

Day hiking

Lake Louise, Castle Junction and Icefields Parkway Areas



Along the spine of the North American continent, the Rocky Mountains poke high into the clouds and blue glaciers cling to their slopes.

Green forested valleys provide a vital food source for grizzly bears and other species. This is the Lake Louise and Icefields area of Banff National Park, a landscape of wonder which has been dubbed the “hiking capital of Canada”. Use the trail descriptions to choose a hike suitable for everyone in your party.



LAKE LOUISE AREA

UPPER LAKE LOUISE AREA

Trailhead: Upper Lake Louise parking area, 4 km from the village of Lake Louise.

Because of the number of options from this trailhead, you have the opportunity to combine some of the trails in the Upper Lake Louise area to suit your abilities and interests.

22 Lake Louise Lakeshore

2 km one way; no elevation gain; 1 hour round trip

This accessible stroll allows visitors of all abilities to explore Lake Louise. At the end of the lake you’ll discover the milky creek that gives the lake its magical colour.

23 Fairview Lookout

1 km one way; 100 m elevation gain; 45 minute round trip

Leaving from the boathouse on Lake Louise, this short, uphill hike offers you a unique look at both the lake and the historic Chateau Lake Louise.

24 Lake Agnes

3.4 km one way; 385 m elevation gain; 2.5 to 3 hour round trip

Lake Agnes is one of the most popular trails in the Canadian Rockies. Hike up a well maintained trail to a beautiful lake tucked underneath towering peaks. Enjoy the scenery or the charm of a quaint European-style tea house (seasonal).

CASTLE JUNCTION AREA

1 Castle Lookout

3.7 km one way; 520 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: 5 km west of Castle Junction on the Bow Valley Parkway (Highway 1A).

In the mid-20th century, Banff erected numerous fire towers where spotters could detect flames from afar. The Castle Lookout tower has long since been removed, but the expansive views of the middle Bow Valley remain.

2 Boom Lake

5.1 km one way; 175 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: 7 km southwest of Castle Junction on Highway 93 South. Travel on a heavily forested trail featuring some of the largest subalpine trees in Banff National Park. Your ultimate destination is a pristine lake backed by an impressive mountain rampart.

3 Stanley Glacier

4.2 km one way; 395 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: in Kootenay National Park, 13 km southwest of Castle Junction on Highway 93 South.

The hike to Stanley Glacier features fire and ice in equal measures. The lower trail, which burned in 1968 and 2003, is re-growing with lodgepole pines, willows, and colourful wildflowers. Along the upper trail, you’ll get clear views of Stanley Glacier, and its numerous meltwater falls.

4 Arnica Lake

5.1 km one way; 120 m elevation loss; 580 m elevation gain; 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Vista Lake Viewpoint on Highway 93 South, 8 km southwest of Castle Junction, on the east side of the road.

Lose elevation before you gain it en route to Arnica Lake; the views and variety make this destination worth the ups and downs.

5 Twin Lakes

Via Arnica Lake trail: 8 km one way; 120 m elevation loss; 715 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip

Trailhead: Vista Lake Viewpoint on Highway 93 South, 8 km southwest of Castle Junction.

Hike under a canopy of larch trees while the Continental Divide guides you to Arnica and Twin lakes.

6 Taylor Lake

6.3 km; 585 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Taylor Creek day-use area 8 km west of Castle Junction, or 17 km east of Lake Louise, on the south side of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Thick forest gives way to subalpine meadows as you climb steadily to this classic glacial lake. This trail holds its snow through the early part of the hiking season, so it’s best from July on.

Side trip to O’Brien Lake: 2.1 km one way; 55 m elevation gain from Taylor Lake. Extend your Taylor Lake hike by visiting this charming tarn.



Done with this brochure?

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ICEFIELDS PARKWAY AREA

7 Bow Summit Lookout

2.9 km one way; 245 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 40 km north of the Lake Louise junction, at the Peyto Lake parking lot.

From the highest-point on the Icefields Parkway (2070 m), hike beyond the Peyto Lake Viewpoint on the upper self-guided nature trail, then follow an old fire road to the lookout. Watch for pikas, marmots, and ptarmigan.

