

Drives and Hikes Banff Vicinity

Banff National Park



1. CAVE AND BASIN HOT SPRINGS/SUNDANCE CANYON DRIVE (Two miles)

The springs are one mile west of the park administration building along Cave Avenue. Their discovery in 1883 on the lower slopes of what is now Sulphur Mountain led to the establishment two years later of a federal reserve that became Rocky Mountain Park (later re-named Banff)—Canada's first national park. The spring flows from rocks at the rear of a sandy-floored cave entered from the east end of the Cave and Basin building. Interpretive signs and pamphlets describe the origin and history of the sulphur springs.

Parking facilities are at the far end of the building.

A mile beyond the Cave and Basin the road descends to parallel the Bow River. To the right is a superb view of Mount Edith and the Sawback Range. Continue on for one-and-two-tenths miles to the end of the road at the Sundance Canyon picnic area. The canyon is steep-walled and overhangs on one side. Because of the undercutting, large boulders have fallen off the overhanging wall into Sundance Creek.

(a) Sundance Canyon Trail

Start: Sundance picnic area
Distance: One-and-one-half mile loop
Average hiking time: One hour return
This relatively easy trail passes through the canyon and loops back through the woods to a viewpoint of Mount Edith and the Bow Valley.

2. THE UPPER HOT SPRINGS DRIVE (Three miles)

Follow the signs for Upper Hot Springs. These springs provide visitors with an opportunity to bathe in the 40°C (102°F) waters of an outdoor sulphur pool or to enjoy

(i) Stony Squaw Trail

Start: To the right, just inside the entrance to Parking Lot Three at Mount Norquay
Distance: One-and-one-half miles one way
Average hiking time: 45 minutes one way
This trail passes through stands of Douglas fir and white spruce and opens to offer an excellent view of the Bow Valley.

6. BUFFALO PADDOCK (One mile loop)

Off Trans-Canada Highway, two miles east of Norquay overpass.
Bison are the only confined wildlife species in the park. A small herd is maintained in a 100-acre parkland setting. The bison are most often seen during morning or evening. Because bison are unpredictable and often aggressive, you must remain in your car.

7. MINNEWANKA DRIVE (Eight miles)

North from the traffic circle, two miles east of Banff. The first point of interest is a cenotaph and remains of the old coal mining town of Bankhead that flourished between the years 1904 and 1923. An interpretive plaque explains the townsite history and location.

Lake Minnewanka, three miles beyond Bankhead, is the largest lake in the park and is a popular boating, fishing, hiking and picnic area. The 12-mile-long lake lies in a valley between the Palliser and the Fairholme ranges. Sightseeing boats offer tours; small boats and fishing tackle may be rented.

From Lake Minnewanka the road leads southeast to Two Jack Lake and campground. The last stop on this section of the drive is Johnson Lake, another popular picnic and fishing area.

the hotter plunge pools and steam baths. At an elevation of 5,200 feet this is the highest and hottest of the five springs on Sulphur Mountain. The water flows from the mountain at about 455 litres (100 gallons) a minute at an average temperature of about 64°C (115°F).

The nearby gondola lift operates throughout the summer carrying visitors to the 7,500 foot level atop Sulphur Mountain. Here a panorama of the entire area may be enjoyed and a tearoom provides an opportunity for a pleasant break.

(b) Sulphur Mountain Summit Trail

Start: Upper Hot Springs parking area
Distance: Three miles one way plus a 2,000 foot climb
Average hiking time: Two hours one way
The alpine larch and whitebark pine, trees of the timberline zone, can be observed. Alpine flowers are found along the ridge trail. The summit provides a complete view of the region.

(c) Spray River Trail

Start: Upper Hot Springs parking area or Banff Springs Hotel parking area or first green of Banff Springs Golf Course

There are several variations to this trail that can take the hiker along either side of the Spray River through changing scenery and plant life.

3. BOW FALLS AND GOLF COURSE DRIVE (Seven miles)

Drive south across the Bow River, turn left on Spray Avenue and take the first turn left. Bow Falls is up-stream from the confluence of the Bow and Spray Rivers. An interpretive plaque gives the area's history. Continue

(j) C-Level Cirque Trail

Start: Parking area, left off the Minnewanka road beyond the cenotaph
Distance: Two-and-one-half miles one way
Average hiking time: One to one-and-one-half hours one way

This moderately-steep trail leads the hiker past old mine buildings and slag piles, terminating at a cirque gouged out of Cascade Mountain by glacier ice.

