

# Day hikes and rides in the Banff area



Sundance Trail / H. Scrimshaw

## 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/banff-trails](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-trails) for current trail conditions, warnings and closures.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Check the weather before heading out. Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year. Dress in layers, bring warm clothing, extra food and your own water: surface water may be unsafe for drinking. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-hiking#packing](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-hiking#packing) for a recommended packing list.
- Study descriptions and maps before heading out. Always choose a trail or a ride suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- If you bike, wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear. Be prepared for a breakdown or accident. Know how to repair your bike and carry the necessary tools and parts.
- Travel with others and keep your group together.
- Carry a first aid kit, bear spray and a satellite emergency communication device and know how to use it.
- 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 can carry diseases, may be present in the park. It is important to check yourself and your pet after recreating.
- 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 or ice covered, route finding can be difficult and unsafe. Hiking poles and ice cleats are recommended when trails are snowy or icy. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-trails](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-trails) to check trail conditions before heading out.

### Seasonal avalanche risk



Trails above the tree line (2 000 m) may be exposed to avalanche hazard year-round 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](https://parks.mountainsafety.ca) or a Parks Canada visitor centre.

## Wildlife and people

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](https://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. Travel in tight groups. Slow down if you bike. Your speed and quietness puts you at risk for sudden wildlife encounters. Be alert at all times. Do not wear ear buds or headphones while recreating.
- Report bear, cougar, wolf and coyote sightings and encounters to Banff Dispatch when safe to do so: 403-762-1470.

Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-wildlifesafety](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-wildlifesafety) to learn more about keeping yourself safe.

## Trail descriptions

\* Estimated time/duration to complete these trails is round-trip on foot and ranges depending on trail distances, fitness levels, weather and trail conditions. Estimated time is not provided for trails that are mainly bike recommended.

Typical and (minimum) width of the trail tread.

Average and (steepest) trail slope in direction of travel in percent. Ex.: 10% means 10 vertical metres for every 100 linear metres.

Average and (steepest) trail slope perpendicular to the direction of travel in percent. Ex: 5% means 5 vertical cm across a 100 cm-wide trail.



Maximum distance in metres between locations with seating along the trail.

Unless otherwise noted in trail descriptions, most trails consist of uneven, hard natural surfaces with varying amounts of rocks and exposed roots. For hikes and rides rated easy, the first notable obstacle along the route is highlighted.

Hiking recommended on this trail.

Biking allowed on this trail.

Pedal assist e-bikes allowed on this trail. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-e-bike](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-e-bike) for more information and regulations.

Travel restrictions and warnings. See map for details.

## Roam Public Transit and shuttle services

For the best experience, take public transit or a shuttle. Trails identified with the symbols below indicate that the trailhead is accessible by public transit or private shuttle, or near a transit stop:

Roam Public Transit [roamtransit.com](https://roamtransit.com)

Commercial transportation operator [explorethepark.ca](https://explorethepark.ca)

