

Welcome to Banff

Rushing rivers, snow-capped peaks, alpine meadows, and glacially carved cirques make the wilderness surrounding the town of Banff a hiker's paradise. Trails lace the Banff area, ranging from low-elevation strolls along boardwalks to more strenuous full-day outings that lead seasoned hikers to some of the best alpine passes the Rocky Mountains have to offer. Choose a trail suitable to your needs and abilities and enjoy the wonders of Banff National Park.



Ratings

EASY

- Suitable for those with little or no trail experience.
- Flat to gently rolling with no obstacles.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

MODERATE

- Suitable for those with basic trail experience.
- Gently rolling with short, steep sections and infrequent obstacles.
- Moderate elevation gain or loss.

DIFFICULT

- Suitable only for those with trail experience.
- Long, steep sections with frequent obstacles.
- Major elevation gain or loss.

Estimated time to complete these trails ranges depending on trail distances, fitness levels, weather and trail conditions.

Plan Ahead, Be Prepared

Safety

Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards associated with outdoor recreation. Even short trips from the town of Banff can have serious consequences.

- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada visitor centre or visit parks.canada.ca/banfftrails for current trail conditions, warnings, closures, weather and trail classifications.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year. Dress in layers, bring extra food and warm clothing.
- Study descriptions and maps before heading out. Always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Bring your own water. Surface water may be contaminated and unsafe for drinking.
- Carry a first aid kit, bear spray and a satellite emergency communication device like SpotX, inReach or Zoleo, and know how to use them.
- Tell a reliable person where you are going, when you will be back, and who to call if you do not return: Banff Dispatch – 403-762-1470.
- Ticks, which could carry Lyme disease, may be present in the park. It is important to check yourself and your pet after hiking.
- Avoid wearing earbuds or headphones. Be alert at all times.

Snowy Trails

Snow can remain on some trails well into the summer. When trails are snow covered, route finding can be difficult and travel through deep or hard snow and ice can be unsafe. Be prepared and visit parks.canada.ca/banfftrails to check trail conditions before heading out.

Seasonal Avalanche Risk

Trails above the tree line (2 000 m) may be exposed to avalanche hazard at any time of the year and especially from November through June. Snow on steep slopes has the potential to slide. For more information on the avalanche hazard, visit parks.mountainsafety.ca or a Parks Canada visitor centre.

Recommended Packing List

- Trail guide and map
- Full water bottle or thermos
- High energy food
- Bear spray
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- First aid kit and emergency blanket
- Headlamp or flashlight with spare batteries
- Proper footwear
- Hat and gloves
- Hiking poles
- Rain/wind jacket
- Extra warm clothing in case of an emergency
- Fully charged cell phone
- Satellite emergency communication device like SpotX, inReach or Zoleo.

Roam Public Transit and Shuttle Services

Trails identified with a bus symbol indicate that the trailhead is accessible by Roam Public Transit and/or private shuttle service. Parking at trailheads is limited and fills quickly. For the best experience, take public transit or a shuttle. Find out more at parks.canada.ca/banff-transit or at a Parks Canada visitor centre.



Easy Trails

1 Fenland Trail

2.1 km loop
No elevation gain; 40 minute round trip
Trailhead: Fenland Trail parking area, west of Mount Norquay Road
On foot: Trailhead is a 20 minute/1.5 km walk from downtown Banff

Learn about the local ecosystem on this self-guided interpretive trail through old-growth spruce. This short loop is a pleasant escape from the bustle of town.

2 Marsh Loop

2.6 km loop
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site
On foot: Trailhead is a 30 minute/2 km walk from downtown Banff

Roam Route 4

This trail encircles a wetland filled from hot springs flowing out of the lower slopes of Sulphur Mountain. Due to heavy horse use, the Marsh Loop tends to be muddy after rain.

