

# Camping in the Banff Area

## WELCOME TO BANFF NATIONAL PARK!

Banff National Park offers diverse camping experiences, from cozy and authentic lakeside campsites to scenic sites located within close proximity to amenities in the Town of Banff. Seven campgrounds in the Banff Area provide convenient access to the park's most famous attractions. Each campground varies in size, location and services. Visitors can choose one that best suits their needs and preferences.

The information in this brochure is important to know for your enjoyment and safety. Should you have any questions, friendly staff are available at most campgrounds and are also ready to assist you at the Banff Visitor Centre.



## WHILE IN THE PARK ...

For information on things to do while camping in the park, view these guides online or pick up a copy at the Banff Visitor Centre.



## THE 'BARE' CAMPSITE PROGRAM

The 'Bare' Campsite program aims to ensure that no wildlife attractants are left unattended at any site in the campgrounds. Special effort is being made by park staff for your safety, and to help wildlife in our national parks continue to thrive. The program is in effect in all Banff National Park campgrounds.



### WHY A 'BARE' CAMPSITE?

When people leave their food and animal attractants outside, bears and other wildlife can lose their fear of humans. Once an animal becomes familiar with human food, that animal becomes a risk to public safety and may be destroyed. By keeping a 'Bare' campsite, you are playing an important role in preventing the creation of "problem" animals.

### HOW TO KEEP A 'BARE' CAMPSITE:

A 'Bare' campsite does not have any wildlife attractants (food or food-related or scented items). To ensure you have a 'Bare' campsite, do not leave any of the following items unattended at your site:

- Coolers\*\* – full and empty,
- Food – wrapped, unwrapped, and in containers,
- Garbage/Wrappers,
- Dishes/Pots/Cutlery – clean and dirty,
- Empty beverage containers,
- Pet Food/Bowls – full and empty,
- Bottles/Cans – open or unopened,
- Scented Products – all, such as shampoo, toothpaste, candles, citronella, dish soap,
- BBQs – clean and dirty,
- Any other items used for food preparation or that have a smell or scent.

\*\*A note about coolers: Animals will be attracted to these because they hold smells from items that have been stored in them, even when the coolers are empty.



## CAMPING REGULATIONS & RULES

### GENERAL

In addition to the 'Bare' Campsite Program, a number of regulations are in effect to ensure campers have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Campgrounds and campsite sizes have been designed to reduce our impact on the ecosystem. The maximum occupancy for each campsite is similar to a hotel: to exceed it places stress on the campground and on the natural environment.

- A maximum of 2 vehicles, 2 tents and 6 people are permitted on each site.
- Check out time: 11 a.m.
- Maximum stay: 14 days.
- Camping is only permitted in a designated campground and site.
- Vehicles and tents must be within your designated site and on the gravel pad.
- Do not tie anything to the trees (this includes tarps). Tarps should be strung using poles.

### NOISE

People love to camp because of the opportunity it provides to escape the noise of the city and enter the peace and quiet of nature. Even conversation can carry through a forested area. Excessive noise is not permitted at any time of the day. Any disturbance should be reported immediately to the Wardens or park staff.

Quiet Hours – Are in effect from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. During quiet hours, music, campfires and alcohol are prohibited. Quiet conversation only.

Alcohol – Open alcohol is not permitted between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. Review the *Alcohol and Fire Bans* section for more information.

Generator Use - Permitted between the hours of 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. daily.

Visitors – Only site occupants are allowed on a campsite after 11 p.m. Large groups should disperse back to their own sites.

### CAMPFIRES

Having a campfire is one of the most enjoyable "things to do" when camping. In order to keep your campfire safe for you and for the environment, please adhere to the following regulations:

Permit - Each registered party wanting to have a campfire must purchase a fire permit for \$8.80 per day. Permits are available at the campground or self-registration kiosk.

Fire Size – The suggested fire size is ½ metre x ½ metre x ½ metre. Fires must be contained within the firebox provided. It is illegal to have a fire outside of a designated location.

Wood – Only use wood that is provided within the campground. To reduce the negative impact of campfires on the environment, keep your fires to a reasonable size. Do not burn garbage or collect deadfall from the surrounding forest for burning. Use an axe to make your own kindling from the firewood provided.

