

Profile: Simon Khouri



Hometown:

Auckland New Zealand

Program:

Work Canada

Length of time spent overseas?

18 Months

Tell us where you lived and what you got up to in Canada?

We moved around a fair bit. I started in Vancouver and stayed for four or five months making little excursions around the country on my time off – Vancouver Island, Yellowknife & Whistler. We arrived late in the winter and stayed through spring. Vancouver is at its best in the warmer months. The beaches are a great place to hang out and a lot of good bands come through.

Over the summer we moved into the Rocky Mountains. I got a job doing maintenance in a campground hours away from anywhere. The days were long and sunny and involved chopping a lot of wood, but also a lot of fishing, swimming and beers by the fire. We were living in a cabin in the woods by a lake in the middle of the Rockies; it doesn't get more Canadian than that.

As the weather got colder we moved to Revelstoke just before the town started to swell with all the other ski bums. We were out of money and had no jobs, but we met some amazing people and made a lot of friends. It was possibly the best time of the whole trip. In the end I spent the winter bartending in a remote heli-ski lodge and split my time between riding the resort and heli-skiing.

In the spring and with all the snow melting we had no plans, so we built a bed in the back of our van and headed east across the prairies until we arrived in Montreal. We rented an apartment near the university and I got a job as a pool boy. From here we made more excursions on our time off. Like Vancouver, Montreal is alive in summer with concerts. If you go, watch the fantasy role players at Tam Tams.

From Montreal we headed west again but this time drove across the States, spent some time in Wyoming and then north back to Revelstoke to meet up with friends.

What are some of the experiences that you had which made an impact on you?

Living in Canada made me realise that the mountains are where I'd like to make my home.

Were there any times that were hard?

The hardest times always led to the best experiences. I was made redundant from my job in Vancouver just as my lease was running out. I had no savings and no plans. I took it as a sign to move and so drove into the Rocky Mountains and straight into an amazing job and lifestyle.

What is something unexpected/different/strange about Canada compared with other places you have lived?

The size blew me away, I knew it was big but driving across it really put it into scale. The summers were also unexpected; I think before I arrived I must have just been dreaming about the snow.

Type of job?

I worked a lot of different jobs; architect, bartender, pool boy, runner for a concert series, picking up rubbish at the town dump, maintenance/grounds keeper!



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What are your 3 favourite memories of Canada?

- 1) The opening day of Revelstoke Mountain Resort. We were all there... with our faces sore from grinning.
- 2) Leaving Vancouver, it was a warm summer day and we were leaving the city behind for nothing but open road.
- 3) Discovering 'paradise cove' in Ontario.

Do you have any advice for someone who wants a Canadian adventure?

The best parts of our trip were unplanned... actually 90% of our trip was unplanned which made it really exciting. So maybe don't stress the details too much. It will all work out.

What next or where to next for you?

I'm going to spend some time in Queenstown, regroup and enjoy Kiwi life for a bit. But there is still a lot of world to see, South America, Japan, Africa. Then there's also another season in Canada as a possibility, visit some good friends and get lost in an endless expanse of deep, deep snow.

Must do's?

There are so many must do's! Definitely stay as long as you can and see the seasons change - it's amazing all year. Settling in one place for the winter and forming a group of friends was by far the best experience I had. But also leave B.C., go north and experience 24 hour day light or east and practice your French. Oh and Salmo for Shambala, you wont be the same again.



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