	Recommended hikes and rides	Distance	Ascent	Descent	Duration*	Description (Visit <a href="https://parks.canada.ca/banff-trails">parks.canada.ca/banff-trails</a> for more information)									
Easy	Fenland Loop	15	1.9 km loop	20 m	40 minutes	This is a self-guided interpretive forested trail. It has significant root patches 237 m counterclockwise and 746 m clockwise from the trailhead.				850 m					
	Marsh Trail	16	1.5 km one way	15 m	1 hour	This trail encircles a wetland with birds and waterfowl. Heavy horse use makes this path uneven and it is muddy in wetter conditions.				287 cm (200 cm)	3% (26%)	4% (18%)	-		
	Silverton Falls Trail	4a	0.9 km one way	85 m	5 m	40 minutes	This trail leads to an exposed hillside at the base of a waterfall. It has narrow sections and extensive root and rock patches 330 m from the trailhead.				147 cm (47 cm)	8% (30%)	4% (32%)	-	
	Johnson Lake Loop	29	2.9 km loop	90 m	1 hour	This rolling lake loop features mountain views. It has bridges with steps 450 m clockwise and 100 m counterclockwise from the trailhead.					90 cm (44 cm)	6% (31%)	5% (22%)	1.5 km	
	Cascade Ponds – Bankhead Trail	30	2 km one way	55 m	30 m	1.5 hour	From Cascade Ponds, this leveled path leads to the remains of an old coal operation. The natural surroundings narrow some sections of trail.					85 cm (28 cm)	4% (37%)	3% (22%)	-
	Tunnel Campground Loop	25	6.3 km loop	110 m		1.5 hour	This forested trail with mountain views loops around the campground. The path has some low shallow roots and few patches of soft soil and loose gravel.					173 cm (40 cm)	4% (20%)	3% (12%)	6 km
	Sundance Trail	17a	3.7 km one way	85 m	30 m	2 hours	This paved trail to the Sundance Canyon Loop is partly along the Bow River with mountain views. It is mostly smooth with some cracks and bumps.					316 cm (245 cm)	3% (9%)	2% (10%)	1.6 km
	Johnston Canyon Trail	5a 5b	2.4 km one way	215 m	125 m	2 hours	The busy trail into a canyon leads to two waterfalls. It is paved but uneven, with narrow bridges, steps and a large rock 765 m from the trailhead.					163 cm (75 cm)	10% (30%)	6% (28%)	450 m
	Boom Lake Trail	1	5.1 km one way	180 m		3-4 hours	This forested trail leads to a large alpine lake. Some shallow streams, including one through a rock field, 890 m from the trailhead, create some wet and muddy spots.					191 cm (60 cm)	6% (29%)	4% (21%)	-
	Water Tower Trail	28	4.2 km one way	130 m	105 m		This connector has mountain and valley views. The singletrack starts at Cascade Ponds, travels up high steps, and turns into a wide gravel road past the water tower towards Johnson Lake.					134 cm (25 cm)	6% (35%)	3% (16%)	-
	Healy Creek Trail	10a 10b	5.5 km one way	135 m	145 m		The hilly, forested trail features some views of Brewster Creek and has some loose gravel sections.					254 cm (95 cm)	4% (22%)	3% (14%)	-
	Spray River East and West trails	19a 19b	11.5 km loop	380 m		3-4 hours	This is a rolling doubletrack trail through the forest along Spray River. It has a few rocky sections. Horse use makes the first 250 m, from the east trailhead, muddier in wet conditions.					350 cm (100 cm)	4% (17%)	3% (20%)	5.7 km
	Sunshine Meadows trails	9	10.2 km of trails	580 m		4-5 hours	This path network meanders around alpine lakes and meadows. It is mostly uneven with narrow sections, high steps and a narrow bridge.					115 cm (24 cm)	9% (58%)	3% (26%)	2.5 km
	Moderate	Banff Legacy Trail (East)	11b	15.8 km one way	130 m	195 m		This multi-use paved path links Banff to Canmore. It is smooth with just a few cracks and bumps. An additional 1.8 km to the west links to the Bow Valley Parkway.					286 cm (222 cm)	5% (12%)	1% (5%)
Cascade Valley Trail		32	14.9 km one way	320 m	170 m		This former fire road travels into a wide valley. Narrow singletrack in the first kilometre widens into a gravel doubletrack trail.					120 cm (39 cm)	3% (12%)	3% (14%)	-
Upper Stoney Trail		14 14	4.4 km loop	210 m		1.5 hour	This forested trail climbs to Stoney Lookout and its valley views. Return the same way or loop down north on a twisty, rocky singletrack that travels above the Mount Norquay day lodge.								
Tunnel Mountain Summit Trail		20	2.3 km one way	275 m		2 hours	This trail switchbacks up to views of Banff and the Bow Valley. It has a few concrete steps at the lower and upper trailheads.								
Banff Avenue Trail		23	3.1 km one way	150 m	95 m		This rolling singletrack trail in the forest connects Banff Avenue roadway to Tunnel Mountain Road. Expect short steep climbs.								
Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint		24 21	4.4 km one way	115 m	90 m	3 hours	This trail travels down and then up along the Bow River with mountains and valley views. It has some steps at the Surprise Corner trailhead and 1 km down the trail.								
Sundance Canyon Loop		17a 17b	3.7 km one way plus 2.1 km loop	190 m		3 hours	This steep narrow trail, with natural rock steps at the start, loops up and around a water-filled canyon.								
C-Level Cirque Trail		31	3.8 km one way	440 m		3 hours	This steep trail travels to a glacially-carved cirque past foundations and vents from an abandoned mine. It has rutted sections and rugged terrain.								
Tunnel Bench Loop		24 24	8.7 km loop	210 m	180 m		These multiple, connecting singletrack trails have mountain views and can be done in a loop. Some sections have significant vertical exposure.								
Castle Lookout Trail		3	3.5 km one way	550 m		3 hours	This trail leads to a former fire tower site with a valley view. The path narrows toward the end with a few steep switchbacks and some exposure.								
Sulphur Mountain Trail		18	4.8 km one way	655 m		4 hours	This trail switchbacks to a summit with 360° mountain views. There is a 500 m long boardwalk at the top with 368 steps leading to a viewpoint.								
Ink Pots Trail		5a 5b 5c	5.5 km one way	425 m	215 m	4 hours	This forested trail leads beyond Johnston Canyon Upper Falls, travelling up and down to a meadow with shallow spring water pools.								
Brewster Creek Trail		10a 10c	11.2 km one way	290 m	110 m		A doubletrack trail that leads up a valley from Healy Creek Trail to Sundance Lodge. Heavy horse use and wet conditions can make this trail muddy.								
Healy Pass Trail		8	8.8 km one way	650 m		6-7 hours	This rocky and rooty trail follows Healy Creek to open meadows above treeline with wildflowers and larches.								
Redearth Creek Trail	6	10.2 km one way	450 m	140 m		This former fire road provides access to various backcountry destinations. Bring a lock; bikes are not permitted on the last 3.6 km to Shadow Lake.									
Cascade Amphitheatre Trail	13	6.8 km one way	740 m	200 m	6 hours	This forested trail starts down by the Norquay Mystic Express chairlift. It ends at a meadow surrounded by a natural rock amphitheatre.									
Rockbound Lake Trail	4b	8.5 km one way	765 m		6-7 hours	This trail travels through mixed forest to open meadows and Tower Lake. It then climbs and emerges next to a glacial cirque lake.									
Arnica Lake Trail	2a 2b 2c	7.4 km one way	700 m	295 m	6-7 hours	This narrow trail descends to Vista Lake then switchbacks steeply to Arnica Lake. It keeps ascending before descending to Upper Twin Lake. It then drops further down to Lower Twin Lake.									
Bourgeau Lake / Harvey Pass trails	7a 7b	8.9 km one way	1010 m		6-7 hours	This forested trail climbs across a few streams to a lake in a glacially carved amphitheatre. The final rocky ascent to the pass offers extensive mountain views.									
Goat Creek Trail	19a 19c	18.8 km one way	490 m	220 m		This rolling doubletrack in the forest follows the Spray River and Goat Creek to Canmore, crossing both using bridges.									
Lake Minnewanka Trail	33a 33a 33b 33b	30 km one way	875 m	875 m		This long rolling and remote singletrack offers lake views. A levelled rough paved road for 800 m through the day-use area leads to a natural hard trail. Expect significant rocks and roots on this trail.									
Difficult	Rundle Riverside Trail	27	7.9 km one way	110 m	130 m		This rough and remote singletrack links Banff to Canmore from the Golf Course Road in Banff to Canmore Nordic Centre.								
	The Toe	26 26	11.1 km of trails	280 m	255 m		This area offers a mix of exposed technical riding, long climbs and descents, and winding narrow singletrack with some views.								
	Tunnel Technical Trails	22a 22b 22c	7.4 km of trails	370 m	460 m		These three moderate to challenging singletracks lead down through wooden features, curving berms and many tight turns.								
	Cory Pass Loop	12	13 km loop	930 m		6 hours	This steep, narrow and exposed route climbs to a rocky pass with mountain views. Route finding skills are required.								
	Aylmer Lookout Trail	33a 33a 33b 33c	11.6 km one way	770 m	240 m	7-8 hours	This hike branches off the Aylmer Pass Trail to a former fire lookout site with wide views of Lake Minnewanka and the surrounding mountains.								
Aylmer Pass Trail	33a 33a 33b 33d	13.1 km one way	970 m	190 m	8-9 hours	From the junction with Lake Minnewanka Trail, this path climbs to Aylmer Pass and ends in mountain meadows.									

