Parks Parcs
Canada Canada

Many of the park's 1000 km of trails were established by early people, on foot and horseback, including Indigenous Peoples, fur traders, explorers and adventurers. This guide serves as an orientation to Jasper's backcountry trails and will help you start planning a trip that is exciting and safe with a low environmental impact

# Trail Etiquette



### What can you expect?

- Wildlife. Trails in Jasper are frequently used by animals. Always make noise in the backcountry to avoid surprising wildlife on the trail.
- Horses. Many backcountry trails in Jasper are historical horse routes and still see frequent horse traffic. Always yield to horses.

### What is your responsibility?

- Share the trail. Hike in single file as a group OR take up no more than half the trail width.
- **Don't tune out.** Headphones prevent you from hearing approaching trail users and wildlife.
- Always keep pets on a leash while passing (or being passed by) other users. Other users may be frightened by dogs or unsure how to pass safely.
- Yield to horses. Stay downhill. Greet the rider and the horse. Ask the rider how to proceed.

### Suggested Itineraries

#### Two-Day/One-Night Trips



24.3 km loop; elevation gain/loss over entire loop: 990 m/-990 m; maximum elevation: 1652 m

**Trailhead** • (P2) Southwest end of the Jasper townsite.

This well-marked trail begins and ends in the Jasper townsite and follows a plateau below treeline. This is a good selection for the novice or early-season hiker.

Campgrounds • (39) Saturday Night Lake (40) Minnow Lake

# Big Bend (126) 🦄 🐼

12.6 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 94 m/-162 m; maximum elevation: 1404 m

Trailhead • Sunwapta Falls, 54.5 km south of the Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.

Campground • (49) Big Bend

This route follows a wide, well-packed fire road that ends with spectacular views of Dragon Peak and the Athabasca River.

Notes • The suspension bridge after Athabasca Crossing Campground (50) is washed out, and the Athabasca River is impassable.

## Whirlpool (115) 🦙 🍇

13.2 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 162 m/-157; maximum elevation: 1269 m

Trailhead • Km 6.4 at end of Moab Lake Road, off of Highway 93A South.

Campground • (55) Whirlpool

This portion of the historic Athabasca Pass Trail is a wellpacked fire road that passes Moab Lake and follows the Whirlpool River through a burn area from the 2000 Moab Lake Fire.

*Notes* • *The Simon Creek Bridge beyond Tie Camp* Campground (56) is washed out. Travel to Middleforks Campground (58) and beyond is not recommended until October.

### Jacques Lake (139) 🦄 🏍



24.4 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 345 m/-271 m; maximum elevation: 1588 m

Trailhead • 28 km from the Jasper townsite on Maligne Lake Road at the south end of Medicine Lake.

Campground • (38) Jacques Lake

This trail travels through a narrow valley, skirts four lakes, and crosses a watershed in less than 13 km, with little change in elevation. This is a great trip for novice hikers.

Notes • The Jacques Lake trail can flood heavily in the spring. Please check the trail report before starting your hike. No fishing permitted in Jacques Lake.

# Utopia (140)

12.6 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 312 m/-350 m; maximum elevation: 1688 m

Trailhead • Miette Hot Springs

**Campground** • (51) Utopia

This route passes the old hot spring building and three natural hot springs before continuing upward through Utopia Pass and down to Utopia Campground.

# Hidden Cove

8 km return

**Trailhead** • Parking lot at the end of Maligne Lake Road.

Campground • (12) Hidden Cove

Hidden Cove is a paddle-in campground designed to provide an introductory paddle and camping opportunity for beginner canoeists and kayakers.





### **Three-Day/Two-Night Trips**

# Skyline 100 M R Q



44 km through hike; elevation gain/loss from Maligne

Lake: 1595 m/-2123 m; maximum elevation: 2534 m **Trailhead** • Parking lot at the end of Maligne Lake Road.

Campgrounds • Night One: (28) Little Shovel, (29) Snowbowl; Night Two: (30) Currator, (31) Tekarra

A classic Rockies trail that is mostly above treeline. The elevation allows for panoramic views that extend over much of the park, and encompass vast alpine meadows and windswept ridges.

Recommended direction is from Maligne Lake to Maligne Canyon (north west).

