



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Head-Smashed-In  
Buffalo Jump  
Inscribed in 1981

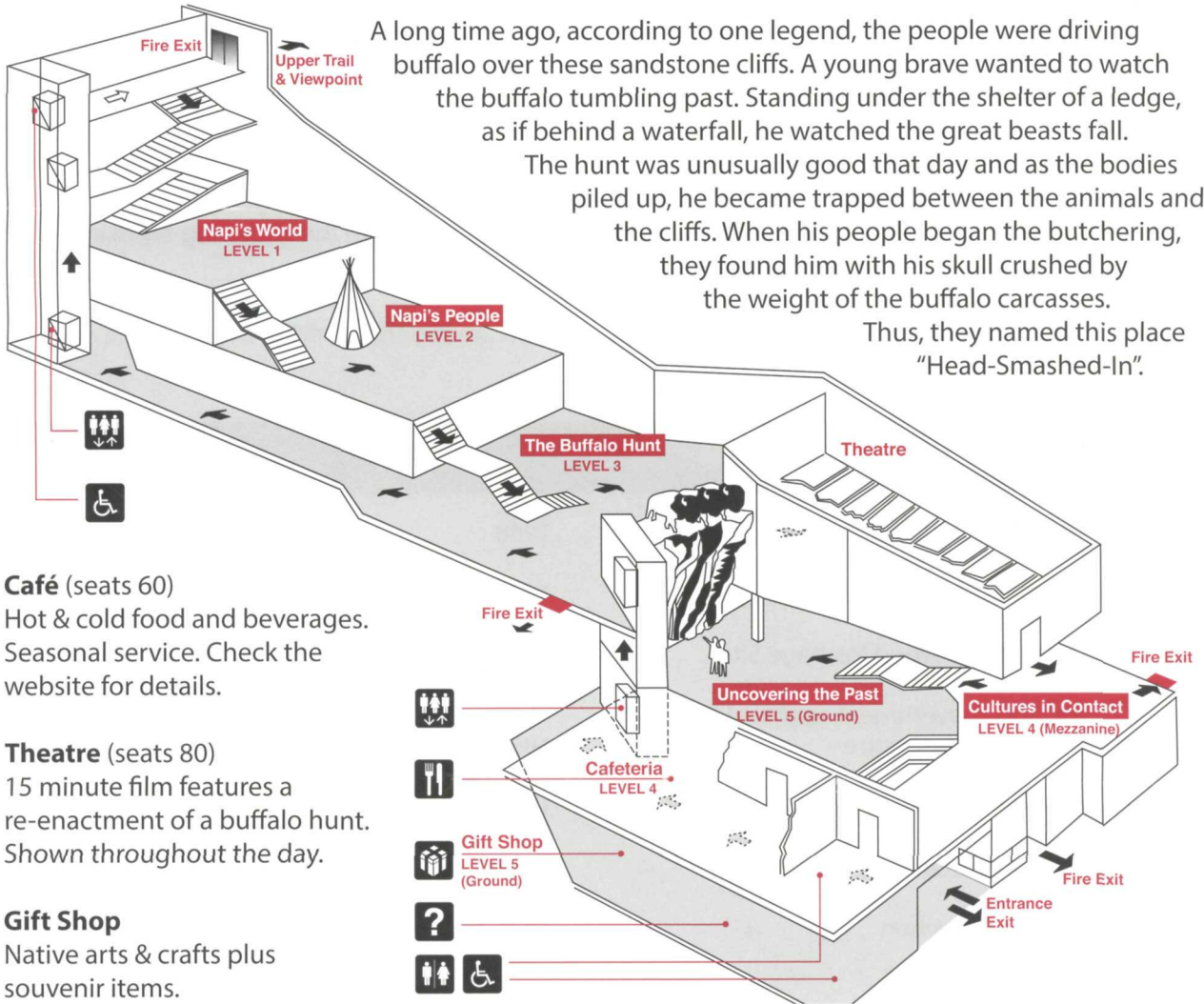


## Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site

A long time ago, according to one legend, the people were driving buffalo over these sandstone cliffs. A young brave wanted to watch the buffalo tumbling past. Standing under the shelter of a ledge, as if behind a waterfall, he watched the great beasts fall.

The hunt was unusually good that day and as the bodies piled up, he became trapped between the animals and the cliffs. When his people began the butchering, they found him with his skull crushed by the weight of the buffalo carcasses.

Thus, they named this place  
"Head-Smashed-In".



### Café (seats 60)

Hot & cold food and beverages.  
Seasonal service. Check the  
website for details.

### Theatre (seats 80)

15 minute film features a  
re-enactment of a buffalo hunt.  
Shown throughout the day.

### Gift Shop

Native arts & crafts plus  
souvenir items.

Enquiries and tour reservations

call: 403.553.2731

Visit: [headsmashedin.org](http://headsmashedin.org)

Free Wi-Fi

**Note:** access to Upper Trail closes at 4:45 pm.  
Last showing of the Theatre Film at 4:30 pm.



Alberta

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## Why is this place a World Heritage Site?

In 1981, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump as a World Heritage Site, placing it in the company of significant cultural attractions like the Egyptian Pyramids, Lascaux Caves, Stonehenge and the Taj Mahal.

There is evidence of human activity in this region of North America for at least 11,000 years. This buffalo jump bears witness to a custom practiced by native people on the Great Plains for nearly 6,000 years.

Thanks to their excellent understanding of topography and bison behaviour, groups of native hunters killed bison by driving them over a precipice. These communal bison hunts required much organization and special skills to lure buffalo from the gathering basin into the drive lanes and finally over the cliffs.

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump has become known around the world as a remarkable site that teaches us about Plains Buffalo Culture.

## History of the Modern Site

Designated a National Historic Site	1968
Designated a Provincial Heritage Site	1979
Designated a World Heritage Site	1981
Provincial Government approval for Interpretive Centre	1982, May
Ground breaking ceremony	1984, September 28
Start construction	1985, June
Finish construction	1986, October
Building occupancy	1986, December
Official opening with The Duke and Duchess of York	1987, July 23

The Architect, Robert LeBlond, received the 1990 Governor General's award for Architecture. Since opening in 1987, the Interpretive Centre has welcomed over 2.5 million visitors from around the world.