## Etiquette and regulations

- Stay on designated trails at all times. It is your responsibility to know where you can and cannot legally hike, ride or e-bike.
- Help preserve the quality of trails. Avoid riding when trails are wet, muddy or very dry. Avoid skidding your tires by hard braking. Ride over obstacles, not around them.
- Ride in control and within your limits.
- Always ride or hike on the right and pass other users on their left and let them know you are coming. Slow down, yield to approaching horse riders and ask them for instructions. Trail users travelling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill. On roadways, ride single-file and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb.
- Obey all traffic rules including road closures, posted speed limits and traffic controls. At intersections, use hand signals to let drivers know your direction of travel.
- Be visible when riding at dawn, dusk, or night. Always have a white front light, red rear light and red rear reflector.
- Dispose of human waste at least 100 m from any water source if you are too far from a toilet. Bury solid human waste in a hole 15 cm deep. Pack out your toilet paper.
- Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in. Use the wildlife-proof garbage bins at the start of the trail to dispose of all unwanted food and garbage.
- Pets must be 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/banff-trails](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-trails)
- Do not feed any wildlife.
- Do not approach wildlife. Give them lots of space.
- 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.
- 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.

A valid national park entry pass is required when visiting the mountain national parks: [parks.canada.ca/banff-parkpass](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-parkpass)

## More information

**Banff Visitor Centre:**  
224 Banff Avenue  
403-762-1550 / [parks.canada.ca/banff](https://parks.canada.ca/banff)

**Trail conditions report:**  
[parks.canada.ca/banff-trails](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-trails)

**Mountain safety:**  
[parks.mountainsafety.ca](https://parks.mountainsafety.ca)

**Environment Canada weather forecast:**  
[weather.gc.ca](https://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.**

# Recommended hikes and rides

- 1 Boom Lake Trail**  
5.1 km one way  
Ascent 180 m; 3-4-hour round trip
- 2a Arnica Lake Trail**  
2a) 1.4 km one way to Vista Lake  
Descent 110 m; 1.5-hour round trip  
2a + 2b) 4.6 km one way to Arnica Lake  
Ascent 580 m, descent 110 m; 5-hour round trip  
2a + 2b + 2c) 7.4 km one way to Lower Twin Lake  
Ascent 700 m, descent 295 m; 6-7-hour round trip
- 2b**
- 2c**
- 3 Castle Lookout Trail**  
3.5 km one way  
Ascent 550 m; 3-hour round trip
- 4a Silverton Falls Trail**  
0.9 km one way  
Ascent 85 m, descent 5 m; 40-minute round trip
- 4b Rockbound Lake Trail**  
8.5 km one way  
Ascent 765 m; 6-7-hour round trip
- 5a Johnston Canyon and Ink Pots trails**  
5a) 1.1 km one way to Lower Falls  
Ascent 85 m, descent 55 m; 1-hour round trip  
5a + 5b) 2.4 km one way to Upper Falls  
Ascent 215 m, descent 125 m; 2-hour round trip  
5a + 5b + 5c) 5.5 km one way to the Ink Pots  
Ascent 425 m, descent 215 m; 4-hour round trip
- 5b**
- 5c**
- 6 Redearth Creek Trail**  
10.2 km one way  
Ascent 450 m, descent 140 m
- 7a Bourgeau Lake and Harvey Pass trails**  
7a) 6.7 km one way to Bourgeau Lake  
Ascent 730 m; 6-hour round trip  
7a + 7b) 8.9 km one way to Harvey Pass  
Ascent 1010 m; 6-7-hour round trip
- 7b**
- 8 Healy Pass Trail**  
8.8 km one way  
Ascent 650 m; 6-7-hour round trip
- 9 Sunshine Meadows trails**  
10.2 km of trails  
Ascent 580 m; 4-5-hour round trip
- 10a Healy Creek Trail**  
10a + 10b) 5.5 km one way  
Ascent 135 m; descent 145 m
- 10b**
- 10a Brewster Creek Trail**  
10a + 10c) 11.2 km one way  
Ascent 290 m, descent 110 m
- 10c**
- 11a Banff Legacy Trail**  
11a) 1.8 km one way  
Ascent 15 m, descent 15 m  
11b) 15.8 km one way to the Banff East Gate  
Ascent 130 m, descent 195 m
- 11b**
- 12 Cory Pass Loop**  
13 km loop  
Ascent 930 m; 6-hour round trip
- 13 Cascade Amphitheatre Trail**  
6.8 km one way  
Ascent 740 m, descent 200 m; 6-hour round trip
- 14 Upper Stoney Trail**  
4.4 km loop  
Ascent 210 m; 1.5-hour round trip

## Recommended road rides

- Roads are shared with vehicles and have limited shoulder space.
- A Bow Valley Parkway**  
49.3 km one way  
Ascent 510 m, descent 315 m  
This narrow route gently rises and falls through the Bow Valley between Banff and Lake Louise. Many rest stops and picnic areas on the way include Johnston Canyon, Castle Junction and Baker Creek.
  - B Vermilion Lakes Drive**  
4.3 km one way  
Ascent 25 m, descent 20 m  
This is a ride along a narrow road with three shallow lakes surrounded by marshland and mountain views. There are benches, bike racks and small docks along the way.
  - C Golf Course Road**  
10.9 km loop  
Ascent 60 m, descent 55 m  
This road winds gently along the golf course before it loops back. It has views on the Bow River and surrounding peaks.
  - D Lake Minnewanka Road**  
14.8 km loop  
Ascent 175 m, descent 175 m  
This narrow loop road crosses varied terrain with lake views, picnic areas and many attractions including Cascade Ponds, Bankhead, Lake Minnewanka and Two Jack Lake.

