beach or kicking off your shoes at a local Cape Breton Ceilidh (a traditional Gaelic social gathering with folk music, dancing and storytelling).

"Many of our tours involve some form of Canada train experience because trains are a great way to travel around our vast country," said Parker. "For example, the Charlevoix train's roundtrip daytime journey from Quebec, which features regional cuisine and visits to small French Canadian villages, is Eastern Canada's answer to the luxurious Rocky

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