(k) Lake Minnewanka Trail

Start: At end of Lake Minnewanka recreational area
Distance: 17 miles to end of lake
Average hiking time: Seven to ten hours
This trail follows the north shore of the lake. Within a half-mile it crosses the bridge at Stewart Canyon, where another smaller trail branches left up this canyon, an outlet of the Cascade River.

(l) Johnson Lake Trail

Start: Parking area to the left off the road
Distance: Two mile loop
Average hiking time: One hour return
This trail circles Johnson Lake and offers a panorama of the Bow Valley east of Banff.

8. TUNNEL MOUNTAIN DRIVE (Four-and-one-half miles)

Five miles east of Banff, turn south off the Trans-Canada Highway.

This road to the hoodoos area follows close to the edge of a steep bank of glacial debris. At the hoodoos viewpoint, on the left side of the road, there is a half-mile trail with signs describing the geological features of the hoodoos and the Bow Valley.

over the Spray River Bridge to Golf Course Drive. This is a beautiful loop drive through the lower Bow Valley and the Banff Springs Golf Course.

(d) Rundle Mountain Trail

Start: Just beyond the first green on the right hand side of the road

Distance: Three miles one way
Average hiking time: One-and-one-half hours one way
This trail turns left within half a mile along the east bank of the Spray River and climbs gradually before switch-backing up through timber to end about halfway to the summit. Travel beyond this point is considered climbing, and climbers must register at the warden's office.

(e) Golf Course Loop Trail

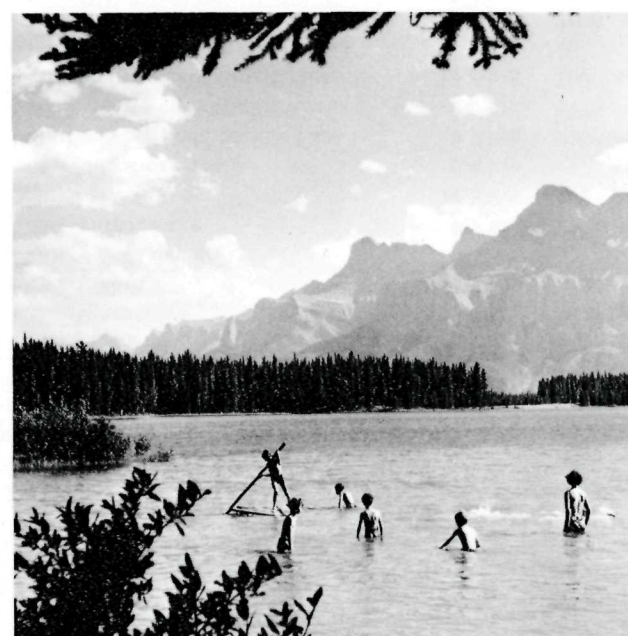
Start: Just beyond the first green
Distance: Five mile loop
Average hiking time: Two hours return
This trail is near the golf course most of the way, and offers lovely views across the fairways. Devil's Cauldron, on the eighth hole of the course, is a small, green pond or "kettle hole" created when retreating glaciers left behind an enormous block of ice.

4. VERMILION LAKE DRIVE (Three-and-one-half miles)

Turn west off Norquay Road immediately before the Trans-Canada overpass. This is one of Banff's most interesting drives. The three small, marshy lakes are one of the most prolific wildlife areas near the Banff townsite.

