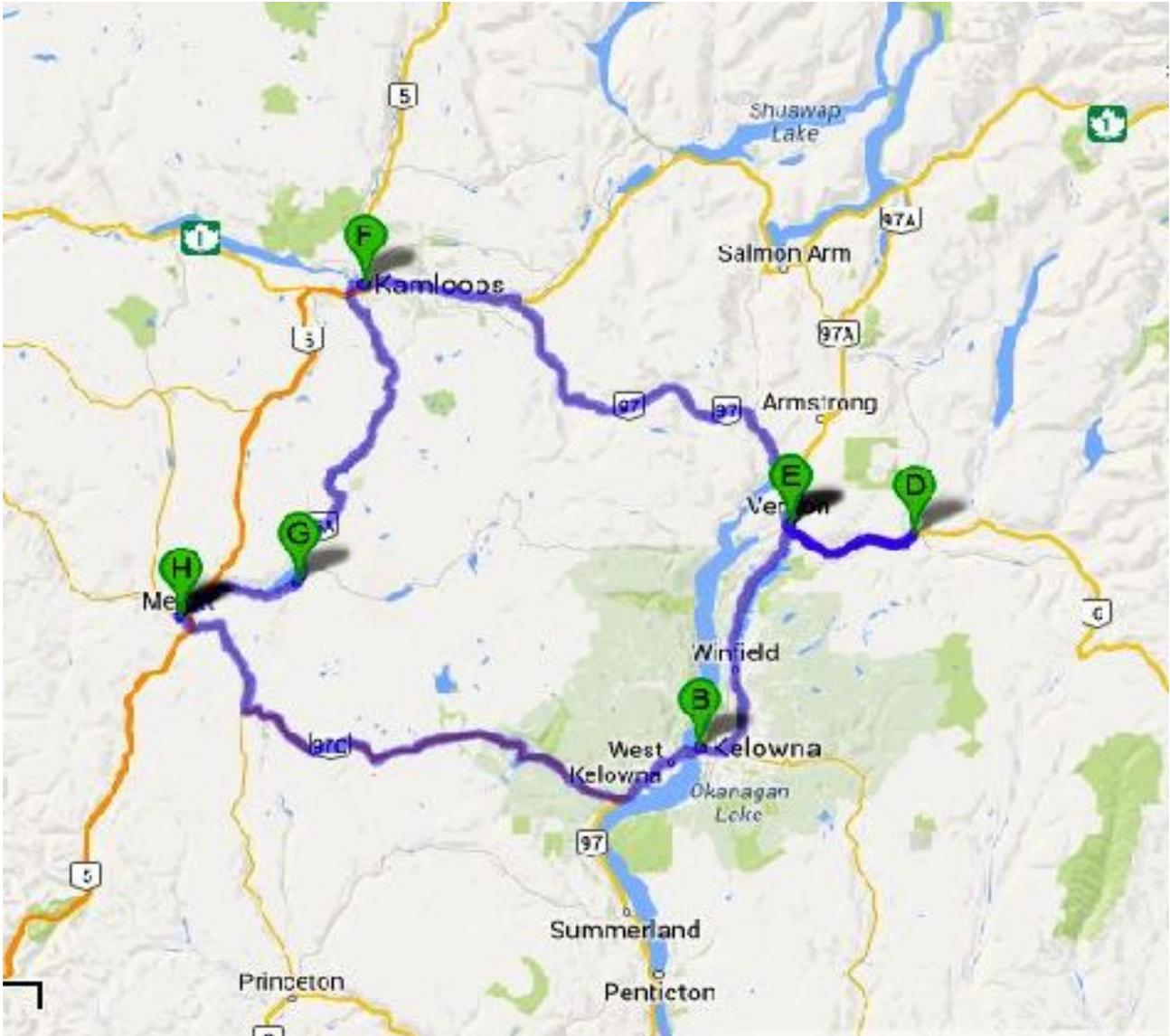


## ***HISTORY, CULTURE AND "FRANCOPHONIE" IN THE THOMPSON OKANAGAN REGION***

**A five-day and four-night circuit, guided in French**



### **ITINERARY:**

- Day 1: Merritt – Kelowna (127 km)
- Day 2: Kelowna
- Day 3: Kelowna - Vernon – Lumby – Vernon (108 km)
- Day 4: Vernon – Kamloops (117 km)
- Day 5: Kamloops – Quilchena – Merritt (98 km)

## PRESENTATION OF THE CIRCUIT



Nicola Ranch - Merritt



Vineyards around Kelowna

Through the lakes, the valleys, the vineyards, the orchards and the ranches that make the picturesque landscapes of the magnificent Thompson-Okanagan region, we can trace the history of a people. Among others, this population was comprised of Francophone pioneers from Canada and Europe, who lived in this part of the world in the second half of the 1800s.

"Voyageurs", labourers, missionaries, miners and land owners — they all helped to shape the identity of this region while contributing to its economic development.