3a Sundance Canyon

3a) 3.7 km one way
Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m
2 hour round trip
3a + 3b) 3.7 km one way plus 1.6 km moderate loop
Elevation gain 155 m, elevation loss 60 m
3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site
On foot: Trailhead is a 30 minute/2 km walk from downtown Banff

Roam Route 4

Follow the paved trail beyond the Cave and Basin National Historic Site. Within a few minutes, views open up to a mountain panorama across the Bow River. After a gentle yet steady climb away from the river, the paved section ends and a moderately difficult trail loops through a water-filled canyon.



4a Spray River East and West

4a) 5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead (Golf Course Road) to Spray River bridge
Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 80 m
4b) 5.6 km one way from Spray River bridge to Spray River West trailhead
Elevation gain 70 m, elevation loss 105 m
3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Spray River East trailhead on the Golf Course Road
On foot: Trailhead is a 30 minute/2.2 km walk from downtown Banff

Often done as a loop, these two lengthy but relatively easy forested trails are popular with hikers, cyclists and horseback riders. They traverse rolling terrain along either side of the Spray River. A short walk around the Fairmont Banff Springs links the east and west trailheads via a small scenic bridge.

5 Tunnel Campground Loop

6.4 km loop
Elevation gain 70 m; 1.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Start at the Hidden Ridge Resort Roam Transit stop
On foot: Trailhead is a 35 minute/2.5 km walk from downtown Banff

Roam Route 2

This lightly forested trail can be joined at any number of points from within the campground. There is no designated parking lot—walk or take Roam Public Transit from downtown to access this trail.

6 Stewart Canyon

1.5 km one way
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area

Roam Route 6

From the day-use area, this low elevation trail follows the Lake Minnewanka reservoir shoreline to a bridge spanning the walls of Stewart Canyon.

7 Johnson Lake

2.8 km loop
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
Trailhead: Johnson Lake Day-use Area

Roam Route 6

This circuit around the lake crosses open slopes, passes some of Alberta's oldest Douglas fir trees, and detours around a shallow bay where waterfowl often rest. This hike offers views of Cascade Mountain and Mount Rundle.

8 Sunshine Meadows

10 km of trails
Elevation gain 200 m
4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Sunshine Village, accessible by a fee-based gondola from the Sunshine Village parking area from early July to early September

Sunshine Shuttle

The most popular trail in this network crests the Continental Divide and descends to a viewpoint at Rock Isle Lake. From there, you can hike the slightly more challenging Grizzly-Larix Lakes Loop, continue on the Twin Cairns-Meadow Park Trail or hike up to Standish viewpoint. Detailed trail maps are available through Sunshine Village.

9a Johnston Canyon / Ink Pots

9a) 1.2 km one way to the Lower Falls
Elevation gain 50 m; 1 hour round trip
9a + 9b) 2.5 km one way to the Upper Falls
Elevation gain 120 m; 2 hour round trip
9a + 9b + 9c) 5.7 km one way to the Ink Pots
Elevation gain 330 m, elevation loss 140 m
4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Johnston Canyon Day-use Area

Roam Route 9

This busy trail takes you into the depths of the canyon on wide paths and narrow bridges with railings that lead to the Lower Falls and to the spectacular 30 metre-high Upper Falls. For a unique perspective, continue 265 m further to the viewpoint at the top of the Upper Falls. Beyond the falls, a forested trail continues up and down to a meadow where water bubbles from deep below the Earth's surface into shallow pools called the Ink Pots.

10 Silverton Falls

0.9 km one way
Elevation gain 90 m; 40 minute round trip
Trailhead: Rockbound Lake parking area

Roam Route 8S to Castle Junction

This hike branches off the Rockbound Lake Trail at the 0.3 km mark. It ends on an exposed hillside at the base of a waterfall that cascades over a series of narrow ledges.

11 Boom Lake

5.1 km one way
Elevation gain 175 m; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Boom Lake Day-use Area

This gradual and easy ascent leads hikers through a picturesque forest to a large alpine lake surrounded by mountains.