8 Parker Ridge

2.7 km one way; 250 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 41 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing or 9 km south of the Icefield Centre.

After a series of switchbacks you’ll be rewarded with dramatic views of the Saskatchewan Glacier – headwaters of the Saskatchewan River. Help maintain this fragile alpine ecosystem by staying on the trail.

9 Bow Glacier Falls

4.6 km one way; 155 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 36 km north of the Lake Louise junction, 400 m down the Num-ti-jah Lodge access road.

At the base of Bow Glacier Falls, amid the spray and roar, you can witness the birth of a river. The Bow River, part of western Canada’s largest watershed, begins as meltwater tumbling down from the Wapta Icefield.

10 Helen Lake

6 km one way; 455 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 33 km north of the Lake Louise junction across from the Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint.

Tucked well into the Main Ranges of the Canadian Rockies is a breathtaking lake in a valley abounding with alpine wildlife and grand vistas.

11 Cirque Lake

4.2 km one way; 150 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 57.5 km north of the Lake Louise junction in Waterfowl Lakes Campground.

This path is thickly forested, but offers mountain and glacier views at the shore of the lake. Note that the trail is often muddy.

12 Chephren Lake

3.5 km one way; 80 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Same as Cirque Lake.

Chephren Lake lies underneath the brooding walls of Howse Peak and Mount Chephren. This trail is often very muddy.

13 Sunset Lookout

4.5 km one way; 390 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 16.5 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing.

There is no question that old fire tower locations offer up great views. A 1.6 km branch off the Sunset Pass Trail allows you to enjoy an almost vertical view down to the confluence of the Alexandra and North Saskatchewan rivers.

28 Sheol/Paradise Connector

4.1 km (connector only); 500 m elevation gain/loss (depending on direction); 1 to 2 hour one way
Trailheads: Upper Lake Louise parking area or follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to the Paradise Valley parking lot on the right hand side.

Connect the Saddleback and Paradise Valley trails by using the Sheol/Paradise connector. A car shuttle may be needed depending on your route choice.

VILLAGE OF LAKE LOUISE AND BOULDER PASS AREA

29 Bow River Loop

7.1 km round trip; no elevation gain; 2 hour round trip
Trailhead: Parking lot opposite the Lake Louise train station (restaurant).

Travel on a pleasant interpretive trail in the rich riparian zone of the Bow River. These waters travel across the prairies to their ultimate destination in Hudson Bay, over 2500 kilometres downstream of Lake Louise.

30 Louise Creek

2.8 km one way; 195 m elevation gain; 1.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: From the Samson Mall parking lot, walk along Lake Louise Drive to a bridge crossing the Bow River. Cross the bridge and then look for the trailhead on the downstream side of the bridge.

14 Wilcox Pass

4 km one way; 335 m elevation gain; 3 to 3.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 47 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing, or 3 km south of the Icefield Centre at the entrance to the Wilcox Creek campground in Jasper National Park.

Rise quickly above treeline to the expansive meadows of this glacier-carved landscape. Bighorn sheep are sometimes seen in this area.

15 Nigel Pass

7.2 km one way; 365 m elevation gain; 4.5 to 5.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 37 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing or 13 km south of the Icefield Centre.

A consistent and gentle grade ensures that it doesn’t take long to reach treeline as you head towards the wide-open scenery of the Banff/Jasper boundary.

16 Molar Pass

10.5 km one way; 530 m elevation gain; 7 to 8 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 24 km north of Lake Louise. Travel into Banff National Park’s wilderness as you rise well above treeline to an expansive alpine meadow.

17 North Molar Pass

11.9 km one way; 760 m elevation gain; 8 to 9 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 24 km north of Lake Louise.

At the Molar Pass trail junction you have the option of travelling to the alpine meadows of Molar Pass or heading left to this higher pass, a rugged and stark landscape of rocky meadows.

18 Dolomite Pass

9 km one way; 550 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 33 km north of the Lake Louise junction across from the Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint.

After you’ve made it to Helen Lake, you can extend your hike and get a geology lesson at the same time: at the pass you’ll have great views of Dolomite Peak, a picture perfect layer-cake mountain, as well the wine-coloured folds below the summit of Cirque Peak.