5. MOUNT NORQUAY DRIVE (Four miles)

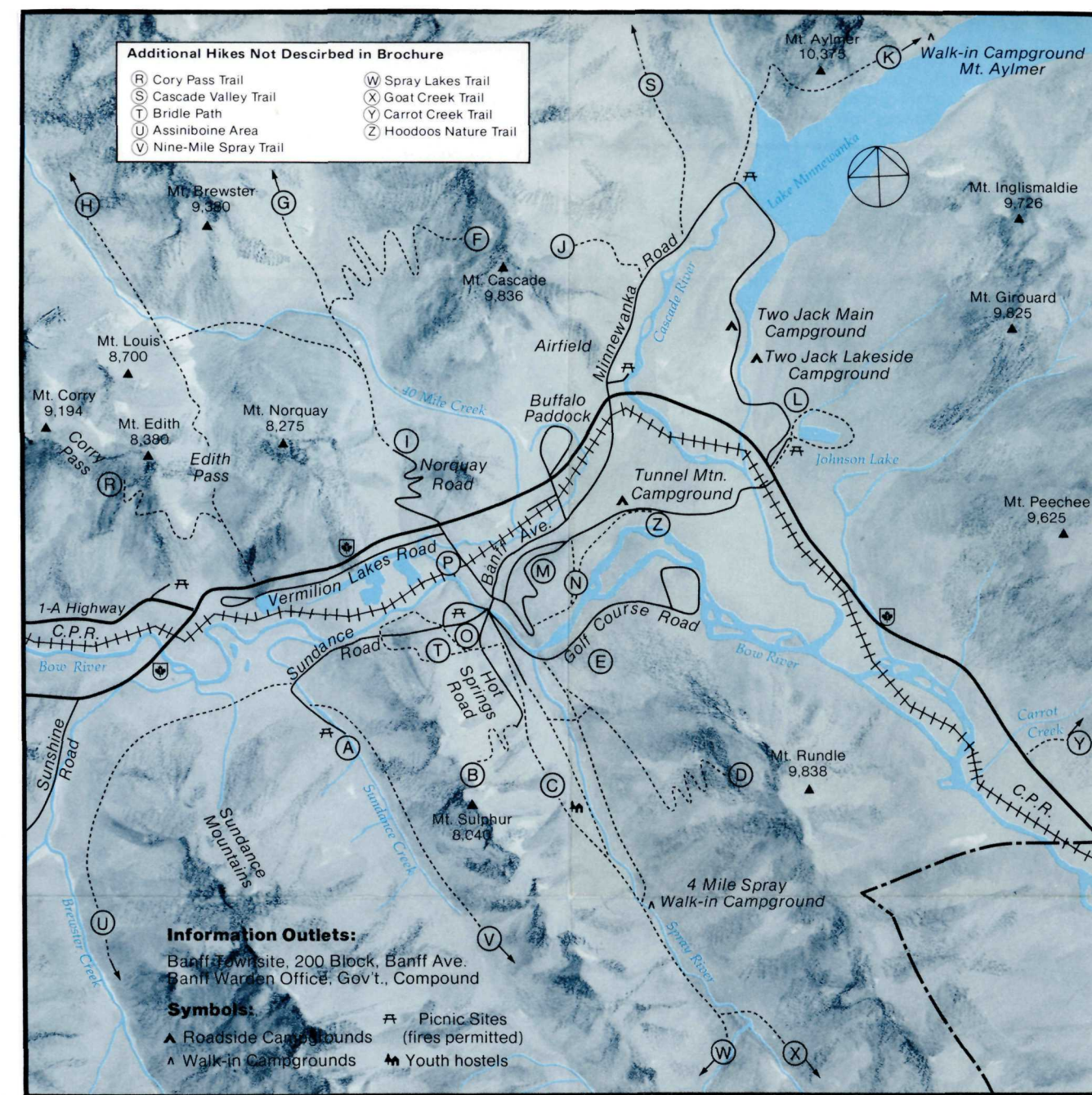
Take Norquay Road and continue over the Trans-Canada overpass. Mount Norquay Drive gives the motorist a superb view of the townsite and surrounding



Continue past Tunnel Mountain campground and turn left on to Tunnel Mountain Road at the first junction. The first viewpoint overlooks the town of Banff and the Bow Valley. The Bow River and Vermilion Lakes can be seen flanked by Mount Norquay and Sulphur Mountain. Tunnel Mountain Road ends at the intersection of St. Julien Road. Turn left past the Banff Centre and proceed to the Bow Falls viewpoint.

(m) Tunnel Mountain Trail

Start: On St. Julien Road just north of the Banff Centre.
Crosses Tunnel Mountain Road near the first viewpoint



Distance: One-and-one-half miles to summit (1,000 foot climb)
Average hiking time: One to one-and-one-half hours one way

From the summit lookout there are impressive views of Mount Rundle and the eastern Bow Valley.

