Backcountry Trails in Banff National Park

What to Expect

Backcountry is a special place in every visitor's life. By venturing off the beaten path and exploring the Park's backcountry, you will be rewarded with a unique sense of adventure and satisfaction.

What to Bring

Ensure you are well-equipped for a full day of backcountry travel. Always be prepared for changing weather conditions, especially on high alpine trails. Water is available in several locations throughout the Park, but bring your own water and food supplies. A guidebook or topographic map is a necessity. A GPS is recommended, as well as a whistle, a whistle, a flashlight, a whistle, and a whistle.

Backcountry Etiquette

1. Know the rules before you go. Learn about the regulations and guidelines, and make sure you understand them.
2. Leave only your footprints. Be sure to pack out all trash and avoid disturbing wildlife.
3. Stay on the trail. Do not hike off-trail or create new trails.
4. Be considerate of others. Keep a safe distance from other hikers.
5. Protect our natural environment. Do not disturb or damage any plants, animals, or water sources.
6. Do not use natural or cultural objects where they do not belong.

Backcountry Use

Hiking

Three-Day Trips

Lake Minnewanka Shoreline Trail

Two-Day Trips

Sunshine – Vista Lake

Cycling

Join a group or ride solo - backcountry biking is an excellent way to explore Banff National Park. Whether you're a seasoned mountain biker or just starting out, there are trails for everyone. From easy to challenging, there's a route that suits your skill level. Always wear proper safety gear and follow park regulations.

Lake Minnewanka Shoreline Trail

Begin on the lakeshore at the Sulphur Hot Springs boat ramp. The trail is marked by yellow blazes and is a great place to see wildlife. The Lake Minnewanka Trail is a 6.5 km loop that takes you to the end of the lake and back. The trail is wide and well-marked, making it accessible for all abilities.

Lake Minnewanka Shoreline Trail

The trail begins at the oxbow bend of the Bow River and follows the river upstream for 5 km. The trail is wide and easy to follow, with views of the mountains and the Bow River. The trail is 7.5 km long and takes about 2-3 hours to complete. It is open from mid-June to mid-September.

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