19 Sarbach Lookout

5.2 km one way; 590 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 71 km north of the Lake Louise junction, or 6 km south of Saskatchewan Crossing, at the Mistaya Canyon parking lot.

This trail is a good physical workout, but since the fire lookout closed in 1971, forest growth has increasingly blocked the views.

20 Glacier Lake

8.9 km one way; 210 m elevation gain; elevation loss 220 m; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 1 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing.

Snow-free early in the season, this rolling wooded trail takes you to a picturesque lake set below the peaks seen by early European explorers.

21 Sunset Pass

8.2 km one way; 725 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 16.5 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing.

Climb steadily through a thick forest to reach an expansive meadow atop Sunset Pass. Look west for a panorama of the largest peaks in the parks, or east into the remote White Goat Wilderness Area.

Hike through a thick subalpine forest, following the entire length of Louise Creek as it rushes from Lake Louise to the Bow River.

31 Tramline

4.5 km one way; 195 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Parking lot opposite the Lake Louise train station (restaurant).

Follow in the footsteps – or trolley wheels – of travellers who, a century ago, were dropped off at the railway station and then ferried, by tram, on this 3% railway grade to the Chateau Lake Louise.

32 Boulder Pass

8.6 km to pass; 640 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Fish Creek parking area, off Whitehorn Road, 3 km north of Lake Louise.

After 4 km on a wide access road, you will reach a world dotted with lakes and inviting alpine meadows. From the pass, you get a spectacular view into a remote corner of Banff National Park.

Side trip to Baker Lake: 3.4 km; 130 m elevation loss from Boulder Pass. Visit the stunning shores of Baker Lake in the valley below Deception Pass.

Side trip to Deception Pass: 2.4 km; 145 m elevation gain from Boulder Pass. Hike over to this windswept pass if you have energy to spare.

LAKE LOUISE AREA

MORAINÉ LAKE AREA

Trailheads: Moraine Lake parking area, 14 km from Lake Louise along Moraine Lake Road. All trails begin just beyond Moraine Lake Lodge unless stated otherwise.

33 Moraine Lake Lakeshore

1.5 km one way; no elevation gain; 45 minute round trip

This stroll allows visitors of all abilities to explore Moraine Lake. Along the trail you will gain a magnificent view of Mount Fay and the Fay Glacier.

34 Consolation Lakes

2.9 km one way; elevation gain 65 m; 2 hour round trip
Trailhead: East side of the Moraine Lake parking lot, near the public toilets.

Hiking to Consolation Lakes requires much less effort than most of the Moraine Lake trails, but rewards the hiker with views of high alpine meadows, enormous talus slopes, and the Quadra Glacier.

35 Eiffel Lake

5.6 km one way; elevation gain 370 m; 4.5 hour round trip

The trail to Eiffel Lake splits off from the Larch Valley trail and takes you high along the side of the valley to panoramic views overlooking Eiffel Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks.

36 Larch Valley/Minnestimma Lakes

4.3 km one way; 535 m elevation gain; 3.5 to 4 hour round trip
Hike into a unique larch forest high above Moraine Lake. Views of the Ten Peaks are breathtaking.

37 Sentinel Pass

5.8 km one way; elevation gain 725 m; 4.5 to 5.5 hour round trip
Steep switchbacks lead to two famous valleys: Larch Valley and Paradise Valley.

38 Wenkchemna Pass

9.7 km one way; elevation gain 720 m; 7.5 to 8 hour round trip
Travel the entire length of the Valley of the Ten Peaks, wandering steadily into a high alpine environment to reach this spectacular pass on the Continental Divide.



PARADISE VALLEY AREA

39 Lake Annette

5.7 km one way; elevation gain 245 m; 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to the Paradise Valley parking lot on the right hand side.

The steady hike through the subalpine forest is a perfect prelude for the wonderful sensory experience that will greet you at Lake Annette.

40 Paradise Valley and Giant Steps

10.3 or 10.9 km one way; elevation gain 385 m; 7 to 8 hour round trip
Trailhead: Follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to the Paradise Valley parking lot on the right hand side.