*Notes* • *Campfires are not permitted. Use of a stove is* mandatory. Snow may hinder travel until mid-July. Recommended travel between July 1 and mid-September.

### Tonquin Valley 105 🦮 😭 🔇





43 km through hike; elevation gain/loss from Astoria Trail: 1437 m/-1635 m: maximum elevation: 2232 m

Trailheads • Km 12.7 on Cavell Road (Astoria Trailhead) and km 6.3 on Marmot Basin Road (Portal Creek Trailhead).

**Campgrounds • Night One:** (44) Clitheroe, (46) Amethyst Lake, (45) Surprise Point; Night Two: (47) Maccarib, (48) Portal The Tonquin Valley's scenery is unrivalled. This area is one of

Canada's premiere alpine regions. The valley offers a unique combination of rugged peaks, ghostly ice and fertile lakes. There are several excellent day hikes in the area.

Recommended direction is from Astoria Trailhead to Portal Creek Trailhead.

Notes • Campfires are not permitted. Use of a stove is mandatory. Snow may hinder travel until July. Recommended travel between July 1 and September. Regular horse use and rain during July and August may make trails muddy and challenging for hikers.

#### Fryatt Valley to Brussels (122)



35.4 km return; elevation gain/loss to Brussels: 302 m/-158 m: maximum elevation: 1677 m Trailhead • Km 2 of the Geraldine Road, off Highway 93A

North just north of Athabasca Falls. Campgrounds • (34) Lower Fryatt (bikes allowed),

This alpine valley tucked into one of Jasper's great mountain ranges is a jewel that rewards all your effort. Camp at Brussels and explore the upper valley and beautiful Fryatt Lake on day two, or tackle the infamous headwall and the small hanging valley beyond.

Notes • Biking is permitted to Lower Fryatt Campground.

### Four-Day/Three-Night Trips

### **Poboktan Creek and Jonas Pass**







54 km one way; elevation gain/loss from Sunwapta Station: 1695 m/-2044 m; maximum elevation: 2492 m

Trailhead • Sunwapta Station, 72 km south of the Jasper

townsite on the Icefields Parkway (93N). Campgrounds • Night one: (26) Poboktan, (25) Waterfalls;

Night two: (23) Jonas Cutoff; Night three: (16) Four Point, (15) Boulder Creek

A shorter alternative to the Brazeau Loop, this is an impressive hike with over 13 km of travel above treeline. Good views and prime habitat for park wildlife, including hoary marmot and woodland caribou.

Notes • No fires at Jonas Cutoff (23). Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of Jonas Pass. Horse use is prohibited in Jonas Pass. Dogs are prohibited at Poboktan Creek, Jonas Pass and Poboktan Pass.

## Brazeau Loop (130) (131) (132) 🕅







80 km loop; elevation gain/loss over entire loop: 2145 m/-2145 m: maximum elevation: 2492 m Trailhead • Nigel Creek, 112 km South of Jasper townsite on

the Icefields Parkway Campgrounds • Night one: (16) Four Point, (19) Brazeau River, (21) Brazeau Lake; Night two: (22) John-John, (23) Jonas Cutoff; Night three: (16) Four Point, (15) Boulder Creek

The "grand tour" of the southern ranges, this circuit includes one of the park's largest backcountry lakes and an extraordinary alpine traverse with glaciated peaks, lush wildflowers, and a variety of wildlife. The trail winds through extensive alpine meadows and three passes.

Recommended direction is counter clockwise to Brazeau Lake, through Poboktan pass, and finally through Jonas Pass.

Notes • No fires at Jonas Cutoff (23). Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of Jonas Pass. Horse use is prohibited in Jonas Pass. Dogs are prohibited in Pokoktan Pass, Jonas Pass and along Poboktan Creek.

### Planning Your Trip

When and where to go

Early May to late June: Spring in the mountains means snow in the alpine, and sometimes muddy trails in the valleys. During

this time of year, valley bottom hikes are the best option.

Early July to mid-September: Alpine trails are typically snow free at this time of year, although snow can persist much later in the summer in some places. This is a good time of year to explore alpine trails. Be aware of changing weather conditions. Freezing temperatures and snow are not uncommon above 1500 m. Mid-September to late October: Autumn in the mountains brings shorter days, fewer bugs and cooler temperatures. The option to explore alpine trails still exists, but weather is unpredictable, nights are cold and snow is likely.