(n) Bow River Trail

Start: Half a mile north of Bow Falls viewpoint
Distance: Three miles one way to hoodoos
Average hiking time: One-and-one-half hours one way
This trail follows the Bow River at the foot of the Tunnel Mountain cliffs. The hoodoos and Tunnel Mountain campground can be reached from this trail. At the viewpoint, the white waters of Bow Falls are immediately below, Sulphur Mountain and the Goat Range are on the skyline, and to the left is Spray Valley. To return to the townsite, continue down Tunnel Mountain Road and Buffalo Street to Banff Avenue.

Other Trails

(o) Middle Springs Trail

Start: At the top right of the gardens behind the park administration building
Distance: Three-quarters-of-a-mile one way

Average hiking time: One-half hour one way

This trail is a gradual ascent to natural, undeveloped springs which flow from small hillside caves. A fine view of the Bow Valley is also offered.

(p) Upper Hot Springs Trail

Start: Beyond Banff Springs Hotel parking lot and above fire road entrance
Distance: one mile one way
Average hiking time: Half-hour one way

This well-graded trail, which passes through pleasant woods, ends at the road just below the Upper Hot Springs pool.

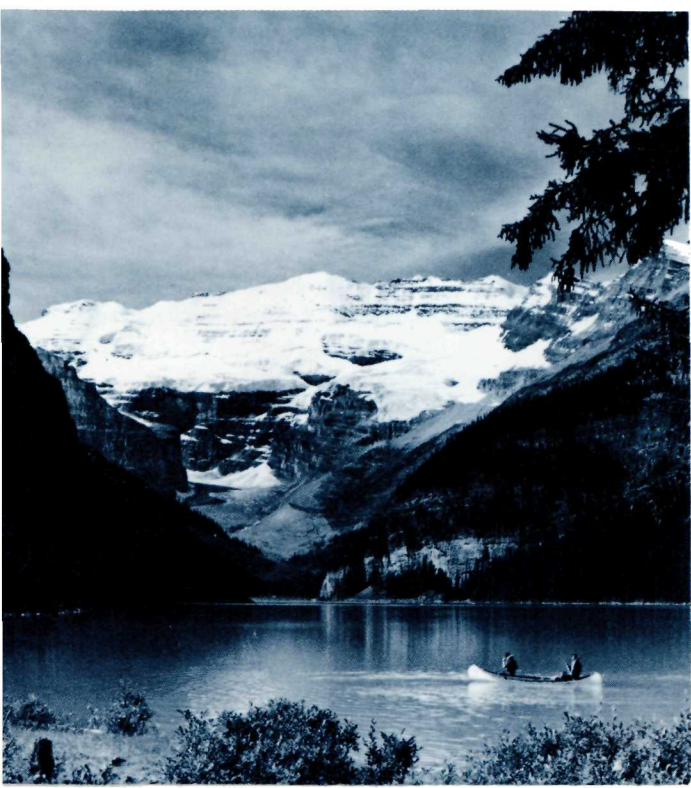
(q) Fenland Self-Guiding Trail

Start: At railway crossing on the Norquay Road
Distance: 1.3 mile loop
Average hiking time: Half-hour return

This trail is an enjoyable walk through the marshy area alongside Forty Mile Creek. Plant and animal life are described by signs and in a brochure.

For persons planning to camp in the back-country, hike overnight, mountain climb, travel off designated trails or ski-tour, registration with the park warden service is necessary. For further information, contact warden offices or information centres.

Drives and Hikes Lake Louise Vicinity



A scenic drive to Lake Louise, Paradise Creek or Moraine Lake from the Trans-Canada Highway at the Lake Louise Service Centre will take you to the trail heads of the hiking and walking trails system in the Lake Louise area.

These trails lead into the three main valleys of the area: Louise, Paradise and Moraine. Descriptions of these trails with distance tables are given in this folder.

Trailers are not allowed on the access roads to Lake Louise and Moraine Lake. Visitors may leave their trailers at a drop-off area on Highway 1A near Lake Louise Campground.

Trails Beginning at Lake Louise

From the parking area you can stroll along the north shore for a leisurely look at Lake Louise. Along the south shore a trail leads to Fairview Lookout, providing an excellent view of Lake Louise.