Times – Campfires are permitted from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fires must be attended at all times. Review the *Alcohol and Fire Bans* section for more information.

### FISHING

A national park fishing permit is required. Permits are available at the Banff Visitor Centre, Lake Minnewanka boat dock or various retail outlets in the area. Pick up a copy of the *Fishing Regulations Summary* to learn about special rules related to fishing in a national park.

### FAILURE TO COMPLY

Park staff are here to help and may visit your site to remind you of these regulations. Campers who fail to comply with the 'Bare' Campsite Program and these regulations may have their camping permit revoked, without a refund, and may be charged under the *Canada National Parks Act* and *National Parks Campground Regulations*. The permit holder is responsible for ensuring the campsite is maintained in a satisfactory condition.

### PETS

Pets must be kept on a leash and under control at all times. Pets are also wildlife attractants, and may be attacked by carnivores (bears, cougars, wolves and coyotes) if they are left outside unattended, especially at night. Ensure you clean up after your pet and pack away all food dishes when not in use.

### IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A 'BARE' CAMPSITE:

Park staff regularly patrol the campground to ensure campers have not left anything out that may attract wildlife. If you return to your site and items you left unattended are missing, look for a written warning left by park staff. Staff may secure your belongings for safekeeping until you pick them up and put them away properly. Not complying with staff requests to clean up your site may result in being charged under the *Canada National Parks Act*.

## CAMPING ETIQUETTE

You can ensure you're a good neighbour and guarantee a good camping experience for yourself, by respecting and adhering to the following guidelines:

- **Washing Dishes** – Use the outdoor sink or a personal basin for washing dishes (not the bathrooms).
- **Washing Laundry** – Please use your own tub and dump water down the outdoor sink or toilets. Laundry facilities are available in the Town of Banff.
- **Recycling** – Bottles and cans (refundable containers) can be recycled in each campground near the washroom building.
- **Children** – To ensure the safety of your children, please supervise them at all times. Children may become lost in the campground or may unknowingly trespass on a neighbouring campsite.
- **Driving** – Respect the posted speed limits and remain alert while driving in the campground. Trees may obstruct your view and pedestrians, especially children, may suddenly dart out onto the road.
- **Accessing Facilities** – Please use roadways and pathways to access campground facilities (picnic shelters, bathrooms, etc.) and your own campsite. Cutting through a neighbouring campsite will disturb other campers and may cause damage to the fragile vegetation.

## HOW TO REACH US

For more information on camping in Banff, Lake Louise or in the backcountry of Banff National Park, contact Parks Canada's Visitor Centre:

Banff Visitor Centre  
224 Banff Avenue, Town of Banff  
403-762-1550

Report all bear, cougar, wolf and coyote sightings to park staff immediately or call the 24-hour Banff Park Dispatch service at 403-762-1470

To report campground noise complaints or other *Canada National Parks Act* offences, call 1-888-WARDENS (1-888-927-3367) (law enforcement), toll free 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week.

For emergencies call **911**.

## BOOKING YOUR CAMPSITE

### CAMPSITE RESERVATIONS

Reservations can be made for Tunnel Mountain Village I and Tunnel Mountain Village II campgrounds. To make a reservation, visit [www.pccamping.ca](http://www.pccamping.ca) or dial toll free 1.877.737.3783 (1.877.RESERVE). Reservations must be made at least 24 hours prior to arrival. All other campgrounds operate on a first come, first served basis.

For backcountry campers, speak to staff at the Banff Visitor Centre about backcountry camping options. Numerous hike-in campgrounds are available throughout Banff National Park and require a wilderness permit.

### DATES OF OPERATION

Dates of operation vary from campground to campground and are available online. Summer camping begins in early May, with all campgrounds open by mid to late June. Demand is heaviest from June through September, with July and August being the busiest months. Campgrounds close throughout September and October, with the exception of Tunnel Mountain Village II, which is open year-round.

