

Adventures on the Rocky Mountaineer and Alaska Cruise| Part 1 | A pre amble in London and making our way to Burn, Canada

Another year, and another exciting Great Rail Journeys trip for us. These trip are addictive- the minute we land from one, we can't stop ourselves obsessively flicking through the next years brochure, pausing to number crunch- can we afford it? Before taking the plunge and booking it, taking advantage of

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in London and making our way to
GRJ's low deposits. The longer we can pay
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chunks of the balance off over, the better.



After months and months of hard saving, first-
ly for the trip itself and then enough spend-
ing money for us to do everything that we
want whilst in the trip, the time finally came
for us to pack our bags, wrap up all our work
affairs and turn that out of office on. Canada
and Alaska – we are on our way.

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When we booked our airport parking and ho-
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tel, we realised the parking began at 00.30
so we decided to use this as an opportunity
for a pre holiday London day. Coincidentally
at the same time, Keith discovered a Stanley
Kubrick exhibition that was on, and as a huge
film fan, wasted no time in booking our tick-
ets.

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Goodbyes were said to Jazz the dog, and
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Mum who has kindly moved into our house
whilst we are away to dog sit, and by 07:30
Wednesday, we were on our way.

Check in at London Heathrow's Renaissance
Hotel was quick and easy. Parking is on site
and we take our keys so no worries about
someone else driving Ruby. And a bonus was
that despite arriving at 10:15, our room was
already ready, so we dumped our cases,
made use of the in room safe and grabbed
the free public bus to Heathrow Bus station
where we jumped on the next Piccadilly line
train to South Kensington.

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No trip to Heathrow for us is complete without a beer at The Hoop and Toy, South Kensington followed by a meal at the wonderful Pierino's.

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We then had a brisk half an hour walk off of
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the carbs to London Design Museum, home
to the Stanley Kubrick exhibition this summer.

Keith was bouncing off the walls. I must admit, I've only seen 3 of his films; Barry Lyndon, Eyes Wide Shut and Full Metal Jacket- all of which I enjoyed. From the moment we stepped inside we were treated to an enormous collection of Stanley Kubrick's personal items on display including an Oscar, his editing desk and lots of original film costumes, including Laurence Olivier's costume in Spartacus, the Venetian Masks from Eyes Wide Shut and most notably, the creepy twins dresses from The Shining.

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A collection of various Venetian carnival masks displayed against a dark blue background. The masks include a white mask with a black hood, a gold mask, a mask with a large black feather headdress, a mask with a red and black face, a mask with a blue face, and a mask with a white face and red lips.



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Uniform worn by a French soldier during
the seven years' war (1756-63) -Left
Costume design by Helene Courtenay and Ulla-Britt Söderlund

Uniform worn by a British soldier during
the seven years' war (1756-63) -Right
Costume design by Helene Courtenay and Ulla-Britt Söderlund
Original costumes
Images - The Courtenays, London

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After the exhibition, Keith was quite emotion-
al - to say he (and I) enjoyed it was an under-
statement and if you have any interest in
Kubrick films I highly recommend a visit.

We made our way to Chinatown for some
dim-sung before a beer on the Thames at
The Tattishall Castle boat pub before making
our way back to the hotel at Heathrow. A
cracking day in London.

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Thursday

For once, we didn't have to set our alarms at an antisocial time! Our Air Canada flight de-

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partures at 13:05 so our check in time was
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10 ish.



Before that, we had the exciting meet and
greet with our Great Rail Journeys tour man-
ager. As with all their tours, throughout our
holiday we will have the company of 30 or so

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travelling companions, led by one of their
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tour managers, who we meet in Heathrow
and stays with us throughout the trip- his job
is to guide us, help us get the absolute maxi-
mum from our trip, and hold our hand
throughout.

After a quick chat with Alex Green, our TM,
we checked in our baggage and headed
through security with a couple of hours to en-
joy Heathrow's Terminal 2.