Here’s a chance to enjoy great views of Mount Temple, identify midsummer wildflowers, and witness dramatic surroundings at the Giant Steps Waterfall.

41 Sentinel Pass Connector

2.3 km one way (connector only); elevation gain/loss 505 m (depending on direction); 1 to 2 hour one way
Trailheads: Same as Paradise Valley area trails or Moraine Lake area trails.

Connect the Sentinel Pass and Paradise Valley trails by using the Sentinel Pass Connector. A vehicle shuttle is required. Routefinding may be required on the rocky slopes on the north side of Sentinel Pass. Check with the Lake Louise Visitor Centre for more details.

PLAN AHEAD, BE PREPARED

Safety is your responsibility.

- Research trails before heading out. Always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.

- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada visitor centre. For current trail conditions, warnings, closures, weather, and trail classifications visit: parks.canada.gc.ca/banfftrails

- Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year. Dress in layers and bring warm clothing.

- Be prepared for emergencies. Bring extra food and a first aid kit.

- Bring your own water. Surface water may be contaminated and unsafe for drinking.

- Tell a reliable person where you are going, when you will be back, and who to call if you do not return (Parks Canada Dispatch: **403-762-1470**).

- Ticks carrying Lyme disease may be present in the park, check yourself and your pet after hiking.

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 by law and must be left undisturbed for others to discover and enjoy.

- Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

- 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 the trail and avoid shortcuts.

- These trails are used by a variety of outdoor enthusiasts. Be sure to yield to others.

WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

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

- Make noise. Being quiet puts you at risk for sudden bear encounters. Be alert through shrubby areas and when approaching blind corners.

- Cyclists are susceptible to sudden, dangerous bear encounters – slow down, stay alert, and make noise.

- Travel in tight groups and always be aware of your surroundings. Avoid wearing earbuds or headphones.

- Carry bear spray with you at all times, ensure it is accessible, and know how to use it. Learn how to use it at: parks.canada.gc.ca/bearspray

- Do not feed, touch, or approach wildlife. Stay at least 30 to 50 m away from most animals, and 100 m away from bears.

- Report bear, cougar, wolf, and coyote sightings and encounters to Parks Canada Dispatch when it is safe to do so: **403-762-1470**.

DOGS

Dogs and other pets cause stress for wildlife. To prevent unsafe situations, it is your responsibility to:

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

- Pick up and dispose of your pet’s waste in a garbage bin.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

Reservations are required at all backcountry campgrounds. They are equipped with tent pads, dry toilets, communal picnic tables, food storage cables or lockers, and metal fire rings where fires are allowed. For more details visit: parks.canada.gc.ca/banff-backcountry

reservation.pc.gc.ca
1-877-reserve (737-3783)

Same day backcountry reservations can be made at Parks Canada visitor centres.

CYCLING

Mountain biking is only allowed on trails designated for cycling. Pick up a cycling guide at a Parks Canada visitor centre.

FISHING

A national park fishing permit is required and available at Parks Canada visitor centres.

LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE

403-522-3833
ll.info@pc.gc.ca
parks.canada.gc.ca/banff

TRAIL CONDITIONS REPORT

parks.canada.gc.ca/banfftrails

ENVIRONMENT CANADA WEATHER FORECAST

403-762-0288
weather.gc.ca

Guidebooks and topographic maps are available at retail outlets in the village of Lake Louise or the Town of Banff.

Banff Lake Louise Tourism / Peter Zahra

- Easy
- Moderate
- ◆ Difficult

CASTLE JUNCTION AREA

- 1 Castle Lookout
- 2 Boom Lake
- 3 Stanley Glacier
- 4 Arnica Lake
- 5 Twin Lakes
- 6 Taylor Lake

ICEFIELDS PARKWAY AREA

- 7 Bow Summit Lookout
- 8 Parker Ridge
- 9 Bow Glacier Falls
- 10 Helen Lake
- 11 Cirque Lake
- 12 Chephren Lake
- 13 Sunset Lookout
- 14 Wilcox Pass
- 15 Nigel Pass
- 16 Molar Pass
- 17 North Molar Pass
- 18 Dolomite Pass
- 19 Sarbach Lookout
- 20 Glacier Lake
- 21 Sunset Pass