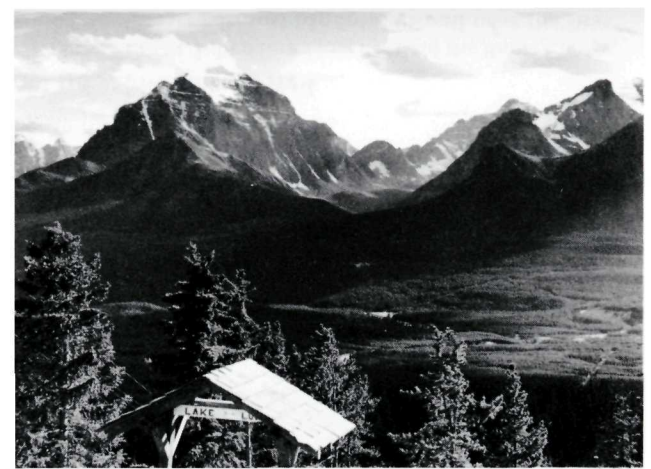
If you'd prefer a hike requiring more time and energy, trails lead from the lake to many points on the Lake Louise trail system. Leaving the north shore of the lake behind the Chateau is a trail connecting with a network of shorter trails around Mirror Lake and Lake Agnes. The trail network in the vicinity of these two lakes also leads to excellent viewpoints atop Big Beehive and near the fire lookout tower at the summit of Little Beehive.

From both Mirror and Agnes lakes, trails lead west to the Plain of Six Glaciers. The plain may also be reached directly from Lake Louise by following the lakeshore trail. The higher elevation routes offer more rewarding views and a circle tour of these trails is a beautiful day's outing. Rest stops are located at Lake Agnes and the Plain of Six Glaciers.

South from Lake Louise, trails lead to the Moraine and Paradise valleys. Reaching Moraine Lake through either of these valleys is a hike of more than 15 kilometres. You may