Moderate Trails

12 Sulphur Mountain

5.5 km to top of gondola, plus 0.5 km to Sanson Peak
Elevation gain 655 m; 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Banff Upper Hot Springs parking area

Roam Route 1

Switchbacks on the slopes of Sulphur Mountain provide a steady uphill hike to a summit renowned for its expansive mountain views. At the top, enjoy the 0.5 km boardwalk along the ridge ending at Sanson Peak. Here, you will find the Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station National Historic Site and the 1903 weather observatory. From the boardwalk, return on the same trail to the parking lot. Alternatively, take the old fire road known as the Sulphur Mountain Westside Trail (5.4 km) to Sundance Trail, ending at the Cave and Basin National Historic Site (2.6 km). Please note that if you choose to go down to the westside trail, you will need to find your own transportation back to the Sulphur Mountain trailhead.



13 Tunnel Mountain Summit

2.4 km one way
Elevation gain 260 m; 2 hour round trip
Trailhead: Lower parking area on St. Julien Road
On foot: Trailhead is a 15 minute/1 km walk from downtown Banff

Accessible from downtown Banff, this trail switchbacks to a low summit with sweeping views across the town, Bow Valley and Mount Rundle rising dramatically to the south.

14 Surprise Corner to Hoodoos

4.8 km one way
Elevation gain 115 m; elevation loss 90 m
3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Surprise Corner, east end of Buffalo Street
On foot: Trailhead is a 20 minute/1.6 km walk from downtown Banff

This pleasant trail passes below the steep cliffs of Tunnel Mountain and meanders along the Bow River. Be aware of the many branching trails that form part of the Tunnel Mountain biking trails network. Always stay on the most southeast trail. As the final section of trail ascends, views open up across the Bow Valley to Mount Rundle. In summer, Roam Public Transit route 2 provides an easy option for returning to town from nearby Tunnel Mountain campground.

15 Upper Stoney

2.1 km one way
Elevation gain 190 m; 1.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Kiosk at the south end of Mount Norquay parking area

Norquay Shuttle

Climb through the forest to enjoy views of Cascade Mountain and the Bow Valley from Stoney Lookout. Along the way, the trail passes through a forest of trees covered in wispy lichen.

16 Cascade Amphitheatre

7.7 km one way
Elevation gain 640 m, elevation loss 150 m
6 hour round trip
Trailhead: Kiosk at the south end of Mount Norquay parking area

Norquay Shuttle

From the ski-area lodge, walk the gravel road all the way to the third chairlift (Mystic Express) where the single track trail starts. Allow a full day for a return trip through the forest, opening to a meadow surrounded by a natural amphitheatre. From the maintained trail, experienced scramblers with proper equipment can attempt the summit of Cascade Mountain. Get route finding information in the *Scrambler's Guide to Cascade Mountain* available at parks.canada.ca/banff-brochures or a Parks Canada visitor centre.

17 C-Level Cirque

3.9 km one way
Elevation gain 455 m; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Upper Bankhead Day-use Area

Hike past the historic foundations and vents from the abandoned Bankhead mining operation on your way to a massive glacially-carved cirque on the cool northern face of Cascade Mountain.



Healy Pass

8.8 km one way
Elevation gain 655 m; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Sunshine Village parking area behind the main gondola building

Sunshine Shuttle

This trail follows Healy Creek to its source amid open meadows above the treeline. Wildflowers bloom profusely from mid-July to late August, and scattered alpine larches turn a magnificent golden yellow in late September.

19a Bourgeau Lake / Harvey Pass

19a) 7.5 km one way
Elevation gain 725 m; 6 hour round trip
19a + 19b) 9.7 km one way
Elevation gain 1020 m; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Bourgeau Lake parking area. Parking on the highway is illegal.

A steady climb through lush forest and across mountain streams lead to Bourgeau Lake which is enclosed in a glacially-carved amphitheatre. From the lake, a 2.2 km more difficult trail continues upward to Harvey Pass where exceptional views extend to peaks along the Continental Divide.

