



DEMPSTER HIGHWAY, YT

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PEDAL TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN

Five ferries, four mountain passes, 1,935 kilometres of riding, 21 days, two rest days.

The numbers add up to one epic ride from Vancouver to Inuvik, Northwest Territories, with Cycle Canada's Tour Arctic. The ride begins with a short ferry from the city to Vancouver Island. A couple days of riding are followed by two ferries up to Skagway, Alaska, and the hardest part of the entire tour—a 1,000-metre climb over 14 kilometres to crest White Pass into the Yukon. Then it's up the Dempster Highway to the end of the road. A van hauls gear, breakfast and dinner are included and most nights are spent camping, except for a couple of well deserved hotel stops along the way. (July 19 to August 12; \$3,995; cyclecanada.com)

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VISIT A DARK-SKY PRESERVE

The most powerful telescope in eastern North America is normally off limits to the public, but every Friday night from mid-July until the end of August the research observatory at Parc National du Mont-Mégantic is open to one and all. Guided four-hour tours stop at the ASTROLab visitor centre and the peak's summit for a star-gazing view over one of Canada's few dark-sky preserves—just 60 kilometres west of the lights of Sherbrooke, Quebec. (Fridays, July 15 to August 26; \$30; astrolab-parc-national-mont-megantic.org)



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DO A BIG BIKE FEST

The biggest prize purse of any mountain bike event in Canada—\$10,000—is up for grabs at Blue Mountain's East Coast Open. In addition to the downhill, first held in 2010, this year's competition includes a cross-country race and dual slalom. The Collingwood resort expects the big money to attract world-class racers and one of the largest fields of any Eastern Canada biking event. Need more incentive? The comp is the same weekend as the Peak to Shore Music and Arts Fest, a free, three-stage, weekend concert headlined by Sarah Harmer. (August 12 to 14; bluemountain.ca)

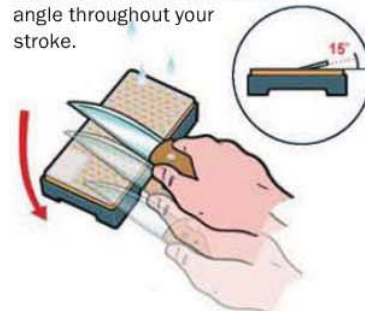
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STAY SHARP

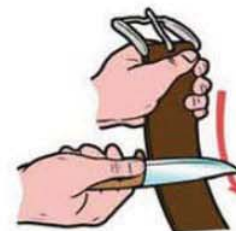
A dull knife is a dangerous knife.

Why? Because you need to use more pressure to cut things, making an accident more likely. "Regular honing and edge touch-ups work much better than bringing a completely dull edge up to sharpness," says Tim Foley from Canadian Outdoor Equipment, a retail store specializing in survival gear. Stay sharp with the following steps:

1. Use a diamond and ceramic sharpening stone. Lubricate it with a bit of water or spit.
2. Most outdoor sport knives have a 15- to 20-degree blade angle, so set the steel against the stone at a similar angle, with the edge facing away from you. Lock your wrist to maintain the angle throughout your stroke.



3. Pull the blade along the stone in one smooth arc, beginning with the butt of the blade and ending with the tip. "Pressing harder does not hasten sharpening," says Foley. Steady, gentle pressure works best. Do 10 strokes on one side, then the other, until the knife cuts hair or paper with ease.



4. Finish by stropping the blade on a leather belt or piece of cardboard. "This is what takes sharp to screaming sharp," says Foley. Use the same motion as with the stone.
5. Keep your blade clean and rust-free. In saltwater environments, only use stainless steel knives. Carbon steel blades need to be oiled regularly.