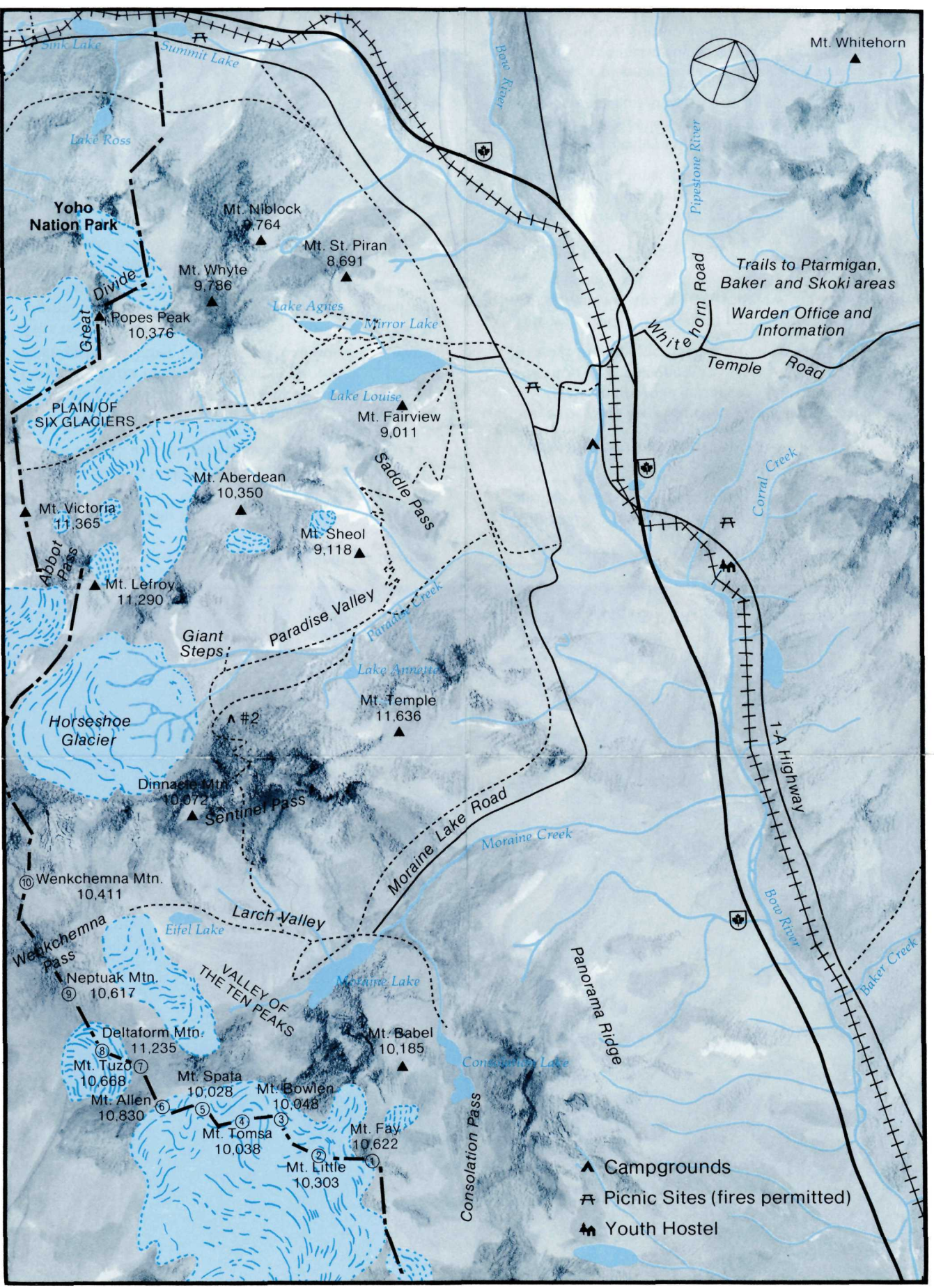


travel south on the direct trail to Moraine Lake which parallels the Moraine Lake Road but the southern half of this trail is infrequently used. From the northern portion of this trail you may turn west on a trail that leads up a number of switchbacks through Saddle Pass, into Sheol Valley and down to Paradise Valley. Farther south a less strenuous trail branches west up Paradise Creek into Paradise Valley. Once in Paradise Valley, you may loop past the Giant Steps and Lake Annette and retrace your steps to the foot of the valley. You may also continue to hike over Sentinel Pass to Larch Valley and then down to Moraine Lake. The trail over Sentinel Pass is strewn with large rocks and requires a bit of scrambling. Snow may remain in the pass until early summer and horses are not allowed in the pass at any time.



Distances from Lake Louise (elevation 1725 metres)

| Destination | Distance | Highest Elevation en route |
|---|----------|----------------------------|
| Fairview Lookout | 1.2 km | 1825 m |
| Mirror Lake | 3.2 km | 2050 m |
| Lake Agnes | 4.8 km | 2125 m |
| Fire Lookout | 6.4 km | 2250 m |
| Plain of Six Glaciers | | |
| via Mirror Lake | 9.7 km | 2125 m |
| via Lake Agnes | 11.3 km | 2125 m |
| via Lakeshore Trail | 6.4 km | 2125 m |
| Paradise Valley via Saddle Pass | 8.9 km | 2300 m |
| Lake Annette via Paradise Creek | 8.0 km | 1975 m |
| Giant Steps via Paradise Creek | 13.7 km | 2000 m |
| Moraine Lake via Paradise Creek and Sentinel Pass | 24.7 km | 2600 m |
| Moraine Lake via direct route | 13.7 km | 1900 m |



additional warm clothing. A small pack containing such items as sandwiches, chocolate, water, a flashlight and insect repellent will help to ensure a pleasant and safe hike.

For more information you may visit the Information Centre or Warden Office at the Lake Louise Service Centre.

Wildlife

The wildlife often observed along the trails in the Lake Louise area include pika, golden-mantled ground squirrel, marmot and, occasionally, wolverine. Gray jays and Clark's nutcrackers are also common in the spruce and fir forests and alpine habitats throughout the area. While larger mammals such as bighorn sheep, moose and bear are seen from time to time they are more plentiful elsewhere in the park.

Approaching or feeding any wild animal is dangerous — although it may appear tame, an animal can inflict injury without warning. Out of respect for the wild and free nature of all the wildlife in the park and for the protection of visitors, these creatures must not be fed.

Icefields Parkway

Lake Louise marks the southern end of the Icefields Parkway, a scenic roadway which ranks among the great highroads of the world and gives easy access to some of the more majestic scenery in the Canadian Rockies. The parkway follows the steep-walled valleys between the mountain ranges running from Lake Louise to Jasper.

Trails Beginning at Paradise Creek Parking Area

Trailhead parking is located approximately 3.2 kilometres up the Moraine Lake Road. From there a trail leads west to the Lake Louise-Moraine Lake Trail. The trail up Paradise Creek crosses the Lake Louise-Moraine Lake Trail. This trail proceeds up to the head of Paradise Valley, climbs south over Sentinel Pass and down to Larch Valley and Moraine Lake.

