

# Wild Rides and Waterslides

– Crystal Palace and Magic Mountain

By Chris Robinson



*Chris and his young family have been bitten by the New Brunswick travel bug; here he explains why Moncton's famous attractions work so well for parents and children alike.*

***There is a problem with vacationing in New Brunswick: there is way too much choice of amazing things to do and great places to visit!***

Planning a vacation to the province with young children can be especially challenging as there is a temptation to try and do too much, to fit in just one more sight, one more of New Brunswick's

many unique experiences...And as every parent knows, this can be a fatal mistake: tired kids and long touring days are not generally a happy combination.

Moncton has the perfect solution to this dilemma. Actually, two perfect solutions: the family attractions of Crystal Palace and Magic Mountain.

Rain or shine, Crystal Palace is a treasure trove of fun rides and attractions that will energize and enthuse any youngsters from two years upwards. It is open

year-round and is Atlantic Canada's only indoor amusement park. And 'amusement' is right. For the older kids (they have to be 48 inches or more in height), there are the thrill rides of the Bullet Rollercoaster which takes you speeding and twisting around the Palace (screaming is mandatory), and the Waveswinger which demonstrates the scientific effects of centrifugal forces in a suitably stomach-turning fashion by flinging its willing victims around high above the park. Krazy Kars (a



souped-up bumper car ride) and Lazer Runner are also favourites of the older kids.

There's no shortage of rides for younger visitors too. They can take to the air in a gentler fashion with the Sky Flyer and Red Baron, take a rollicking train ride on the Rio Grande, dip beneath the waves on the Crazy Submarine and gain some early driving experience in Convoy. Parents find the old-fashioned Carousel ride a little more soothing and for full family participation, the 18 hole mini-golf course weaves its way around all the attractions.

Magic Mountain is only a few minutes away and offers families another wonderful way to have fun together, but this time in the open air and on – an in and under – the warm summer waters of the Magic Mountain Water Theme Park. Leave all your cares and travel paraphernalia behind – all you need is swim-wear and towels...and the kids, of course! Life jackets and lockers are available to rent, so just relax in your inner tube as the gentle currents of the Lazy River wind around an old steamship, or follow your offspring, if you dare, down the Giant Twister water-slides, including the aptly named Loop de Loop and Double Trouble.

Youngsters will love the

Puddle Jumpers Pond where they can meet Pinky the Whale and Gizmo the Frog. There's also a wave pool and mini-golf to keep them amused. Of course this will not do for older siblings. For them (and not for you – believe me, from personal experience!) there are the adrenalin-pumping thrills of the Tornado, a 400 feet enclosed 'dark ride' experience, and Kamikaze where you plunge 100 feet vertically at speeds approaching 60 km/hour.

Both of these attractions work so well as a family experience. Crystal Palace is adjacent to Champlain Place, the Maritime's largest single-level shopping centre with over 160 stores and

services, so parents can take turns to shop. We stayed at the Ramada Plaza Crystal Palace

Hotel which is part of the same complex, for ultimate convenience – we could walk from our room to the park without even going outdoors. Magic Mountain is next door to the famous Magnetic Hill with its weird, other-worldly experience of defying gravity – courtesy of a genuinely surprising optical illusion.

Best of all, each of these fun-filled spots are close by many other New Brunswick attractions that can be combined effortlessly with each other. We spent the morning at Magic Mountain, the

afternoon at The Hopewell Rocks, the evening at Crystal Palace and even saw the Tidal Bore in Moncton before bedtime! It was definitely a long day, the kids were certainly tired - but everyone was very happy.

## Travel Notes

Crystal Palace is located on Paul Street in the City of Dieppe, next door to Moncton (tel: 1877-856-4386; website: [www.crystalpalace.ca](http://www.crystalpalace.ca)). Full day tickets are \$15.50 for adults and \$13.50 for kids under 48 inches; family tickets for four are \$49.95.

Magic Mountain is off Route 2, exit 450 just outside Moncton (tel: 1800-363-4558; website: [www.gomoncton.com](http://www.gomoncton.com)). Full day tickets are \$21 for adults and \$16 for kids under 48 inches; family tickets for four are \$68. The park is open from June 12 to September 6.

Insiders tip: Consider the Family Getaway Package for a great deal – Two adults and two kids enjoy 2 nights' accommodation in Moncton hotels, plus full day family passes to Crystal Palace, Magic Mountain and Magnetic Hill Zoo, all for \$333 per family (tel: 1800-563-2489).

