



# Mountain Biking Trails in the Banff Area

Welcome to Banff National Park, Canada's first and most famous national park. With more than 360 km of cycling trails, biking is an excellent way to explore this special place. Trails range from easy to difficult and the biking season typically extends from May to October. This guide will help you plan an enjoyable and safe mountain biking experience, while keeping the park's natural environment as pristine as possible.

Banff National Park encourages the use of bikes for the appreciation and enjoyment of the park's spectacular landscape of rugged mountains, broad valleys, glaciers, alpine meadows, and wildlife species.

If your objective is freeriding or downhill, please consider areas such as Golden or Fernie, BC or Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, where there are designated trails for these activities.

## Wildlife and People



Banff National Park is home to wildlife, including elk, wolves, cougars, and the remaining grizzly and black bear populations in North America. To successfully raise their young and sustain a healthy population, wildlife need access to as much quality habitat with as few human surprises as possible.

### Be aware of possible encounters with wildlife, even on roads and paved trails.

- Tips:**
- **Always carry bear spray**, ensure it is accessible, and know how to use it before heading out. To watch a video about how to use bear spray, visit: [parksCanada.gc.ca/bearspray](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/bearspray)
  - **Slow down and make noise.** Your speed and quietness puts you at risk for sudden wildlife encounters. Slow down through shrubby areas and when approaching blind corners. Travel in groups, be alert and always look ahead.

Report bear, cougar, wolf and coyote sightings and encounters to Parks Canada staff at 403-762-1470, when it is safe to do so.

[parksCanada.gc.ca/banff-wildlife](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banff-wildlife)

### E-bikes

E-bikes, with the exception of pedal assist e-bikes, are not permitted on trails in Banff National Park. Pedal assist e-bikes are only allowed on roads and trails identified with the e-bike symbol in the trail descriptions.

## Recommended Rides

Are you looking for a “bucket list” biking experience? These routes offer mountain scenery, flowing curves, and all the challenges you're looking for.

### 5 River Rides

If your ultimate ride includes reflecting by a river, the **Spray River East and West (5)** trail should be on your list. This wide trail through the forest has rolling hills and gentle curves. A great family ride, it even has the perfect picnic site near the Spray River bridge. While riding, stay alert – this trail is also used by horse riders and wildlife.

### 14 Scenic Routes

One of the most spectacular scenic, must-do mountain rides is **Hoodoos Viewpoint to Surprise Corner (14)**. Close to town and across from Tunnel Mountain campground, this trail has some sustained climbs and descents, passes through an open meadow and meanders along riverside pathways. Take in astonishing views of Mount Rundle, the Bow and the Spray Valley, and see the renowned Fairmont Banff Springs over Bow Falls. Bring a camera and a lunch – don't forget to pack out the leftovers.

### 12 Technical Adventure

Now, it is time for your adventure ride! Both **Lake Minnewanka (12)** and **Topp Notch (19)** trails are for experienced riders. Lake Minnewanka trail is best ridden early spring or late fall. A seasonal trail restriction during the summer protects both the rider and wildlife during the summer berry season. Topp Notch is full of natural and built features with an incredible flow. Once you make your way down, loop around on the **Tunnel Technical Trails (16)** to experience a thrilling ride again.



### 19 Topp Notch

These trails are great for beginners, children, and riders seeking a gentle adventure. Mostly paved, these easy rides have minimal elevation changes and offer spectacular views. Bring a picnic or snack and enjoy the day at one of the rest stops along these rides. Always remember to pack out everything you bring in.

### 1 Sundance Trail

**3.7 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site**

This paved trail is perfect for families with kids and bike trailers as it winds along the Bow River and climbs gently to the Sundance Canyon picnic area where you can explore a lovely creekside hiking trail. Sundance is popular with hikers. To experience the canyon, bring a bike lock. Connector: **Healy Creek (4)**.

### 2 Tunnel Campground Loop

**6.4 km loop**  
**Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Campground**

Perfect for beginners and children, this simple, packed gravel trail forms a large loop around Tunnel Mountain Campground. There are many places to stop and rest. Be sure to watch out for strolling campers, elk, deer and coyotes.

