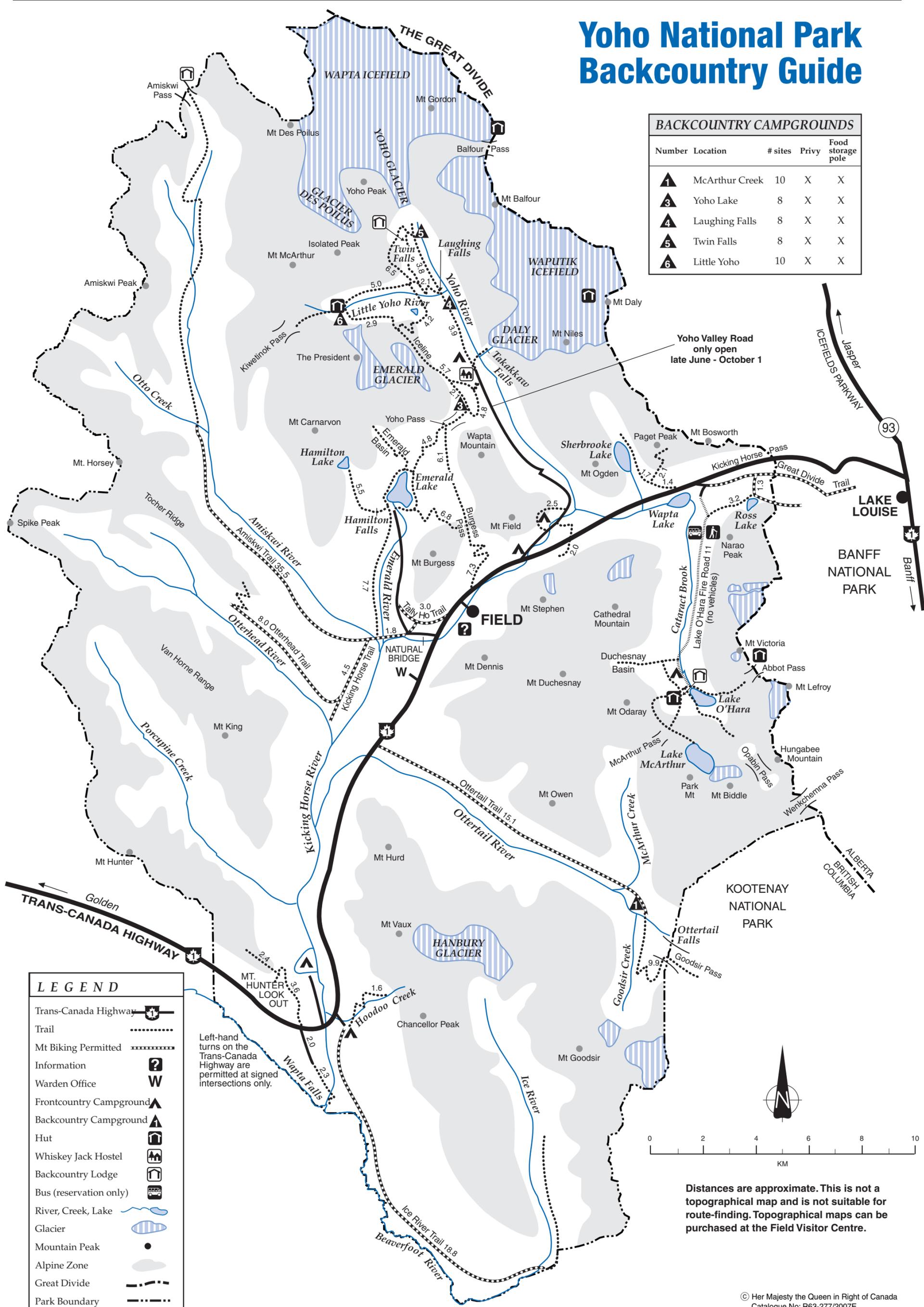




# Yoho National Park Backcountry Guide

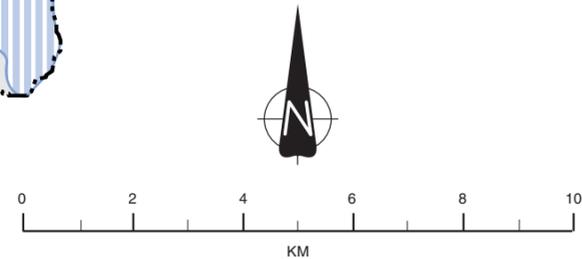
BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS				
Number	Location	# sites	Privy	Food storage pole
1	McArthur Creek	10	X	X
3	Yoho Lake	8	X	X
4	Laughing Falls	8	X	X
5	Twin Falls	8	X	X
6	Little Yoho	10	X	X



**LEGEND**

- Trans-Canada Highway
- Trail
- Mt Biking Permitted
- Information
- Warden Office
- Frontcountry Campground
- Backcountry Campground
- Hut
- Whiskey Jack Hostel
- Backcountry Lodge
- Bus (reservation only)
- River, Creek, Lake
- Glacier
- Mountain Peak
- Alpine Zone
- Great Divide
- Park Boundary

Left-hand turns on the Trans-Canada Highway are permitted at signed intersections only.