20 Rockbound Lake

8.4 km one way
Elevation gain 760 m; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Rockbound Lake parking area

Roam Route 8S to Castle Junction

A long steady climb through a mixed forest leads behind the distinctive cliffs of Castle Mountain to open meadows and flower-fringed Tower Lake, 7.5 km from the trailhead. The trail then climbs a low cliff band and emerges in a glacial cirque filled by Rockbound Lake.



21 Castle Lookout

3.7 km one way
Elevation gain 550 m; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Castle Lookout parking area

In the mid-20th century, numerous fire towers were erected around Banff National Park where spotters could detect flames from afar. This trail ends where a tower once stood. From here, enjoy the sweeping views of the Bow Valley.

22a Vista Lake / Arnica Lake / Twin Lakes

22a) 1.4 km one way
Elevation gain 120 m; 1.5 hour round trip
22a + 22b) 5 km one way
Elevation gain 580 m, elevation loss 120 m
5 hour round trip
22a + 22b + 22c) 8 km one way
Elevation gain 715 m, elevation loss 315 m
6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Vista Lake viewpoint on Highway 93 South, on the east side of the road. Parking on the highway is illegal.

Lose elevation to Vista Lake before you gain it en route to Arnica Lake; the views and variety make this destination worth the ups and downs. Hike under a canopy of larch trees and through a mosaic of wildflowers while the Continental Divide guides you to Arnica and Twin lakes.

23 Stanley Glacier

4.2 km one way
Elevation gain 365 m; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Stanley Glacier parking area in Kootenay National Park. Parking on the highway is illegal.

This popular trail climbs a regenerating forest of lodgepole pines, willows and wildflowers before it opens up to clear views of Stanley Glacier and small waterfalls.

Difficult Trails

24a 24b 24c Aylmer Lookout / Aylmer Pass

6 + 24a + 24b) 11.8 km one way
Elevation gain 560 m; 7 to 8 hour round trip
6 + 24a + 24c) 13.5 km one way
Elevation gain 805 m; 8 to 9 hour round trip
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area

Roam Route 6

From the day-use area, follow the Lake Minnewanka reservoir shoreline for 7.8 km to the Aylmer Pass junction, then embark on a steady 2.3 km climb to a second junction. At this intersection, either follow signs and continue onto Aylmer Pass (3.4 km one way), or take an out-and-back trip to Aylmer Lookout (1.7 km one way). Aylmer Lookout Trail climbs to a decommissioned fire lookout with a view of Lake Minnewanka reservoir and the surrounding mountains. Aylmer Pass opens to wide meadows of wildflowers and views of the slate-grey Palliser Range.

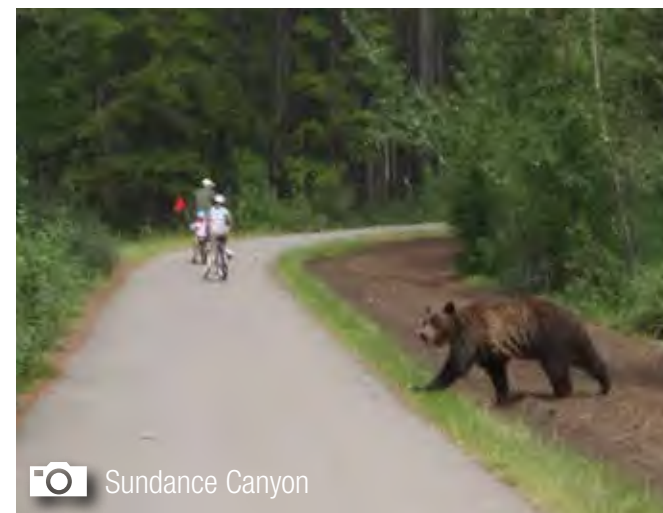
Bear warnings, restrictions and closures are common throughout summer. Visit parks.canada.ca/banfftrails to get current trail information.