### YOUR PASS TO CAMPING

Campers must acquire the following permits to camp in Banff National Park:

- Park Permit – available at the Banff East Gate, Visitor Centre and at campground kiosks
- Camping permit – available at the campground or self-registration kiosks
- Fire permit (if you would like to have a fire) - available at the campground kiosk

### MORE CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES

Parks Canada operates a total of 13 campgrounds in Banff National Park, with 2 468 sites available during peak season.

In addition to the seven campgrounds mentioned in this brochure, the Lake Louise area offers six additional options for camping, including campgrounds in close proximity to Lake Louise and along the scenic Icefields Parkway.

## PACKING FOR THE WEATHER

The weather in Banff National Park is pleasant, but unpredictable. The average high temperature during the day in spring and summer ranges from 10° to 18° Celsius, though temperatures at night can drop below zero. It can also rain, snow or hail any time of year!

In order to be prepared for your camping experience, ensure you have:

- warm clothes (bring various layers to help you dress for the weather)
- waterproof clothing (jackets and pants)
- hats and mitts
- umbrellas
- a groundsheet for your tent
- sleeping mat
- warm sleeping bag
- extra blankets

## ALCOHOL AND FIRE BANS

From May to September, a number of policies are in place to ensure visitors get a good night's sleep. An alcohol consumption ban and a fire ban are in effect daily at campgrounds during quiet hours from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. On summer long weekends, a full alcohol ban on the possession of alcohol is in effect at most campgrounds.

Please note: There is a difference between a ban on the consumption of alcohol and a ban on the possession. Ban on consumption – alcohol is permitted in the campground but may not be open or consumed during quiet hours. Ban on possession – alcohol is not permitted at any time.



## PARK WARDENS

Park wardens are the primary peace officers in the national park campgrounds and are responsible for protecting Banff National Park and ensuring you have a safe and enjoyable experience. Campers are legally required to comply with any and all requests by park wardens. Your cooperation is appreciated.



## FROM A NATURALIST: FLORA & FAUNA

While exploring the park on foot, take a moment to look around you and discover nature at its best! Wonder what the difference is between a chipmunk and a ground squirrel? Wonder why the raven stays here year-round? There are a variety of sources to help you learn from, such as local experts, books, interpretive programs and the internet.

How to be safe with wildlife:

- Be aware of your surroundings, especially at dusk and dawn, or in densely vegetated areas. Surprising a bear that is busy feeding on natural food, such as berries, can be dangerous.
- Keep a safe viewing distance at all times (30 metres for ungulates such as deer and elk and 100 metres for carnivores such as cougars, bears and wolves). Never approach or entice wildlife of any kind, regardless of size.
- Do not feed wildlife. Feeding wildlife is illegal in a national park. Wildlife find their healthiest food in their natural environment. Once they become accustomed to being fed by people, they stop looking for their natural foods and lose their fear of humans. These animals, no longer considered to be "wild," are a threat to public safety.

By understanding more about wildlife you can help reduce the likelihood of an unpleasant encounter and also help protect wildlife populations.



## INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Looking for an evening of entertainment while enjoying your stay in Banff National Park? Join our park interpreters and singing wardens as they share their stories and fun facts about the nature and history of Canada's first national park. From late June to early September, evening programs are offered at the Wolf's Den Indoor Theatre and the Raven's Nest Outdoor Theatre (Tunnel Mountain Campground), and a campfire chat occurs at Two Jack Lakeside Campground. Check our website or ask the campground staff and Banff Visitor Centre staff for a copy of our program schedule. All of our programs are for adults and kids alike, come and join us! Your park entrance fee is your ticket to these programs!



Hey Kids! Have fun while discovering Banff National Park! Pick up your activity booklet at the Banff Visitor Centre, at various campgrounds, or during an evening theatre program. Complete six activities and receive a certificate and souvenir. Have your whole family participate with you! Happy exploring!



**Tunnel Mountain Village II (188 sites)**  
 Located just minutes from town, this campground is perfect for families, backpackers, people needing space for larger units (40+ feet) and/or people wanting power without the full hook-up. It is close to local attractions and offers year-round camping, mountain views, a bus service to town and access to hiking and biking trails.

**Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court (321 sites)**  
 This campground, located in close proximity to town, is reserved for trailers and larger units (50+ feet) and offers full hook-ups, mountain views, shared sites, access to biking and hiking trails and a bus service to town. Campfires are not permitted.

**Tunnel Mountain Village I (618 sites)**  
 Located in close proximity to the Town of Banff, this campground offers a more traditional camping experience with mountain views, fire pits for cooking, and access to hiking and biking trails. This campground has options to suit many camping preferences, and has a limited number of large campsites available.

**Tunnel Mountain Village II (188 sites)**  
 Located just minutes from town, this campground is perfect for families, backpackers, people needing space for larger units (40+ feet) and/or people wanting power without the full hook-up. It is close to local attractions and offers year-round camping, mountain views, a bus service to town and access to hiking and biking trails.

**TREE THINNING**

You may notice that trees are being removed in some of the campgrounds in Banff National Park. Many of these trees have been damaged by forest insects and disease, while others have suffered damage from people. The removal of trees may significantly change the appearance of the campground from closely treed forest to a more open landscape, resulting in better views and better manoeuvrability for vehicles. This is part of a larger vegetation management program which ensures the safety of visitors and staff.

**Johnston Canyon (132 sites)**  
 This campground is a good option for campers wanting a more rustic and authentic camping experience. Sites are available for tents and small RVs (up to 27 feet). Its central location along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A) provides access to a number of unique attractions, including Johnston Canyon and the Ink Pots.

**Castle Mountain (43 sites)**  
 This campground is small and intimate and offers rustic, no-service camping in a beautiful wooded area along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A). Campers, who must self-register for sites suitable for tents or small RVs (up to 24 feet), can enjoy nearby attractions, such as Silverton Falls and Johnston Canyon.

**Two Jack Main (380 sites)**  
 This campground offers a more secluded and authentic camping experience. Located just minutes from Lake Minnewanka and nearby attractions, and 15 minutes from the Town of Banff, this rustic, no-service campground has scenic sites available for tents or RVs up to 27 feet, as well as group camping sites.

**Two Jack Lakeside (74 sites)**  
 Located 15 minutes from the Town of Banff and close to Lake Minnewanka, this rustic, no-service campground is beautifully situated on the shores of Two Jack Lake. It is perfect for tents or small RVs (up to 27 feet) and offers lakefront sites, mountain views and access to the lake for non-motorized boating.

WiFi is not available at campgrounds	Tunnel Mtn Village I	Tunnel Mtn Village II	Tunnel Mtn Trailer Court	Two Jack Main	Two Jack Lakeside	Johnston Canyon	Castle Mountain
Full Hook-Up			X				
Electrical Only		X					
Flush Toilets	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Showers	X	X	X		X	X	
Sani-Dump	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Fireboxes	X	Limited		X	X	X	X
Picnic shelters		X		X	X	X	X
Disabled access	X	X			X	X	X
Reservations	X	X	Confirm online				
Interpretive Programs	X	X	X		X		
Xplorer Booklet	X	X	X	X	X	X	Pick up at Johnston Canyon
Liquor and Fire Ban in effect at all times (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alcohol not permitted (May Long Weekend)	X	X	X	X	X	Closed	Closed
Alcohol not permitted (July, Aug, Sept Long Weekend)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

- Kiosk
- Information board
- Sani-dump
- Picnic shelter
- Drinking water
- Garbage dumpster
- Recycling
- Firewood
- Group fireplace
- Dishwashing sink
- Food lockers
- Flush toilets
- Showers
- Interpretation
- Theatre
- Group camping
- Disabled access
- Bus stop
- Pay phone
- Parking lot
- No campfires

**3 REASONS TO CAMP IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK!**

- Adventure with Family and Friends:** Camping is a great way to inject some adventure into your trip. There is so much to learn about and explore right outside your tent!
- Reconnect with Nature:** Enjoy the smells and sounds of nature as you breathe the fresh mountain air and camp under the stars.
- Walk Through History:** The first explorers in Banff set up campsites during long expeditions in the wilderness. You can walk in their shoes by experiencing camping for yourself in one of the park's designated campgrounds!