Distances are approximate. This is not a topographical map and is not suitable for route-finding. Topographical maps can be purchased at the Field Visitor Centre.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada  
 Catalogue No: R63-277/2007E  
 ISBN: 978-0-662-45859-3

Aussi disponible en français

**YOHO National Park protects a landscape unique to the rugged west slopes of the central Canadian Rockies. This guide provides basic information for backcountry visitors. For more information or advice please contact the park.**

Your stewardship is vital to maintain the integrity and beauty of this special wild place. Please practice minimum impact and observe these key regulations:

- Pack out all garbage including food waste, diapers, tampons and sanitary napkins.
- Do not feed or approach wildlife — this harms their health, alters their natural behaviour, and may expose you to danger.
- Keep your pet on a leash at all times.
- Rocks, fossils, horns, antlers, wildflowers, mushrooms, nests and all other natural or historical objects in a national park are protected by law. Leave them in their natural setting for others to discover and enjoy.
- Angling requires a National Park Fishing Permit.

#### Plan ahead

- Read this guide, other pertinent park brochures or web pages, and guide books.
- Obtain a topographical map.
- Contact a Parks Canada information centre for current information and to obtain permits. A current trail report is posted on the Yoho National Park web site.
- Be aware of park regulations that affect you.

#### Manage Risk

- Know your physical limits. Safety is your personal responsibility. Be prepared for possible hazards and always exercise caution.
- Ensure that you have adequate food, water, clothing and equipment for your trip. Consider your need for these important basics: first-aid kit, map and compass, flashlight, bear spray, fire starter, knife, sunglasses, whistle and a bivouac shelter.
- If you are planning an activity that you feel is hazardous, you may choose to complete a Voluntary Safety Registration. Backcountry travellers should be prepared for at least one day more than their planned trip. Inform friends or family of your itinerary.
- Read the brochure: Bears and People: a guide to safety and conservation on the trail. [www.pc.gc.ca/bears-and-people](http://www.pc.gc.ca/bears-and-people)
- Boil or filter drinking water
- Mountain weather is unpredictable. Be prepared for rain or snow at any time, particularly at higher elevations. Freezing temperatures are not uncommon above 1500 metres, even in summer.

#### Respect the environment

- To dispose of human waste where no facilities are provided, select a spot at least 70 m (seven bus lengths) away from trails, campsites and water sources. Dig a shallow hole with a stick or heel of your boot. Cover the hole with soil or rocks afterwards.

Pack out used toilet paper or burn it if the fire hazard is not extreme.

- Do not wash yourself or your dishes in streams and lakes – carry the water to your campsite and wash there. Minimize use of soap; even biodegradable soaps are pollutants. Strain out the last bits of food waste and pack them out. Dispose of grey water on land, well away from water sources and campsites.

#### Restricted Access

Access to the fossil beds on Mt. Stephen and Walcott's Quarry on Mt. Field is restricted to protect the fossils. Guided hikes to these areas are offered during the summer. Alpinists who are climbing Mt. Stephen or travelling through Duchesnay or Dennis Passes must obtain a permit to pass by the restricted area.

To protect an important wildlife movement corridor and increase security for grizzly bears, the McArthur Creek Valley from McArthur Pass to the Ottetail Valley is closed from May 1 to August 15 annually. After August 15, the valley is open to limited human use; a permit is required to hike this unmaintained route.

#### Horses

Horses can be used in the Amiskwi, Ottetail, Otterhead and Ice River valleys, and on the Emerald River Trail. Check ahead at the park information centre for current information and regulations.

#### Mountain Biking

In Yoho National Park, former fireroads have been converted to trails. These are the trails in the park where biking is permitted. Please ride with care, bike bear-aware, and give right of way to hikers and horse parties.

- Great Divide route (to Great Divide)..... 3 km (to Lake Louise)..... 10.5 km
- Ross Lake trail (to Lake Louise)..... 8.3 km
- Tally-ho trail ..... 3 km
- Amiskwi trail (to Otto Creek)..... 18.8 km
- Kicking Horse trail ..... 4.5 km
- Otterhead trail (to Tocher Ridge junction)..... 9.8 km
- Ottetail Valley trail (to warden cabin)..... 15.1 km
- Ice River trail (to Lower Ice River warden cabin) ..... 17.5 km

#### Backcountry Accommodation

- The Alpine Club of Canada operates cabins at Lake O'Hara (Elizabeth Parker Hut), Abbot Pass (Abbot Pass Hut), Little Yoho Valley (Stanley Mitchell Hut), and the southwest corner of Mt. Daly (Scott Duncan Hut).
- Twin Falls Chalet (seasonal): 403.228.7079
- Lake O'Hara Lodge: May-October/February-April: 250.343.6418; Other months: 403.678.4110
- Hostelling International operates Whiskey Jack Hostel near Takakkaw Falls (late June to late-September).