This circuit will help you learn more about the history of these pioneers in Merritt, Kelowna, Vernon, Lumby and Kamloops. You will also discover the history of the region's First Nations, the Salish, Westbank and Shuswap Nations, who have lived in the region for millennia. In fact, the history of Francophones in BC and in Canada in general is closely linked to that of the indigenous people, who shared their knowledge with them and helped them adapt to their new environment.

**N.B.:** The underlined businesses and organizations offer services in French.

## DETAILS OF THE CIRCUIT

### DAY 1: MERRITT - KELOWNA (127 km)

Meet in the late morning at the Visitor Centre in Merritt (269 km north-east of Vancouver) located in **Baillie House**, the oldest building in the city dating back to 1809.

Situated in a region teeming with ranches and approximately 150 lakes, located at the junction of the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers, the City of Merritt is the country music capital of Canada and boasts a rich and diverse cultural history based on First Nations' heritage, the fur trade, cattle ranching and mining.

Lunch at the restaurant of the **Coldwater Hotel** (built in 1908), followed by a visit to the **Nicola Valley Museum** to become acquainted with the Salish people's culture.

Departure for Kelowna. The drive on Highway 97C will offer some spectacular vistas in places, such as Trepanier Valley.

Arrival in Kelowna, where we will go see a "story pole" and an ancestral canoe at the Francophone school, **École l'Anse-au-sable**. These two pieces are a good illustration of the collaboration between Francophones and the local First Nations.

Check-in at the hotel, free time in town, then group dinner at the **Bouchons Bistro**, the flagship of French gastronomy in the Okanagan Valley.

Night in Kelowna, at the **Comfort Suites Hotel** or similar.



Baillie House – Merritt



A view of Merritt



The Coldwater Hotel



The road between Merritt and Kelowna

## DAY 2: KELOWNA

**Kelowna** is a culturally vibrant city, located at the heart of the Okanagan Valley, on the shores of the eponymous lake. Surrounded by orchards and vineyards that produce world-class wines, it is also a renowned lakeside resort.

After breakfast, a guided tour of the city will help you understand the importance of the Francophone presence in the region for the last 150 years. You will discover streets named Padosy, Bérard, Alphonse and Bernard; you will hear about families like the Léquimes, the Fortunes, and others; and you will learn the origin of the proper name “Kelowna”, which was inspired by Auguste Gillard — all genuine French names, either from France or from Quebec. After the tour, we will meet some French speakers at the **Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan (CCFO)**, located in a former Lutheran church. On one of the Centre's exterior walls, you will discover six murals depicting the contribution of Francophones to the history of the Okanagan.

After lunch, a visit to the **Okanagan Heritage Museum** will help you become acquainted with the culture of the Westbank Nation. We will then proceed to the site of **Father Padosy Mission**, which was founded in 1860. Aside from his primary objective as a Christian missionary, Father Charles Padosy, a French Oblate priest, introduced apple and grape growing in the region, therefore contributing significantly to its economic development. A number of French-speaking priests and families gravitated around Father Padosy and made their mark one way or another during that time and in the following years: Father Pierre Richard, Brother Surel, Cyprien Laurence, Auguste Gillard, Isidore Boucherie, Jules Blondeaux, Elie Léquime, Joseph Christien, Alphonse Lefevre, François Ortolon, Auguste Calmels, among others.

At the end of the afternoon, we will offer a guided tour in French of **Summerhill Pyramid Winery** near the Okanagan Lake. This will be followed by diner on site at the **Sunset Organic Bistro**.

We will return to the hotel in Kelowna for one more night.



The Okanagan Lake



Kelowna



Mural of the CCFO



Father Padosy Mission - Kelowna



Summerhill Pyramid Winery- Kelowna

### DAY 3: KELOWNA - VERNON - LUMBY – VERNON (108 km)

After breakfast, we will leave for Vernon and drive on a panoramic road surrounded by orchards that follows the shores and the beautiful sandy beaches of Lakes Ellison, Wood and Kalamalka. In Vernon, the oldest city in the Okanagan Valley, we will visit ***Girouard Cabin and Park***. In this small park, we will discover a tiny log cabin built in 1867. This was Vernon's first post-office as well as the home of Luc Girouard. He came from Quebec in 1861 to search for gold in the Cherry Creek, east of Vernon, and was one of the city's first settlers. Not far from there, we will also visit ***Pioneer Park Cemetery***, which was established in 1880 on a piece of property belonging to Luc Girouard. He is buried there, along with other pioneers.

We will have a picnic lunch in ***Davidson Orchards Country Village***, following an orchard tour by cart and a visit to the Farmer's Market.

Visit to the ***Greater Vernon Museum & Archives***, where we will discover the history of the region through exhibits recounting the early days of the Interior Salish First Nations and the period of the fur trade and the gold rush, during which many French pioneers distinguished themselves.