25 Cory Pass Loop

13 km loop
Elevation gain 915 m; 6 hour round trip
Trailhead: Fireside Day-use Area

The unobstructed view of Mount Louis, an imposing limestone monolith, is worth the strenuous uphill trek to Cory Pass. Rather than returning via the same route, energetic hikers have the option of descending into the Gargoyles Valley before returning to the trailhead via Edith Pass. **Route finding can be challenging beyond Cory Pass.**

Wildlife and People



Banff National Park is home to wildlife including elk, wolves, cougars, grizzly bears and black bears. To successfully raise their young and sustain a healthy population, wildlife need access to as much quality habitat with as few human surprises as possible.

Be aware of possible encounters with wildlife in all areas of the park, including paved trails and roads.

Tips:

- Always carry bear spray, ensure it is accessible, and know how to use it. Visit parks.canada.ca/bearspray for more information. Bear spray is available at the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and retail outlets in the town of Banff.
 - Make noise. Being quiet puts you at risk for sudden wildlife encounters. Be alert through shrubby areas, near running water and when approaching blind corners. Travel in tight groups and always be aware of your surroundings.
 - Report bear, cougar, wolf and coyote sightings and encounters to Banff Dispatch when it is safe to do so so: 403-762-1470.
- Visit parks.canada.ca/banff-wildlifesafety to learn more about keeping yourself safe.

Human Food Kills Wildlife

Wildlife come in all sizes: squirrels, chipmunks and birds, as well as larger animals such as bears and elk. Wildlife need to find their own natural food sources, not yours.



Do not feed any wildlife.



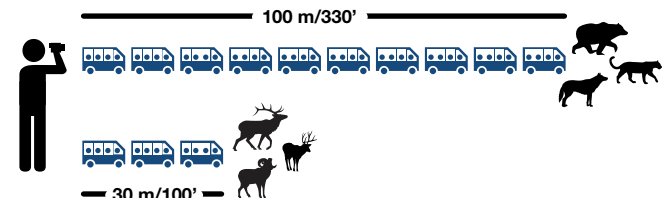
Do not litter.



Pack out what you pack in. Use the wildlife-proof garbage bins at the start of the trail to dispose of all unwanted food and garbage. Otherwise, be prepared to pack it out.

Give Wildlife Space

If you approach wildlife, you put yourself in danger. You may also cause animals to lose their natural fear of people. Give them lots of space:



Drones Disturb Wildlife



Drones/UAVs are prohibited in all national parks as they disturb wildlife. Leave your drone at home or in your vehicle. **If you witness the use of a drone in Banff National Park, please report the incident to Banff Dispatch: 403-762-1470.**

Dogs

We recommend leaving your dog at home if you plan to camp, hike or go into the backcountry. Dogs cause stress for wildlife as they may be seen as a threat. They can trigger aggressive behaviour from wildlife such as grizzly bears and elk. To prevent unsafe situations for yourself, your dog, wildlife and other people, it is your responsibility to:



Ensure your dog is on a leash and under physical control at all times.



Pick up and dispose of your pet's waste in wildlife-proof garbage bins.

Dogs are not allowed on some trails: parks.canada.ca/banfftrails



Trail Etiquette

Show courtesy to fellow trail users:

- Leave what you find—it is the law. Natural and cultural resources such as rocks, fossils, artifacts, horns, antlers, wildflowers and nests are protected and must be left undisturbed for others to discover and enjoy.
- If you are too far away to use the toilets provided at the trailheads, dispose of human waste at least 100 m from any water source. Bury solid human waste in a hole 15 cm deep. Pack out your toilet paper.
- To prevent damage to vegetation, stay on designated trails at all times.
- Trails are used by a variety of outdoor enthusiasts. Be sure to yield to others.
- Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

More Information

Banff Visitor Centres:
224 Banff Avenue and 327 Railway Avenue
403-762-1550 / parks.canada.ca/banff

Trail Conditions Report:
parks.canada.ca/banfftrails

Mountain Safety:
parks.mountainsafety.ca

Environment Canada Weather Forecast:
403-762-2088
weather.gc.ca

Banff Dispatch:
403-762-1470

Guidebooks and topographic maps are available at the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and retail outlets in the town of Banff.

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or satellite phone: 403-762-4506.
Cell phone coverage is not reliable throughout the national park.