- Hiking recommended on this trail.
- Biking allowed on this trail.
- Pedal assist e-bikes allowed on this trail. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-e-bike](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-e-bike) for more information and regulations.
- Travel restrictions and warnings. See map for details.

This is not a detailed trail map. Topographic maps are available for purchase at the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and retail outlets in the town of Banff.

**Bear Spray**  
Gaz poivré

Always carry bear spray, ensure it is accessible and know how to use it. Visit [parks.canada.ca/bearspray](https://parks.canada.ca/bearspray) for more information.

**How was your experience?**

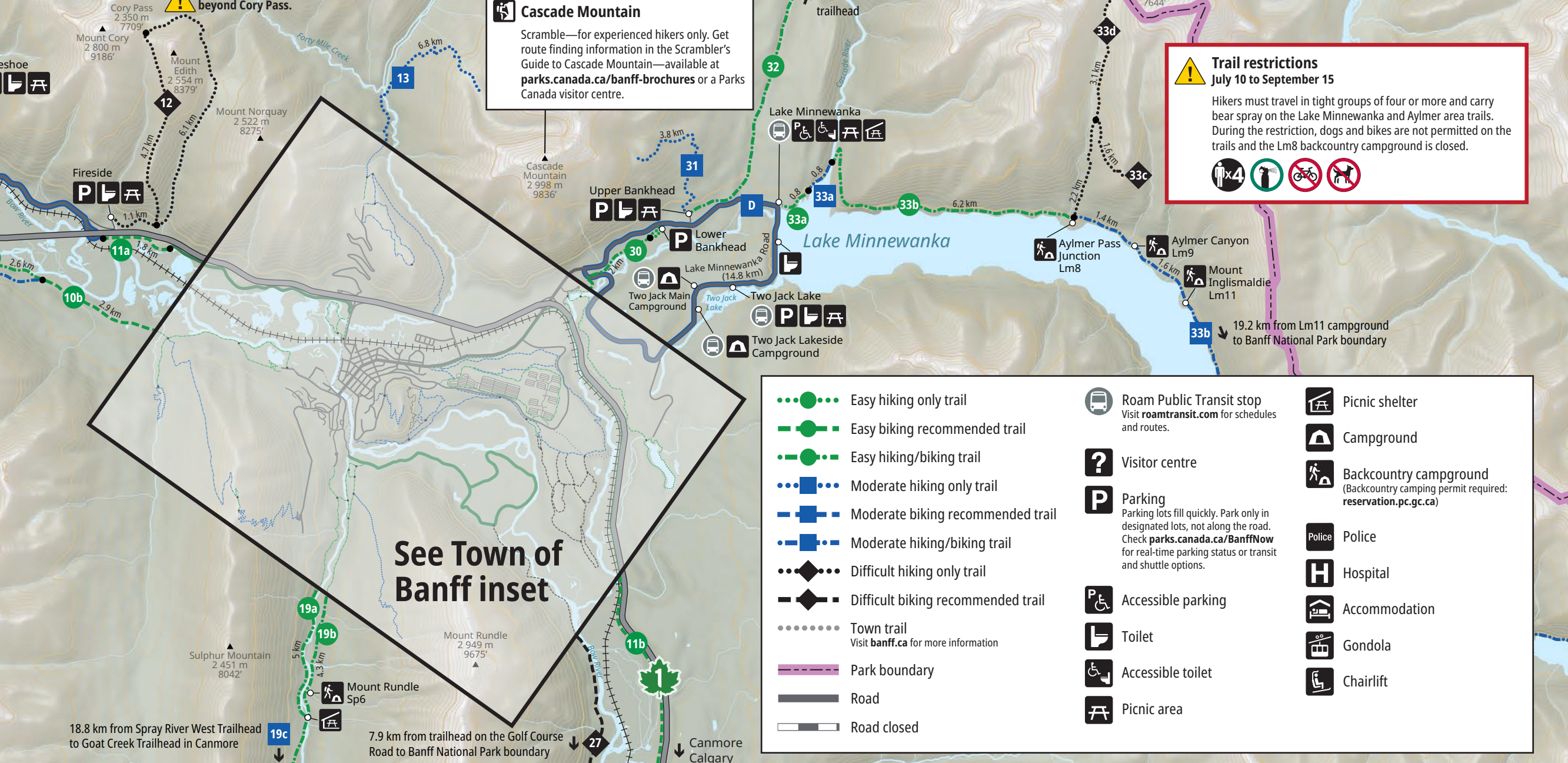
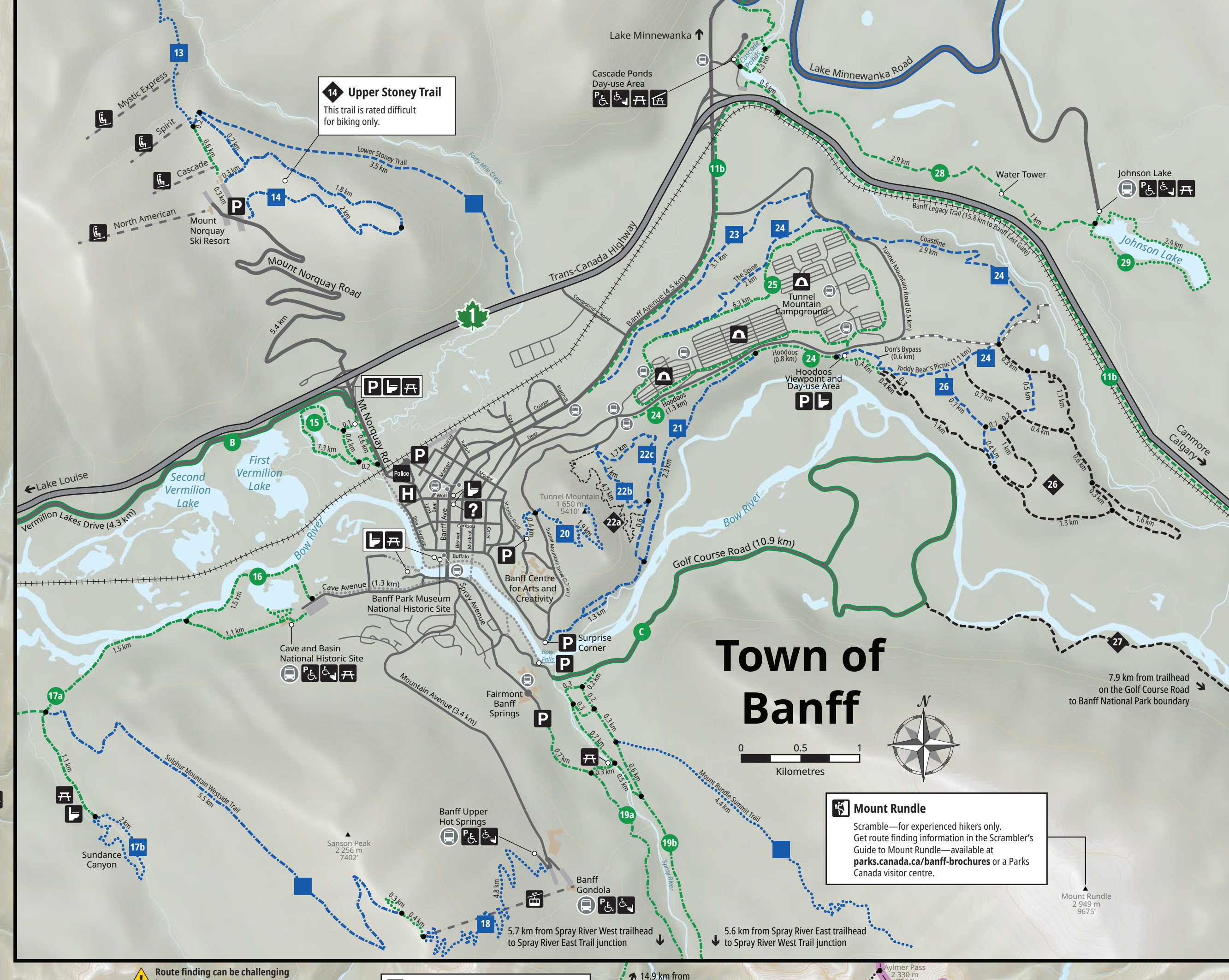
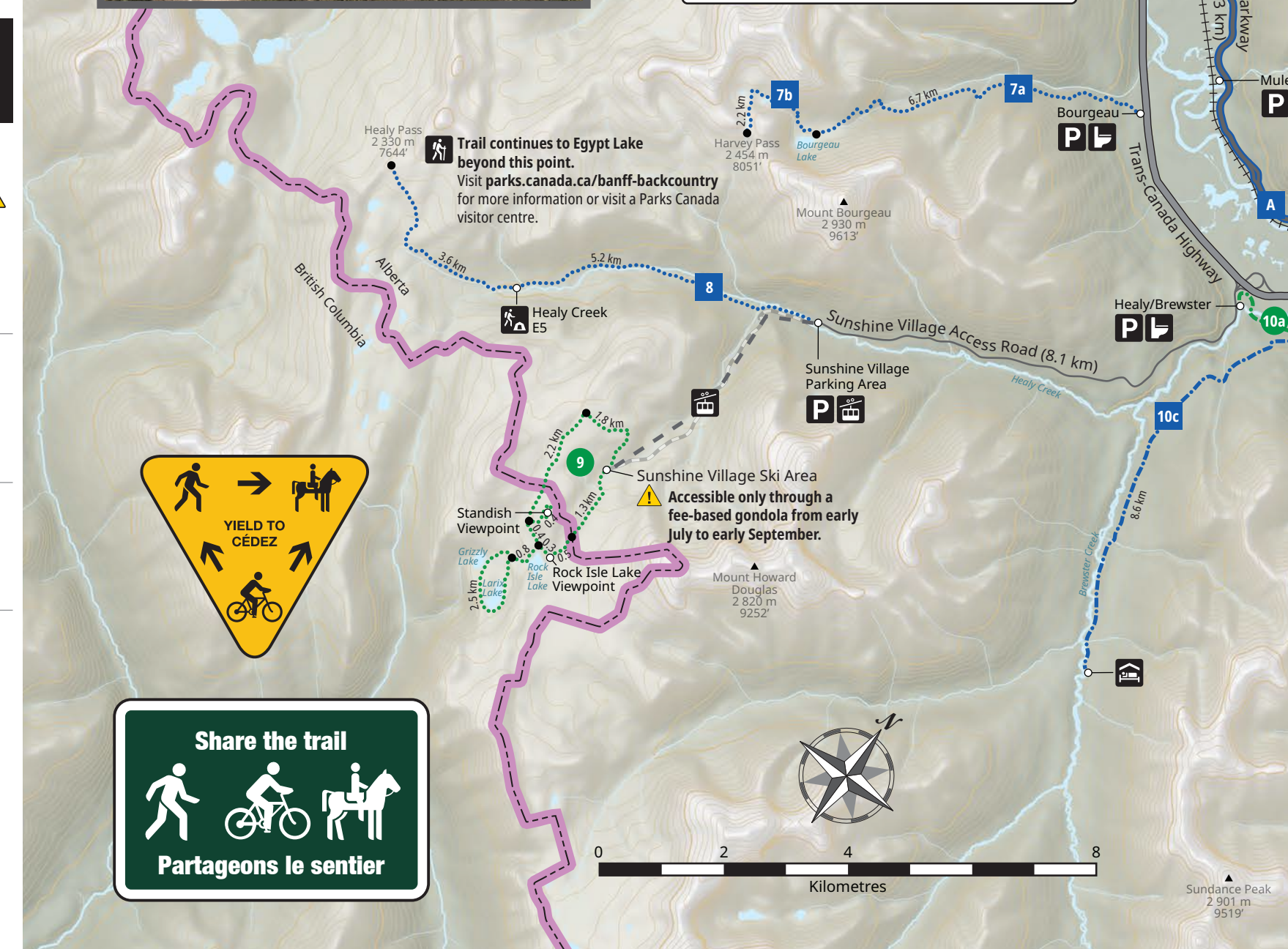
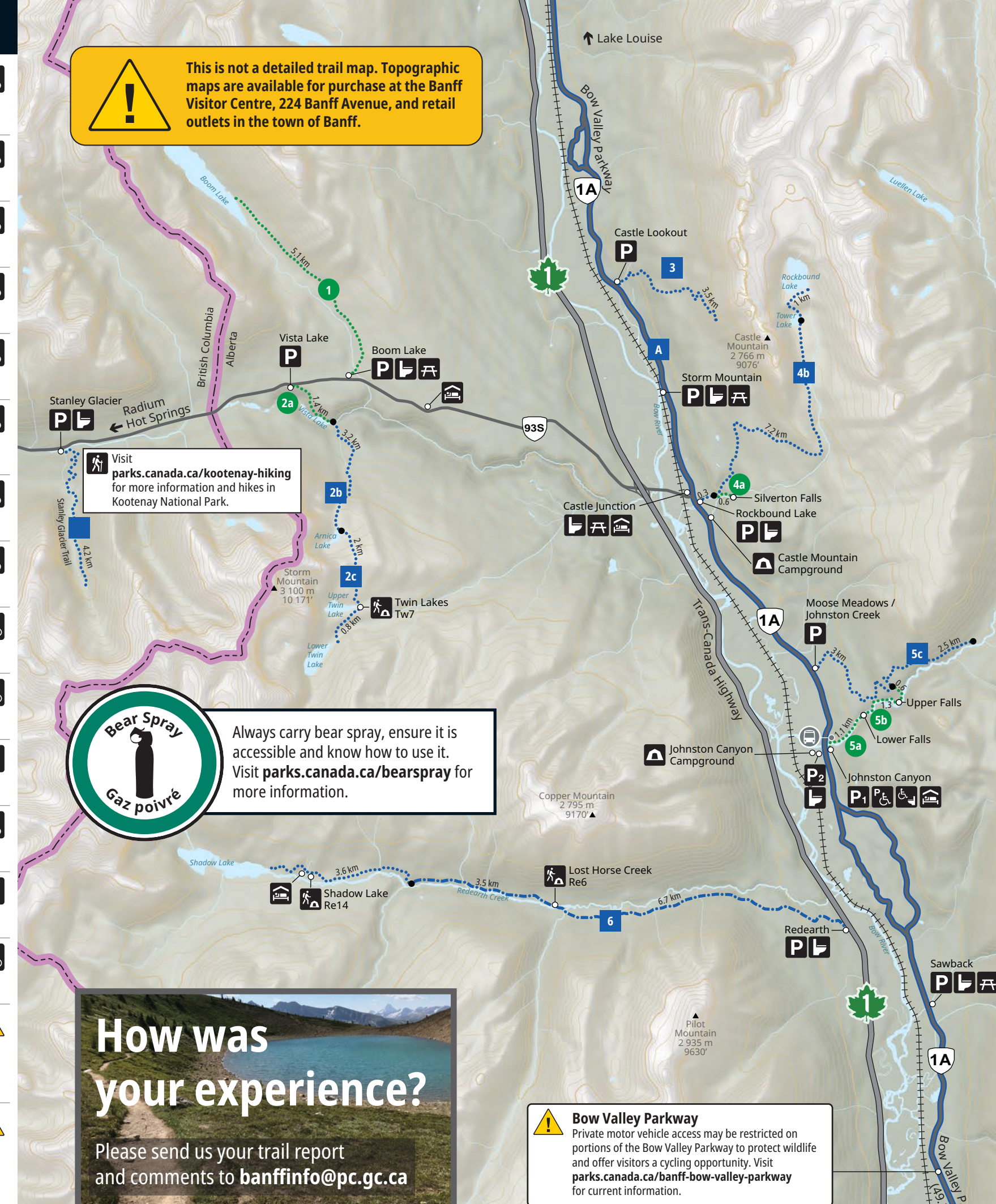
Please send us your trail report and comments to [banffinfo@pc.gc.ca](mailto:banffinfo@pc.gc.ca)