#### Backcountry Camping

##### Wilderness Pass

Anyone planning an overnight trip into the backcountry by foot, mountain bike or horse, at any time of year, must

have a Wilderness Pass. There is no charge for children 16 years of age and under. You can purchase a Wilderness Pass from Parks Canada visitor centres or Parks Canada's office in Calgary. An annual Wilderness Pass, valid for one year from the date of purchase, is also available.

Random camping is permitted in Amiskwi, Otterhead, Ice River, and Porcupine valleys. Camps must be set up at least 3 km from the highway, 100 metres from water, and 50 metres from the trail. There is a three-day maximum stay for one spot. Climbers on routes that cannot be completed in one day require a Wilderness Pass to bivouac.

#### Reservations

Backcountry campsites can be reserved three months in advance of your first day of stay. A non-refundable fee applies. Contact the Yoho Visitor Centre. Group size can be no greater than ten people, including guides and leaders.

#### Lake O'Hara Campground

Parks Canada operates a 30-site backcountry campground at Lake O'Hara from mid-June to early October. Reservations are required and accepted three months in advance by phone only. Before you call, please check the Lake O'Hara Availability Report at: [www.pc.gc.ca/yohotrails](http://www.pc.gc.ca/yohotrails)

Contact the Yoho Visitor Centre for details and information about off-season camping.

#### Campfires

Campfires are not permitted in Yoho's backcountry. Campers must use portable stoves.

#### Wildlife Safety

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears and other wildlife, all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment must be suspended from the food storage cables provided at designated campgrounds. Prepare meals away from your tent.

#### Directory

- **Emergency: 911**
- **Yoho National Park: [www.pc.gc.ca/yoho](http://www.pc.gc.ca/yoho)**
- Yoho Visitor Centre: 250.343.6783  
Email: [yoho.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:yoho.info@pc.gc.ca)
- Lake O'Hara Reservations [www.pc.gc.ca/lakeohara](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lakeohara)  
Check availability: [www.pc.gc.ca/yohotrails](http://www.pc.gc.ca/yohotrails)
- Park Dispatch: 403-762-1473 (non-emergency)
- Friends of Yoho National Park: 250.343.6393  
[www.friendsofyoho.ca](http://www.friendsofyoho.ca)
- Alpine Club of Canada: 403.678.3200  
[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca)
- Hostelling International: toll-free 1.866.762.4122
- Burgess Shale Guided Hikes: 1.800.343.3006  
[www.burgess-shale.bc.ca](http://www.burgess-shale.bc.ca) OR  
[www.pc.gc.ca/burgessshale](http://www.pc.gc.ca/burgessshale) 1-877-RESERVE (1-877-737-3783)
- Environment Canada weather  
<https://weather.gc.ca/>
- Leave No Trace: [www.leavenotrace.ca](http://www.leavenotrace.ca)

## Trail Descriptions

### SHORT WALKS (1 to 2 hours)

**Wapta Falls** elevation loss 30 m ..... 2.3 km, one way  
The 2 km gravel road skirts Leancoil marsh. From the end of the road follow the level trail to where the Kicking Horse River drops 30 m. \*Note: The trailhead is not marked on the Trans-Canada Highway for westbound traffic as there is no left turn lane here. Continue 3 km to the west entrance of the park, turn and come back.

**Emerald Lake** minor elevation gain / loss .. 5.2 km circuit  
A self-guided nature trail, this scenic hike is accessible for wheelchairs and strollers from the parking area to the bridge at the back of the lake (4.6 km return).

**Hamilton Falls** minor elevation gain ..... 1.6 km return  
The trail starts at the entrance to Emerald Lake parking area.

**Centennial Trail** minor elevation gain / loss 2.5 km circuit  
Begins at the bridge by Kicking Horse Campground on the Yoho Valley Road.

**Walk-in-the-Past** elevation gain 90 m ..... 4 km return  
From the trailer circle in Kicking Horse Campground, cross the Yoho Valley Road and follow the trail to an abandoned, narrow-gauge locomotive used to build the Spiral Tunnels.

**Point Lacey Falls and Angel's Staircase** .. 4.4 km return  
Starts at Takakkaw Falls campground. minor elevation gain

### HALF-DAY HIKES (3 to 4 hours)

**Mt. Hunter Lookout** elevation gain 400m 7.2 km return to Upper Lookout ..... 12 km return  
Park at the \*Wapta Falls turn-off on the Trans-Canada Highway, and carefully cross the highway. The trail climbs steadily through montane forest to two former fire lookouts.