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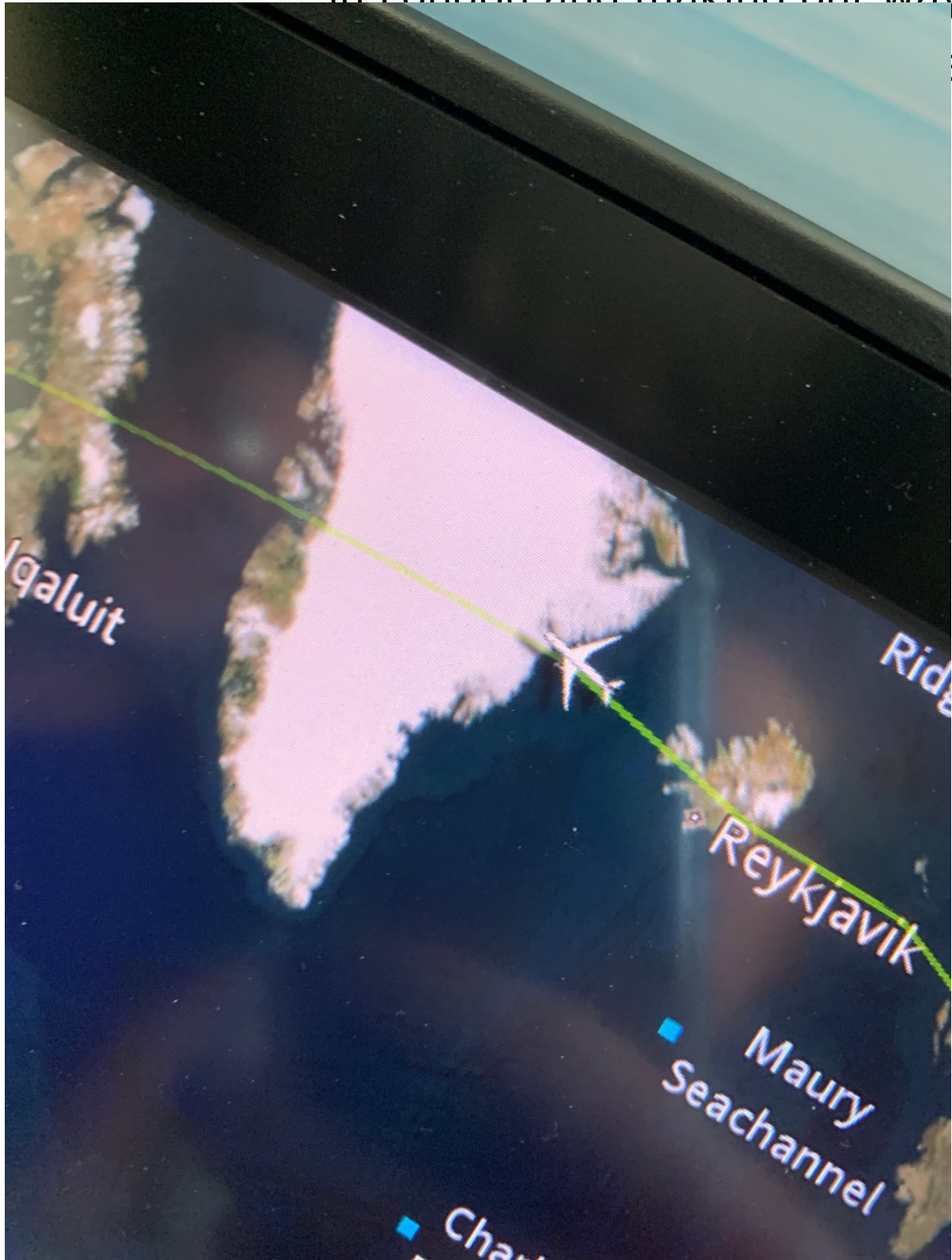


Our Air Canada flight was on time, and really a rather pleasant 8.5 hour flight on their Dreamliner before touchdown at Calgary, Canada at around 14:45 local time. We flew right over Greenland and got an amazing view of the mountains.

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Calgary is currently hosting its Stampede, famous fortnight of events such as rodeos and horse cart racing. As such, the captain treated us to a massive “Yeee haaaaa” just before landing, and the airport is full of people in cowboy hats and boots. Before we’d got out of the airport Keith had made friends with