Departure for the small community of ***Lumby***, beautifully situated at the junction of three valleys and a 30-minute drive east of Vernon, to discover thirty murals telling the story of the region and featuring names like the Bessette family, Alex Christien and Eva Leger. Return to Vernon. Formerly, Lumby was called "White Valley"; it was named after George Leblanc, who came with Pierre Bessette as a prospector around 1870 and became a landowner in the region

Return to Vernon, check-in at the hotel and free time. Dinner at the ***Intermezzo Restaurant***.

Night in Vernon.



Kalamalka Lake - Vernon



Girouard Cabin – Vernon



Davidson Orchards Country Village in Vernon



A vista of Lumby



Mural in Lumby

## DAY 4: VERNON – KAMLOOPS (117 km)

After breakfast, during a city tour, you will discover some other beautiful murals that tell **Vernon's** history and describe its heritage; one of them is dedicated to the town's multiculturalism.

Departure for **Kamloops** and drive on Highway 97 through a beautiful agricultural region, where cattle and horse ranchers have been established for several generations. Among the many ranches scattered along the route, we will visit the **Historic O'Keefe Ranch**, which was established in 1867; at the end of the 1800s, it became a small town in itself, with a Catholic church, a general store, a blacksmith shop, a post-office, etc. Lunch on site at the **Cattlemen's Club Restaurant**.

Back on the road, we will drive through **Falkland**, a small town whose economy relies on forestry and agriculture; on a hill 500 feet high, we will be able to see the biggest Canadian flag in Western Canada. Raised in 1992, the flag is 28 feet high and 56 feet wide and is supported by 8 telephone poles, metal cables and 18 cement blocks weighing 2 tons each! We will then drive through **Westwold**, which was called "Grande Prairie" until 1926, then through **Monte Creek**, a small village where American Bill Miner, the famous Gentleman Robber who is credited with inventing the expression: "Hands up", made quite an impression in 1906!

Arrival in **Kamloops**, in a semi-arid region scented with wild sage where ginseng is grown. The city was founded in 1811 by the Northwest Company, under the name of Fort Thompson. Because of its geographic situation at the junction of the North and South Thompson Rivers, the history of Kamloops and its surrounding area was marked by the nomadic culture of the First Nations, the fur trade, gold prospecting, cattle farming and the development of the railway with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific railway (CPR) in 1883.

Check-in at the hotel and free time.

Dinner at **Terra Restaurant** and night in Kamloops at the **South Thompson Inn**, a waterfront hotel in full nature.



Mural in Vernon



Kamloops



Historic O'Keefe Ranch



Historic O'Keefe Ranch



Falkland



Kamloops Heritage Railway

## DAY 5: KAMLOOPS - QUILCHENA – MERRITT (98 km)

After breakfast, visit of the **Kamloops Museum and Archives** with its exhibits on First Nations' way of life, the pioneer era, the fur trade, the gold rush and life in Kamloops at the turn of the century. This will be followed by a guided walking tour of Kamloops' historic downtown, told through its old brick buildings and other attractive features. Visit of an Indian reserve at **Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park**, with **St. Joseph's Historic Church**, the oldest church in Kamloops, built in 1887 by Catholic missionaries and Aboriginal people. Father Jean-Marie-Raphaël Le Jeune, a French Oblate, was its parish priest until 1891, when he launched the first issue of the "Kamloop Wawa", an illustrated newspaper written in English and the Chinook Jargon. In the park, you will also visit a museum and the archaeological remains of a winter village more than 2,000 years old that will introduce you to the culture of the Shuswap and Salish First Nations.

Lunch at **Minos Restaurant**, on a street bearing the French name "Tranquille"! As for the region's toponymy, many villages, streets, localities, lakes, rivers and streams north and south of Kamloops have French names. This attests to the presence and the role of people from France and Quebec in the area during the mid-19th century, whether they were missionaries, prospectors, landowners or businessmen: Louis Creek, Barrière, Vidette, Pavillon, Savona, Colletville, Trepanier Park, Alice Lake, Lac Le Jeune, Chapperon Lake, Genier Lakes, Lac du Bois, Brousseau Lake, Roche Lake and Lac La Hache, the Guichon and Chartrand Rivers, Prairie Guichon, etc.

Departure for Merritt on Highway 5A, and stop in **Quilchena** in the Nicola Valley at the edge of Nicola Lake to visit the **Quilchena Hotel** (1908). This Edwardian-style building is located on the ranch of Guy Rose, the grand-son of Frenchman Joseph Guichon, who founded Guichon Ranch in 1882 with his brother Laurent.

Arrival in **Merritt**, where we will conclude our journey by spending a few hours together while enjoying a great meal with musical entertainment in the saloon of the **A-P Ranch**, where André and Suzan Patry will host us in French.



The Court House - Kamloops



Secwepemc Park - Kamloops



Secwepemc Park - Kamloops



St Joseph Church - Kamloops



The Quilchena Hotel - Quilchena



A-P Ranch - Merritt