Trail Guide

- 1

Fenland Trail
2.1 km loop
No elevation gain; 40 minute round trip
- 2

Marsh Loop
2.6 km loop
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
- 3a

Sundance Canyon
3a) 3.7 km one way
Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m; 2 hour round trip
3a + 3b) 3.7 km one way plus 1.6 km moderate loop
Elevation gain 155 m, elevation loss 60 m; 3 hour round trip
- 3b
- 4a

Spray River East and West
4a) 5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead (Golf Course Road) to Spray River bridge
Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 80 m
4b) 5.6 km one way from Spray River bridge to Spray River West trailhead
Elevation gain 70 m, elevation loss 105 m; 3 to 4 hour round trip
- 4b
- 5

Tunnel Campground Loop
6.4 km loop
Elevation gain 70 m; 1.5 hour round trip
- 6

Stewart Canyon
1.5 km one way
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
- 7

Johnson Lake
2.8 km loop
Minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
- 8

Sunshine Meadows
10 km of trails
Elevation gain 200 m; 4 to 5 hour round trip
- 9a
- 9b
- 9c
- 10

Silverton Falls
0.9 km one way
Elevation gain 90 m; 40 minute round trip
- 11

Boom Lake
5.1 km one way
Elevation gain 175 m; 3 to 4 hour round trip
- 12

Sulphur Mountain
5.5 km to top of gondola, plus 0.5 km to Sanson Peak
Elevation gain 655 m; 4 hour round trip
- 13

Tunnel Mountain Summit
2.4 km one way
Elevation gain 260 m; 2 hour round trip
- 14

Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint
4.8 km one way
Elevation gain 115 m; elevation loss 90 m; 3 hour round trip
- 15

Upper Stoney
2.1 km one way
Elevation gain 190 m; 1.5 hour round trip
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Cascade Amphitheatre
7.7 km one way
Elevation gain 640 m, elevation loss 150 m; 6 hour round trip
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C-Level Cirque
3.9 km one way
Elevation gain 455 m; 3 hour round trip
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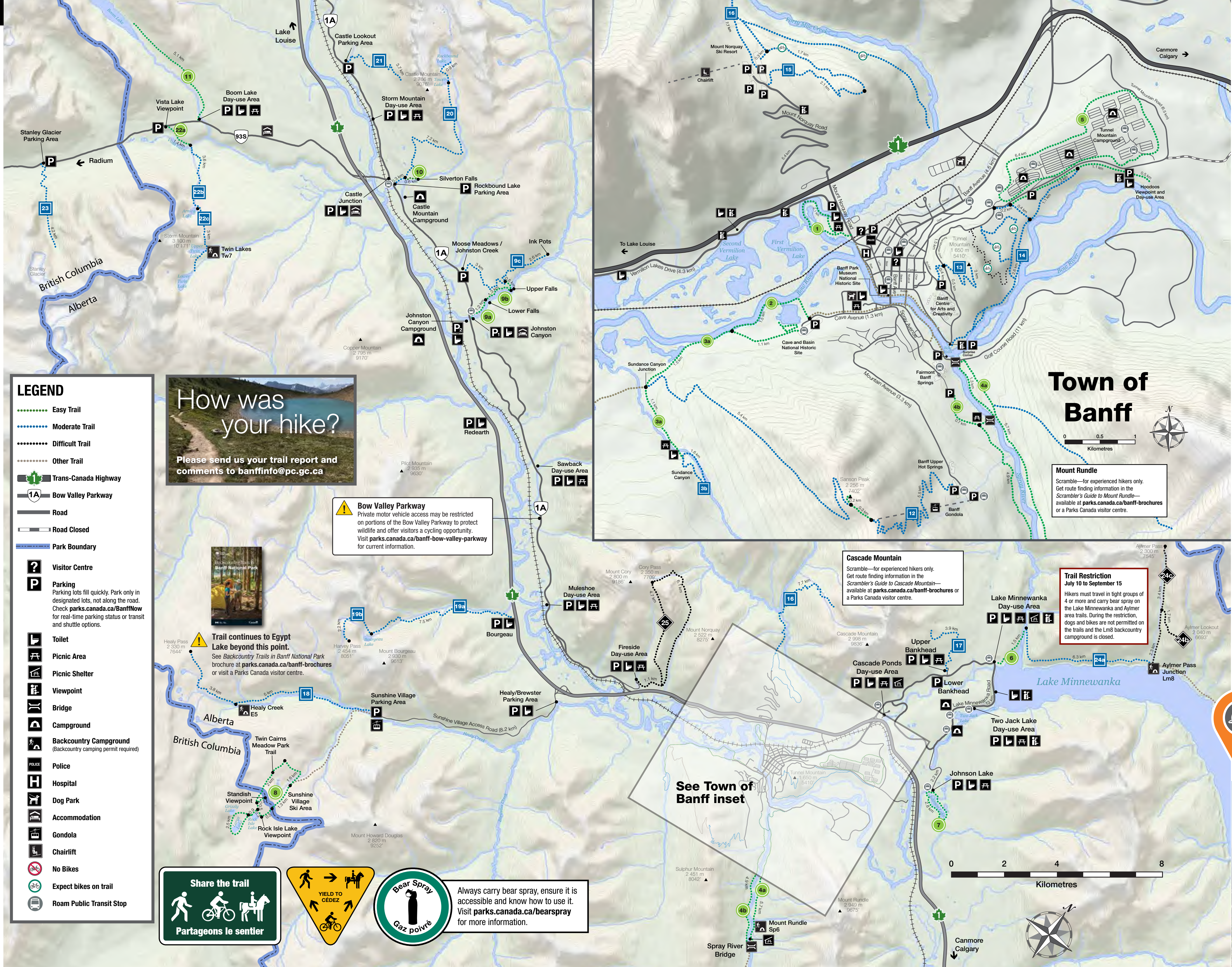
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8.8 km one way
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- 19b
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Rockbound Lake
8.4 km one way
Elevation gain 760 m; 7 to 9 hour round trip
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Castle Lookout
3.7 km one way
Elevation gain 550 m; 3 hour round trip
- 22a
- 22b
- 22c
- 23