### 3 Banff Legacy Trail

**29 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Valleyview, Cascade Ponds, Vermilion Lakes and Fireside day-use areas or east end of Banff Avenue**

The Banff Legacy Trail offers cyclists, runners, roller skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts, 29 km of paved trails and roadways with breathtaking views, rest stops and picnic areas. The trail connects the Bow Valley Parkway with the town of Banff, Cascade Ponds, the Banff East Gate and the town of Canmore. This three-season trail is typically snow-free and rideable from April to October. An absolute must.

## Easy Rides

### 4 Healy Creek

**5.5 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Healy/Brewster parking lot**

This forested trail close to the town of Banff is ideal for visitors wanting to experience a taste of the backcountry. For a memorable one-way adventure, arrange a drop-off at the Healy/Brewster parking lot, and at the end of the Healy Creek trail, take a short detour to Sundance Canyon (bring a bike lock as bikes are not permitted in the canyon). After the canyon, continue along **Sundance Trail (1)** to the Cave and Basin National Historic Site. A short trail will bring you along Cave Avenue to the Banff Avenue bridge.

### 15 Tunnel Bench Loop



### 5 Spray River East and West

**5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead (Golf Course Road) to Spray River Bridge**  
**5.6 km one way from Spray River Bridge to Spray River West trailhead behind Fairmont Banff Springs**

This winding, rolling gravel double track can be ridden as a loop in either direction or as an out-and-back from either trailhead. Choose your own adventure! The trail parallels the rushing Spray River. Great as a family outing and picnic near the bridge. Be sure to yield to horses. Connector: **Spray River and Goat Creek (11)**.

### 6 Cascade Ponds – Bankhead

**2.7 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Cascade Ponds Day-use Area or Lake Minnewanka Road**

From Cascade Ponds, ride past the picnic tables, over the creek and left to cross Minnewanka Road. Follow the old Canadian Pacific rail grade to the ghost town of Bankhead. Ride as out and back.

### 7 Cascade Valley

**14.6 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Upper Bankhead parking area**

This former fire road is a gravel double track that opens with a sustained climb. It travels into the wilds of the Cascade Valley, through prime bear habitat. Cycling ends just before the remote Stoney Creek campground (C15).

### 8 Water Tower

**4.3 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Cascade Ponds or Johnson Lake day-use areas**

This trail begins at the northeast corner of Cascade Ponds, crosses a small creek, and climbs up an almost impossible-to-ride-up set of steps (prepare for significant hike-a-bike on this moderately challenging section of the trail). The remainder of the trail to the water tower is an easy, sweet singletrack that dips and turns its way along the edge of the escarpment above the Trans-Canada Highway. Views of the Bow Valley and its iconic mountains, Rundle and Cascade, are spectacular. From the water tower, it's worth your while to continue along a short section of gravel road leading to Johnson Lake. This trail is easily ridden as an out and back from either end.

### 12 Lake Minnewanka



### 14 Hoodoos to Surprise Corner

**4.8 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Hoodoos Viewpoint and Day-use Area or Surprise Corner**

Can be enjoyed in both directions but best ridden north to south. This trail offers an exhilarating experience with some steep climbing and descending. The route has spectacular views of Mount Rundle, a short section along a braid of the Bow River, and a short hike-a-bike section at a set of stairs.

### 15 Tunnel Bench Loop

**9.7 km loop**  
**Trailheads: Hoodoos Viewpoint and Day-use Area or Tunnel Mountain Campground**

Typically ridden clockwise, this popular loop connects *The Spine*, *Coastline*, *Teddy Bear's Picnic* and *Don's Bypass* to make a winding and varied entry-level singletrack with minimal elevation gain. Take in the spectacular views of Mount Rundle and Cascade Mountain as well as the Fairholme Range. Be aware that some sections have significant vertical exposure. If you are uncomfortable, be sure to walk your bike. Connector: **The Toe (23)** and **Hoodoos Viewpoint to Surprise Corner (14)**.

### 16 Tunnel Technical Trails

**2.7 km loop**  
**Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Drive near reservoir**

These fun and twisty technical trails have wooden features, big curving berms, a wall ride, ladder bridges, skinnies and endless switchbacks. Riders typically ride down *Star Wars* and complete the loop on *Return of the Jedi*. The trails were designed and built in partnership with the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance.