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the locals! Banff, Canada

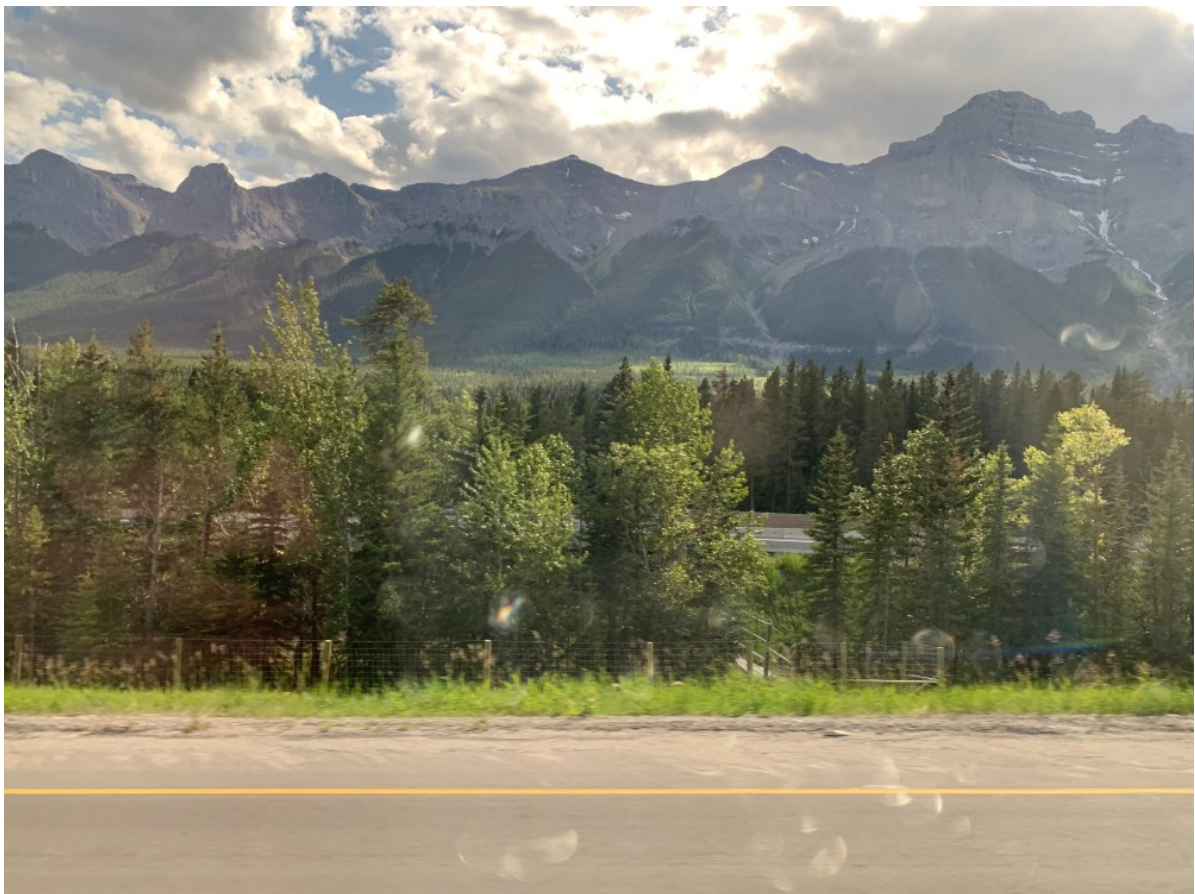
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Sadly we were not staying in Calgary to wit-
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ness Stampede events, our coach transfer to
Banff awaited. The trip took around 90 min-
utes and it didn't take long for the open
fields to turn into ski slopes, toboggan runs
and then into huge dramatic, snow capped
mountains.



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Our hotel, The Banff Ptarmigan Inn, was situ-
ated right on the Main Street so after a quick
check in, we jumped into the shower,
changed and went straight out again. Even-
ings are free time away from the group- a
perfect mix of having a tour group but hav-
ing alone time too.

Despite being up for almost 20 hours, we
were a little tired but wanted to make it to
9.30pm in an effort to beat the jet lag. We en-
joyed our first Canadian lager- Kokanee
lager- in the hotel bar, before taking a wan-
der down the high street to find a suitable
dinner place.

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Banff is full of restaurants of all different cuisines and gift shops. The buildings are cute wooden chalets and the backdrop is stunning mountains. We were lucky, the sky was a picture perfect blue sky.

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We opted for burgers at Eddie's Burger bar- a long standing burger joint which is very popular and as such we waited across the road at The Rose and Crown Tavern whilst a table became available. This was the perfect time to sample my first Canadian Gin - distilled across the road, The Park Gin was nice

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and smooth. Keith had a Keith lager!
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We enjoyed our “ Rocky Mountain burger” – an elk patty with jack cheese and onions etc- it was gorgeous and had a great chat with the really friendly bar men. Clearly they love where they live and work, and although we’ve only been here for a couple of hours, we can wholeheartedly see why.

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We made it until 9:30pm – before caving in and hitting the sack. Tomorrow we’ve got a full days itinerary- let’s see what time we wake up!

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