UPPER LAKE LOUISE AREA

- 22 Lake Louise Lakeshore
- 23 Fairview Lookout
- 24 Lake Agnes
- 25 Plain of Six Glaciers
- 26 Saddleback
- 27 Fairview Mountain
- 28 Sheol/Paradise Connector

VILLAGE OF LAKE LOUISE AND BOULDER PASS AREA

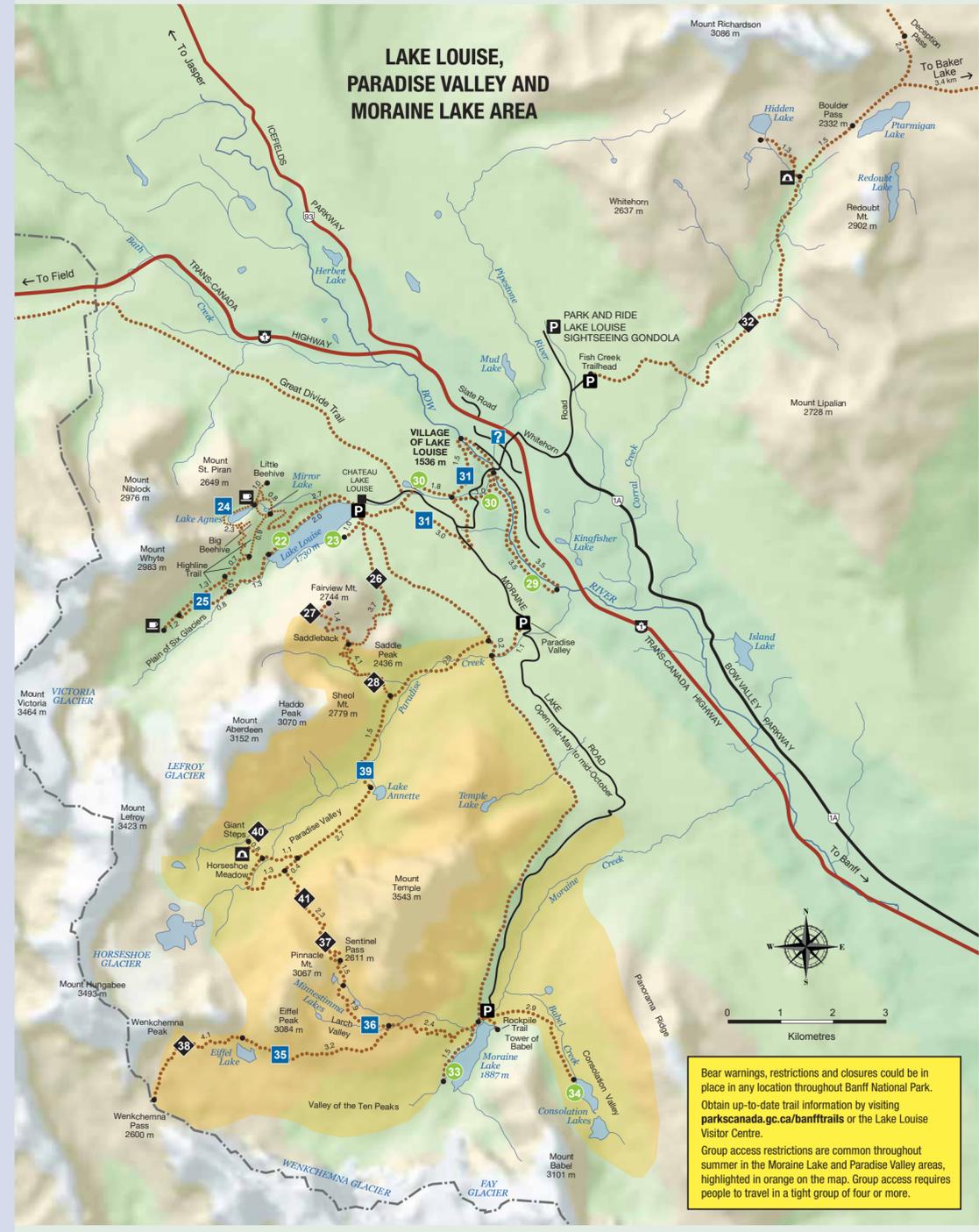
- 29 Bow River Loop
- 30 Louise Creek
- 31 Tramline
- 32 Boulder Pass