## Moderate Rides

### 9 Brewster Creek

**8.5 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Cave and Basin National Historic Site or Healy/Brewster parking lot**

Ride **Sundance (1)** and/or **Healy Creek (4)** until you get to the Brewster Creek Junction where the trail begins. This trail is a double track that climbs steadily up the Brewster Creek valley to the Sundance Lodge (service for guests only). The ride to the lodge is not suitable for beginners. Brewster Creek is used by commercial horse traffic and is not recommended in wet conditions.

### 10 Redearth Creek

**10 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Redearth Creek parking area**

This former fire road provides bike access to some very scenic backcountry hiking near the Great Divide. Bring a lock, as you must leave your bike at the end of the road and continue on foot in order to access popular hiking destinations such as Shadow Lake Lodge, Shadow Lake, and Egypt Lake.

### 11 Spray River and Goat Creek

**18.7 km one way (trail is rated easy for first 10 km, then moderate to Canmore)**  
**Trailhead: Spray River West trailhead behind the Fairmont Banff Springs**

This popular, rolling double track follows the Spray River for 10 km before reaching the easy-to-miss turn that veers off on the left just past the base of a short downhill section. Fork left, then head down over the bridge. From there the trail turns to a moderate rating as it rises gradually along the lower slopes of Mount Rundle, ending at the Goat Creek parking area on the Smith-Dorrien Road above Canmore. Alternatively, arrange for a shuttle up to the Goat Creek trailhead and ride the long, gentle descent to Banff. Connectors: Canmore Nordic Center (take the Banff Trail) with the **Rundle Riverside Trail (20)** and Golf Course Road. Note: Due to the clay content of the Goat Creek trail, it is not recommended in wet conditions.

### 12 Lake Minnewanka

**29.4 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, kiosk at far end of picnic area**

Don't let the gentle opening of this iconic ride fool you; the physical demands and the remoteness of this trail require excellent fitness, bike handling skills and preparation. The challenging and at times exposed sidehill trail climbs steeply out of Stewart Canyon and heads east on a rollicking single track towards the park boundary at Devil's Gap. Destinations include the Aylmer Pass junction (16 km return) and the Warden's Cabin (32 km return). This is a popular hiking trail, so mountain bikers should aim for weekday rides in May/June and September/October. **NOTE: Trail is closed to cycling between July 10 and September 15.**

### 13 Banff Avenue Trail

**3.3 km one way**  
**Trailheads: East end of Banff Avenue at the junction with the Banff Legacy Trail or Tunnel Mountain Road**

This rolling trail runs parallel to Banff Avenue roadway. Access from the start of the Banff Legacy Trail located at the east end of Banff Avenue then ride or walk 100 m until you see a steep path going up through thick forest. The trail levels off gradually until it reaches an open meadow; head left on nice rolling singletrack. The trail ends at Tunnel Mountain Road. Return the same way or for a longer ride into town, connect with the **Coastline on Tunnel Bench Loop (15)**, and return to town via the **Hoodoos Viewpoint to Surprise Corner Trail (14)**.

### 14 Hoodoos to Surprise Corner

**4.8 km one way**  
**Trailheads: Hoodoos Viewpoint and Day-use Area or Surprise Corner**

Can be enjoyed in both directions but best ridden north to south. This trail offers an exhilarating experience with some steep climbing and descending. The route has spectacular views of Mount Rundle, a short section along a braid of the Bow River, and a short hike-a-bike section at a set of stairs.

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**2.7 km loop**  
**Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Drive near reservoir**

These fun and twisty technical trails have wooden features, big curving berms, a wall ride, ladder bridges, skinnies and endless switchbacks. Riders typically ride down *Star Wars* and complete the loop on *Return of the Jedi*. The trails were designed and built in partnership with the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance.

## Difficult Rides

### 17 Middle Springs

**7 km of trails**  
**Trailheads: Spray River West trailhead or Banff Upper Hot Springs parking area**

Several loops connect the Middle Springs neighbourhood with the Spray River West trailhead and Banff Upper Hot Springs parking area. Some parts of the trail are used by commercial horse tours and can become quite mucky in wet weather.

### 18 Sulphur Mountain Westside

**7.8 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site**

This ride is for endurance seekers. Follow **Sundance (1)** 2.6 km to the junction, where you'll find the Sulphur Mountain Westside Trail branching back to the east. From there, this old weather station access road is a grueling "Sulphur-fest" of a climb. Use caution and make brake-cooling stops on the descent back down the same route you came up – bicycles are not allowed on the Sanson Peak boardwalk, the gondola, or the trail on the east side of Sulphur Mountain.