Stanley Glacier
4.2 km one way
Elevation gain 365 m; 3 hour round trip
- 24a
- 24b
- 24c
- 25

Cory Pass Loop
13 km loop
Elevation gain 915 m; 6 hour round trip



Common Critters, Birds and Wildflowers

While exploring the park on foot, take a moment to smell, hear and look around you to discover nature at its best. Wonder what the difference is between a chipmunk and a ground squirrel? Why the raven stays here year-round? Why is that pretty red flower called paintbrush? Challenge yourself to answer your curiosity by learning more about the living things – big and small – that call Banff National Park home. Find more information in books available at many stores in the town of Banff, online, through interpretive programs, and from local experts. Visit a Parks Canada visitor centre to learn more.

Prairie crocus

Red paintbrush

Heart-leaved amica

Fireweed

Red squirrel

Least chipmunk

Columbian ground squirrel

Golden-mantled ground squirrel

Common raven

Black-billed magpie

Grey jay

Clark's nutcracker

Photos: Parks Canada

Town of Banff

Scramble—for experienced hikers only. Get route finding information in the *Scrambler's Guide to Mount Rundle*—available at parks.canada.ca/banff-brochures or a Parks Canada visitor centre.

Trail Restriction

July 10 to September 15
Hikers must travel in tight groups of 4 or more and carry bear spray on the Lake Minnewanka and Aylmer area trails. During the restriction, dogs and bikes are not permitted on the trails and the Lm8 backcountry campground is closed.

Cascade Mountain

Scramble—for experienced hikers only. Get route finding information in the *Scrambler's Guide to Cascade Mountain*—available at parks.canada.ca/banff-brochures or a Parks Canada visitor centre.

See Town of Banff inset

Banff Now

Real-time trailhead parking information:
parks.canada.ca/banffnow

Tunnel Mountain