#### **Backcountry camping permits**

A backcountry camping permit is required for all overnight trips. It can be obtained online at parkscanada.ca/ bookjasperbackcountry or by calling the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS) at 1-877-737-3783. A non-refundable reservation fee applies. Jasper backcountry bookings typically open up in late January. Visit parkscanada.ca/jasperbackcountry for more information.

Backcountry campgrounds can be booked for a maximum of 3 nights in a row (some 2 nights). Plan your route and layover's accordingly.

#### Refunds and cancellations

If you cancel your backcountry reservation at least three days prior to your start date, you will receive a full refund of your camping fee less the original, non-refundable reservation fee and cancellation fee. If your plans change please take advantage of our refund policy and make your space available to others. To cancel, contact the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS) at 1-877-737-3783.

# Weather

Rain or snow can fall any time of year in the mountains. Pack for all weather conditions and be aware that daily weather in the mountains often differs from the forecast. Always check the Environment Canada weather forecast at weather.gc.ca before embarking on your trip.

#### **Self-serve backcountry guides**

Visit parkscanada.ca/jasperbackcountryguides to view and download detailed guides on Jasper's backcountry trails. These guides provide information that goes well beyond what is offered in this brochure. It is highly recommended that you consult these guides before leaving for your trip.

Some of the information you can find in these guides are:

- More suggested itineraries
- Detailed trail maps • Distances between major trail
- junctions and campgrounds
- Elevation profiles for the trail
- Campground information Safety considerations
- specific to the trail In-depth backcountry
- etiquette and best practices Equipment checklists



Checklist

Managing Our Use

- Select a trip that best suits your party's abilities and experience, interests, equipment and the time you have
- Familiarize yourself with the trail you have selected. This includes using additional reference guides, our self-service guides and topographical maps
- Obtain a backcountry permit online at parkscanada.ca/
- Be prepared to be self-sufficient during inclement and rapidly changing mountain conditions by packing the right clothing and camping gear
- Let a friend or family member know about your travel plans.
- Check the trailhead kiosk prior to your hike; it contains valuable information about closures and warnings

### Backcountry Etiquette

#### **Campfires**

All backcountry travellers should carry a portable stove for cooking. Campfires are not permitted in some areas (see map). If you choose to have a fire, you must use the metal fireboxes provided, keep your fire small and use only deadfall. Tend to your fire at all times and extinguish it completely before you move on.

#### Garbage

You are responsible for everything you take into the backcountry and this includes garbage. Do not dispose of garbage in pit toilets or bear lockers—it attracts animals.

#### Camping

Please camp only at the campsites indicated on your backcountry camping permit, and use the tent pads (where provided) to minimize impact on vegetation.

#### Food storage

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears and other wildlife, all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment must be hung from the food storage cables, or locked in food lockers provided at designated campsites. When no food storage options are available (see trail directory), bear-resistant containers are recommended to store food. Please clean food lockers after use

#### Washing

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 70 m away from streams or lakes and use a small amount of biodegradable soap. Strain out those last bits of food waste and pack them out. Disperse strained water on land.

#### **Human/Dog waste**

Use the facilities provided. When there are no facilities nearby, select a spot away from trails, campsites, and at least 70 m from water sources. Dig a hole 15 cm deep to the dark, biologically active soil layer. Loosely fill the hole with soil afterward. Use as little toilet paper as possible and carry it out or burn it.

#### Stay on the trail

Short cutting between trail switchbacks damages both the soil and plant life. This ruins the look of the area and makes it susceptible to further damage by erosion.

#### **Collecting natural or cultural objects**

Rocks, fossils, horns, antlers, wildflowers, nests and all other natural or historical objects in national parks are protected by law. Leave them as you found them for others to enjoy.