**Hoodoos** elevation gain 455 m ..... 3.2 km return  
A steep, dry trail to capped pillars of glacial debris starts at the creek, between loops F and T in Hoodoo Creek Campground. Signs advise on the hazard of falling trees due to a 2005 prescribed burn.

**Emerald Basin** elevation gain 225 m ..... 9.2 km return  
Walk to the far end of Emerald Lake for the turn-off to Emerald Basin. After a short, steep section the trail levels.

It ends in a natural amphitheatre of hanging glaciers and avalanche paths.

**Sherbrooke Lake** elevation gain 165 m..... 6.2 km return  
From the Wapta Lake picnic shelter, the trail climbs moderately to a lake surrounded by steep slopes.

**Great Divide** elevation gain minimal..... 6 km return  
Bike or walk to the Great Divide on the original road through Kicking Horse Pass. (no longer open to vehicles)

**Ross Lake** elevation gain 100 m..... 3.2 km one way  
Watch for the Ross Lake junction at 1.9 km on the Great Divide route. Turn right for a gentle climb to a tiny rockbound lake.

**Paget Lookout** elevation gain 520 m..... 7 km return  
Follow the trail to Sherbrooke Lake for 1.4 km. Take the right hand fork at the junction for Paget Lookout.

### FULL DAY HIKES (5 to 8 hours)

The main trailheads for day hikes and backcountry camping are located at Emerald Lake, Takakkaw Falls Campground and Whiskey Jack Hostel. Many trails connect, giving numerous options for start and finish points, and circuit hikes.

**Hamilton Lake** elevation gain 850 m..... 11 km return  
From the entrance at Emerald Lake parking area, follow the trail past Hamilton Falls on a steady climb to a classic alpine lake.

**Yoho Pass** elevation gain 530 m..... 12 km one way  
Follow the Emerald Lake trail around the lake to the Yoho Pass junction. The trail traverses a gravel outwash plain, climbs through the pass to Yoho Lake and descends to

**Whiskey Jack Hostel near Takakkaw Falls.**  
Emerald Triangle elevation gain 880 m..... 19.7 km circuit  
Follow the Yoho Pass trail to Yoho Pass, then travel south along the Wapta Highline trail to Burgess Pass. Descend the switchbacks to Emerald Lake and your starting point.

**Iceline** elevation gain 695 m  
via Little Yoho ..... 20.8 km circuit  
via Celeste Lake ..... 17.5 km circuit  
The trail starts at Whiskey Jack Hostel and climbs through a large avalanche path onto a bench. Hikers descend to the

Yoho Valley by taking the Celeste Lake trail, or follow the trail signs to the Little Yoho Valley.

**Wapta Highline** elevation gain 660 m  
to Field ..... 18.5 km one way  
to Emerald Lake ..... 19 km one way  
Start as for the Iceline, but take the fork to Yoho Lake and Yoho Pass. In Yoho Pass, take the left fork along the flank of Wapta Mountain to Burgess Pass, then down switchbacks to Emerald Lake or the town of Field.

#### Yoho Valley Trailhead, one way to:

Laughing Falls elevation gain 60 m ..... 3.9 km  
Twin Falls elevation gain 300 m to chalet ..... 7.9 km  
Yoho Glacier Moraine elevation gain 250 m ..... 8.4 km  
Laughing Falls is passed en route to Twin Falls. Strong parties can continue to the top of Twin Falls and over the Whaleback trail for incredible views. Ask at the Yoho Visitor Centre if the bridge is in before you take this route  
Returning to Takakkaw Falls via the Whaleback/Laughing Falls is a 20.1 km circuit.

**Little Yoho Valley** elevation gain 520 m 9.3 km one way  
Follow the Yoho Valley trail to Laughing Falls, turn north at the junction and ascend the switchbacks.

**Lake O'Hara** elevation gain 400 m 11 km one way  
A quota limits the number of visitors using the bus service into Lake O'Hara. Anyone may hike the 11 km access road. Note that buses do not stop for walkers and a ride out is not assured. Bikes are prohibited. Reservations are required for both day use and camping. The bus operates from mid-June to early October. Camping reservations can be booked three months in advance by phone. Day reservations for the entire summer open online in April and fill within 60 minutes.

**Ottetail Valley** to McArthur Creek Campground  
elevation gain 285 m ..... 14.9 km one way  
to Ottetail Falls ..... 17.7 km one way  
to Goodsir Pass elevation gain 1015 m..... 23.9 km one way  
Trailhead located on the Trans-Canada Highway 8.4 km west of Field. Links with The Rockwall in Kootenay National Park.