The trail over Sentinel Pass is strewn with large rocks and requires a bit of scrambling. Snow in the pass may remain until early summer and horses are not allowed in the pass at any time.

Distances from Paradise Creek Parking Area (elevation 1825 metres)

| Destination | Distance | Highest Elevation en route |
|--|----------|----------------------------|
| Moraine Lake via direct route | 8.0 km | 1900 m |
| Lake Louise | 5.6 km | 1725 m |
| Lake Annette via Paradise Creek | 5.6 km | 1975 m |
| Giant Steps via Paradise Creek | 10.5 km | 2000 m |
| Moraine Lake via Paradise Valley and Sentinel Pass | 20.1 km | 2600 m |

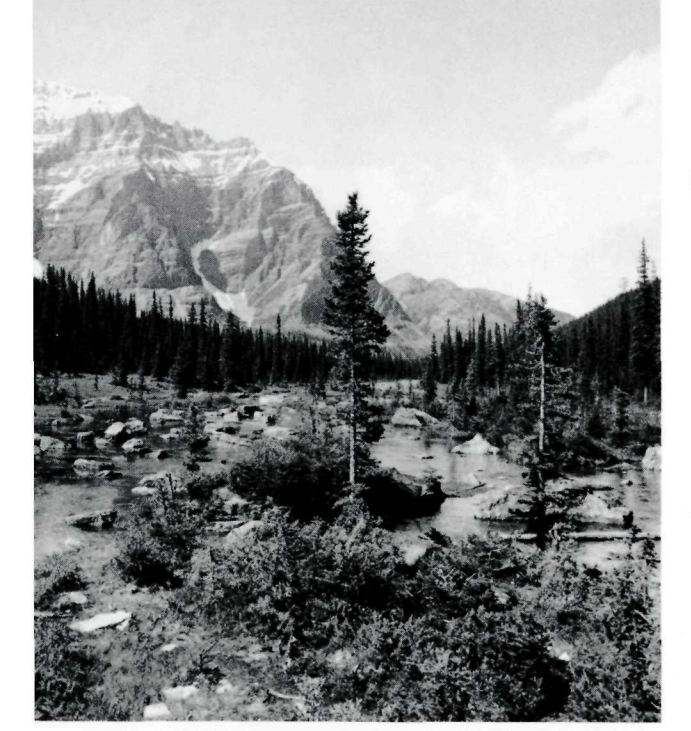


Distances from Moraine Lake Parking Area (elevation 1900 metres)

| Destination | Distance | Highest Elevation en route |
|--|----------|----------------------------|
| South end of Lakeshore Trail | 1.6 km | 1900 m |
| Lower Consolation Lake | 3.2 km | 1950 m |
| Eiffel Lake | 8.0 km | 2250 m |
| Larch Valley | 4.0 km | 2275 m |
| Lake Louise via Sentinel Pass and Paradise Creek | 24.1 km | 2600 m |
| Lake Louise via Sentinel Pass and Saddle Pass | 24.9 km | 2600 m |
| Paradise Creek Parking Area via Sentinel Pass | 20.1 km | 2600 m |
| Lake Louise via direct route | 13.7 km | 1900 m |

Hiking Hints

Sudden drops in temperature and rapidly occurring storms are common in the mountains. While travelling in the mountains, hikers should wear properly fitting boots and carry



Trails Beginning at Moraine Lake

A short trail leads along the north shore of the lake to its end and is an easy walk providing good views. At the outlet of Moraine Lake a short trail leads east to the two Consolation Lakes. An easy climb leads to the lower lake. The upper lake can be reached by scrambling over boulders, talus and scree.

The trail to Larch Valley and Eiffel Lake is located along the north shore of Moraine Lake. The left branch ends at Eiffel Lake. The right branch climbs into Larch Valley, continues over Sentinel Pass and down into Paradise Valley.

Well down Paradise Valley, a trail forks to the north and heads up Sheol Valley, through Saddle Pass and down a number of switchbacks to the main trail to Lake Louise. From this junction you may proceed north to Lake Louise, south to the Paradise Creek parking area, on the Moraine Lake Road, or on to Moraine Lake by an infrequently used trail that parallels the Moraine Lake Road.