**Bow Valley Parkway**  
Private motor vehicle access may be restricted on portions of the Bow Valley Parkway to protect wildlife and offer visitors a cycling opportunity. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-bow-valley-parkway](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-bow-valley-parkway) for current information.

Trail continues to Egypt Lake beyond this point. Visit [parks.canada.ca/banff-backcountry](https://parks.canada.ca/banff-backcountry) for more information or visit a Parks Canada visitor centre.

Accessible only through a fee-based gondola from early July to early September.

**Share the trail**  
Partageons le sentier



- Easy hiking only trail
- Easy biking recommended trail
- Easy hiking/biking trail
- Moderate hiking only trail
- Moderate biking recommended trail
- Moderate hiking/biking trail
- Difficult hiking only trail
- Difficult biking recommended trail
- Town trail  
Visit [banff.ca](https://banff.ca) for more information
- Park boundary
- Road
- Road closed
- Roam Public Transit stop  
Visit [roamtransit.com](https://roamtransit.com) for schedules and routes.
- Visitor centre
- Parking  
Parking lots fill quickly. Park only in designated lots, not along the road. Check [parks.canada.ca/BanffNow](https://parks.canada.ca/BanffNow) for real-time parking status or transit and shuttle options.
- Accessible parking
- Toilet
- Accessible toilet
- Picnic area
- Picnic shelter
- Campground
- Backcountry campground  
(Backcountry camping permit required: [reservation.pc.gc.ca](https://reservation.pc.gc.ca))
- Police
- Hospital
- Accommodation
- Gondola
- Chairlift