MORAINES LAKE AREA

- 33 Moraine Lake Lakeshore
- 34 Consolation Lakes
- 35 Eiffel Lake
- 36 Larch Valley/Minnestimma Lakes
- 37 Sentinel Pass
- 38 Wenkchemna Pass

PARADISE VALLEY AREA

- 39 Lake Annette
- 40 Paradise Valley and Giant Steps
- 41 Sentinel Pass Connector



Bear warnings, restrictions and closures could be in place in any location throughout Banff National Park. Obtain up-to-date trail information by visiting parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails or the Lake Louise Visitor Centre. Group access restrictions are common throughout summer in the Moraine Lake and Paradise Valley areas, highlighted in orange on the map. Group access requires people to travel in a tight group of four or more.



LEGEND

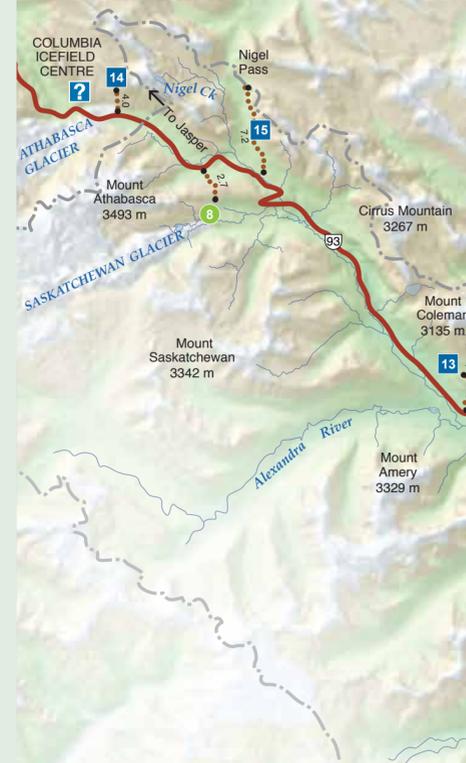
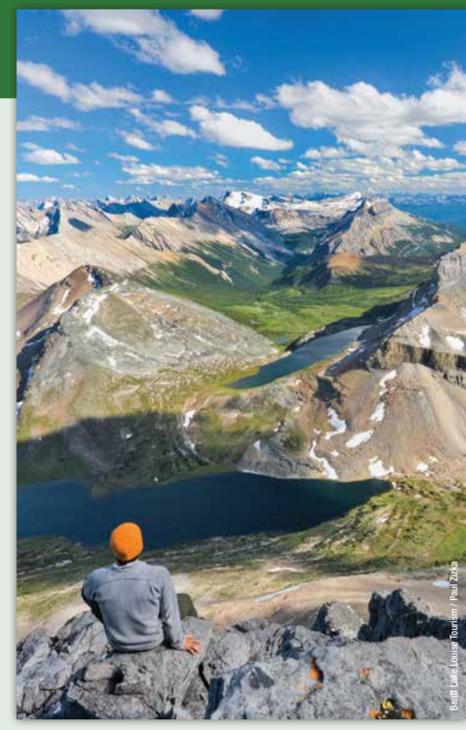
- Hiking trail
- ? Visitor centre
- P** Parking
- D** Backcountry campground
- T** Tea house
- Highway
- Road
- - -** Park boundary
- Possible group access restrictions

How was your trip?

Please send us your comments at ll.info@pc.gc.ca and report trail problems to park staff.

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⚠️ AVALANCHE RISK

Avalanche season in the mountains extends from November to June. A short walk from a parking lot can take you into avalanche terrain. Please respect all avalanche warning signs.

parks.mountainsafety.ca
avalanche.ca

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or satellite phone: 403-762-4506

Cell phone coverage is not reliable throughout the national park.