#### Remember, you are responsible for your own safety.

canyons, rapids and waterfalls, glacial crevasses, falling rocks

Giardia lamblia is a water-borne parasite that can be present in any surface water. Boil, filter or chemically treat all water before drinking.

health.alberta.ca for more information. Wild animals see dogs as either prey or predator. They can

Park animals are wild and can be dangerous. Any animal can become aggressive if it feels threatened. Keep your distance; 30 m from most animals and 100 m from carnivores. Moose

Both black and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. Carry bear spray with you in the backcountry and note that it is safer to travel in groups of three or more. Learn more by visiting a parks information centre or parkscanada.ca/bears-and-people.

If travelling into the backcountry for extended periods of time, it is recommended to carry a personal locator such as a SPOT

# Other Ways to Explore

### Horseback riding

Park information centres have information about guided day or overnight horse trips in the park. For overnight trips, a backcountry permit and grazing permit are required. Please visit or call the Jasper Information Centre (780-852-6177, Ext. 2) to obtain your permits. Visit parkscanada.gc.ca/horse-user**guide** for more information.

### **Mountain biking**

Mountain biking is allowed on select backcountry trails (see map). If planning an overnight trip, you must have a backcountry permit. Bikers can more easily startle wildlife, horses and other trail users. Please be respectful of all other users while biking in the backcountry.

### Climbing, mountaineering and glacial travel

Mountaineering parties can apply at a Parks Canada information centre for a permit to bivouac in non-vegetated areas. Special restrictions may apply. Visit parksmountainsafety.ca for more

## Random camping

Random camping is permitted in designated areas only. Visit or call an information centre (780-852-6177, Ext. 2) for more information and to reserve. Special rules and conditions apply to random camping.

### **Fishing**

A national park fishing license is required. Visit a Parks Canada information centre or local outdoor shop to purchase a permit and review the mountain parks fishing regulations. See parkscanada.gc.ca/jasperfishing for more information.

#### **Backcountry huts and lodges**

Backcountry shelters and lodges are available to book through various third parties within Jasper National Park. A backcountry permit is required.

Alpine huts maintained by the Alpine Club of Canada are available to club members and non-members. Reservations can be made at alpineclubofcanada.ca or by calling

- Skyline Trail Rides skylinetrail.com or (780) 852-4215 / 1-888-852-7787
- Tonquin Valley Adventures tonquinadventures.com or (780) 852-1188

Tonquin Valley Backcountry Lodge

tonguinvalley.com or (780) 852-3909

- **JASPER INFORMATION CENTRE:** 780-852-6177 Ext. 2 pc.sentiersjasper-jaspertrails.pc@canada.ca
- WEBSITE: parkscanada.gc.ca/jasper
- JASPER TRAIL CONDITIONS REPORT: parkscanada.ca/jaspertrails
- **WEATHER:** weather.gc.ca
- BEAR INFORMATION: parkscanada.ca/bears-and-people • MAPS AND GUIDE BOOKS: Friends of Jasper National Park at 780-852-4767 or www.friendsofjasper.com

#### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Call 911 or, if using a satellite phone, call the park dispatch office at (780) 852-3100. Cell phone reception is unreliable.

FOLLOW US ON:



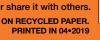
facebook.com/Jaspernp



**DONE WITH THIS BROCHURE?** Please return it or share it with others.

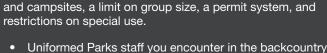
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

PRINTED IN CASCAL









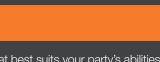
may ask to see your backcountry camping permit.

environmental impact, including quota restrictions on trails

Humans have an impact in all areas of the park. The

backcountry is especially vulnerable to our use. Park

management regulations are in place to minimize our





- bookjasperbackcountry or by phone at 1-877-737-3783
- Check trail conditions and weather prior to departure

# Plan Ahead and Prepare

Rapidly changing weather, steep, rugged or unfamiliar terrain, avalanches (at any time of year), cold, swift-flowing streams, and wild animals are all hazards visitors may encounter in the backcountry. Caution and self-reliance are essential.

Ticks carrying lyme disease may be present in the park. Visit

provoke confrontations with wildlife and affect your safety. Dogs must be kept on a leash while in a national park. Please note that dogs are not allowed in some backcountry areas to protect caribou and ground-nesting birds.

and elk can be especially dangerous in the fall during the rut, and when calves are young in the spring.

# More Information

• AVALANCHE INFORMATION: parksmountainsafety.ca

