Introducing a park and an idea.

Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than half-way south. To survive, all living things have adapted to the extreme and variable conditions of topography and climate that are characteristic of the park.

Banff, Alberta

The Rocky Mountains had their beginning in the distant past when this portion of North America was covered by an ocean. As the earth's climate cooled, snow accumulated and was compressed into ice. As the ice moved over the land, it carved deep valleys, leaving their sides sheer and steep. The great Ice Age, which began about a million years ago, greatly altered the appearance of the Rockies.

The great Ice Age, which began about a million years ago, greatly altered the appearance of the Rockies. The many thousands of feet of sediment laid down in the seas, and their fossilized remains are now preserved in the lakes and rivers that flow through the park. The fossils of silt-laden glacial waters of Banff contain little food for fish, and most are rather poor fish producers.

The lower levels of the intermediate slopes support lodgepole pine and white spruce. As the forest grows up, it changes to a spectacular golden color before its needle-like leaves drop. Above treeline, the alpine life zone is characterized by stunted, wind-vegetation. In this Arctic-like environment the growing season is short, cool, and unpredictable. Snowdrifts last until late summer, and frost may occur at almost any time. In style of this, small bright alpine and Arctic plants grow in great profusion. Many early spring species flower at this season.

Early activities in the park centred around these springs. In 1885, far-sighted legislators reserved an area of 10 square miles around these springs to preserve them for the people of Canada. From this small beginning, Canada has grown to possess a network of national parks. In 1940, the long-planned highway from Lake Louise to Jasper National Park was completed. Called both the Banff-Jasper Highway and the Icefields Parkway, it provides access to the great Columbia Icefield and the surrounding mountainous area.

The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that national parks are "dedicated to the people of Canada's national parks."

With its majestic peaks, deep valleys, and glacial lakes, Banff National Park is a credit to a few only of the Rocky Mountains. Situated at some 300 miles west of Calgary, Alberta, it preserves a 2,446 square miles of breathtaking scenery and is the oldest and most popular of Canada's national parks.

In 1883, surveyors for the Canadian Pacific Railway searched for a route through the mountains to the then inland colony of British Columbia with the rest of Canada. In that year, railway workers learned of a cave formed by hot springs bubbling on the northwest slopes of Sulphur Mountain in the park. In autumn it changes to a spectacular golden color before its needle-like leaves drop. Above treeline, the alpine life zone is characterized by stunted, wind-vegetation. In this Arctic-like environment the growing season is short, cool, and unpredictable. Snowdrifts last until late summer, and frost may occur at almost any time. In style of this, small bright alpine and Arctic plants grow in great profusion. Many early spring species flower at this season.

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How to get there
Banff National Park is served by commercial air lines. From the east, the Trans-Canada Highway links the park with Calgary, and Highway No. 1, the David Thompson Highway, enters from Red Deer. The park is accessible from the north by the Icefields Parkway, from the west by the Trans-Canada Highway and the Banff-Windermere Highway. The nearest commercial airport is in Calgary, but there is a grass landing strip near the Banff townsite for daylight landings of light aircraft. Pilots must obtain permission from the Superintendent of the park and detailed maps of trails in the Banff and Lake Louise areas may be obtained from Alberta Agriculture.

Mountains climbing —
This is a popular sport in Banff. Inexperienced climbers should hire a guide.

Mountain climbers and overnight hikers must register at the Superintendent, Banff National Park, Banff, Alberta, or at any information centre. A campsite permit must be purchased, first-come, first-served basis. Campgrounds open about May 15 and close about September 15, depending on the weather. Campfires may be lit only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in portable stoves. Barbecues may be kept on leash. No permit or vaccination certificate is required.

Fishing in the park is by permit, available at information centres or the park administration office. Fishing —
Permits are over 700 miles of trails, providing access to all areas.

Hiking —
This is an ideal way to see the park. There are over 500 miles of trails, providing access to all areas. Most leading to remote areas are well suited to overnight trail trips. Other areas are readily accessible for day walking or riding, particularly the Lake Louise and Moraine Lake districts. A printed guide to the trails of the park and detailed maps of trails in the Banff and Lake Louise areas may be obtained from Alberta Agriculture.

Information Services
A variety of commercial accommodation is offered in the park, details of which are available at all park information centres. Reservations can be made through commercial booking services in Banff.

Other facilities
Nearly all the facilities of a modern town, including garages, grocery stores, and restaurants, are found within the park. The majority are conveniently to Banff townsite, which is situated beside the Trans-Canada Highway. In addition, visitors will find a large variety of recreational facilities, including swimming pools, bus and boat tour operations, riding stables, skiing, golf courses, and ski developments.

Fire
Campers may be kept in full-time in campgrounds, except for primitive ones. All campsites vary and depend on whether the site is serviced or unoccupied. Campgrounds open about May 15 and close about September 15, depending on the weather. Full-time campgrounds are one mile west of Lake Louise. To help you understand and appreciate Banff's natural treasures, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive programs conducted by a park naturalist. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, land formations, plants and animals are interrelated, and your stay will be more rewarding.

Moose feeding in water besides Banff-Jasper Highway
five highway approaches. From the east, the Trans-Canada Trans-continental trains of the Canadian Pacific Railway Banff National Park is serviced by commercial bus lines.

How to enjoy the park
Season
— The park is open throughout the year, although some visitor services are only seasonal. Summer is the peak season,

near Banff and on Lake Minnewanka, provided they conform with federal navigation regulations and carry appropriate permits. Boating —
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Mule deer are frequently seen in the park —
For daylight landings of light aircraft. Pilots must obtain permission from the Superintendent of the park and detailed maps of trails in the Banff and Lake Louise areas may be obtained from Alberta Agriculture.

Fossil and alpine plants can be seen along the trail to the upper falls.

Information on points of special interest.

Additional information on other national parks, write the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A4.
Banff National Park

Legend
- Trans-Canada Highway
- Secondary Road
- Walking or Hiking Trail
- Railroad
- Lake, River, Creek
- Glacier, Icefield
- Mountain
- Warden's Cabin
- Picnic Area
- Accommodation
- Viewpoint
- Self-guiding Trail
- Youth Hostel
- Ski Area
- Mountain Lift
- Highway Number

Note: This is but a reference map, designed to give you a general idea of what you will find in this park. It is not a hiking, boating or road map. To find your way accurately, you should obtain a topographical map, available at the information centres in Banff and Lake Louise during the summer months and at the administration building (Revenue Office) year round.

Canada's National Parks
1. Pacific Rim
2. Mount Revelstoke
3. Glacier
4. Yoho
5. Kootenay
6. Jasper
7. Banff
8. Waterton Lakes
9. Elk Island
10. Wood Buffalo
11. Prince Albert
12. Riding Mountain
13. Pukaskwa
14. Point Pelee
15. Georgian Bay Islands
16. St. Lawrence Islands
17. La Mauricie
18. Fundy
19. Kouchibouguac
20. Fundy
21. Kejimkujik
22. Cape Breton Highlands
23. Prince Edward Island
24. Gaspé
25. Terra Nova