### 19 Topp Notch

**3.9 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Drive near reservoir, west of the entry to the Tunnel Technical Trails (16)**

Built for experienced riders, the trail starts with a challenging feature—if you cannot ride it, return to *Star Wars* for the ride down. This trail is a step up from the **Tunnel Technical Trails (16)**, and full of wooden features, big curving berms, ladder bridges, skinnies and endless switchbacks with an incredible flow. At the end, this trail connects up with *Return of the Jedi*. Ride back up the hill for another run, or continue to **Hoodoos Viewpoint to Surprise Corner (14)** and back into town.

### 20 Rundle Riverside

**13.9 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Golf Course Road (kiosk at far end)**

Intermediate and advanced riders may relish the challenge of this rocky roller coaster trail linking Banff and Canmore. Eight kilometres of rough and rooty singletrack give way to six kilometres of double track approaching the Canmore Nordic Centre. Full suspension is recommended. Be prepared with a repair kit; the remoteness of this trail may be an issue if you get into trouble. Connector: Canmore Nordic Centre (Banff Trail), **Spray River and Goat Creek (11)** and Golf Course Road.

### 21 Lower Stoney

**4.2 km one way**  
**Trailhead: Mount Norquay Ski Area parking lot**

This is a great trail for intermediate riders to work on their technical skills. Ride past the day lodge and down the ski area service road near the cascade lift for 1.4 km. Watch closely on the right for a sign indicating the entrance. The steep sidehill nature of the trail features many rough and rocky sections, and drops continuously to the highway. Watch for hikers, horses and bears on this fast, technical descent and be sure to close the fence gate. Return to Banff along the Trans-Canada Highway to the Norquay exit. Take extra caution when biking along this busy section of highway.

### 22 Upper Stoney

**4.8 km loop**  
**Trailhead: Immediate right at Mount Norquay Ski Area parking lot**

This narrow, technically difficult, rooted little trail climbs, at times steeply, through thick forest to the Stoney Lookout. If you can "clean" this trail you're a rock star! Enjoy a snack and a well-deserved rest at the viewpoint with views of Cascade Mountain and the Bow Valley beyond. From there, continue north and descend a rocky, twisting technical trail back to the old ski runs above the Mount Norquay day lodge. Connector: **Lower Stoney (21)** for a challenging, yet easily accessible loop out of the town of Banff.

### 23 The Toe

**7.9 km of trails**  
**Trailheads: Hoodoos Viewpoint and Day-use Area or Tunnel Mountain Campground**

An exhilarating mix of challenging and exposed technical riding, long climbs and descents, and winding narrow single-track. It can be ridden in any direction and has some exceptional views. For a short side trail along the main loop, try out *Wolf Skat Alley*. This area is sensitive to erosion and wildlife movement—please ride with care.



### 1 Sundance

## Plan Ahead and Prepare

### Rules of the Trail

- **Be a mountain park steward, ride with care!** Riding non-designated or closed trails, building new trails, or riding off-trail displaces wildlife and destroys soil and vegetation. These activities are also illegal and violators may be charged under the *Canada National Parks Act*.
- **Be bear aware.** Cyclists are particularly susceptible to sudden, dangerous bear encounters because of the speed and silence of their travel. Be alert, make noise, slow down, carry bear spray, and look ahead.
- **Ride designated trails.** It is your responsibility to know where you can and cannot legally ride.
- **Avoid riding during extreme conditions.** Wet, muddy or very dry trails are more likely to be damaged.
- **Help preserve the quality of trails.** Ride, don't slide—avoid skidding your tires by hard braking. Ride over obstacles, not around them. If obstacles are above your skill level, walk your bike.
- **Ride within your limits.** Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk.
- **Leave no trace.** Be sure to pack out what you pack in. Leave natural and cultural objects undisturbed for others to discover.
- **For the safety of wildlife, your pet and yourself,** keep your dog on a leash and under physical control at all times.
- **Yield appropriately.** Let your fellow trail users know you are coming. Make each pass a safe and courteous one. Cyclists travelling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill.
- **E-bikes** (pedal-electric power assisted bicycles) are only permitted on roads and select trails in Banff National Park. Visit [parksCanada.gc.ca/banff-e-bike](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banff-e-bike) for more information.

### Share the Trail

- The bike trails in Banff National Park are all shared-use trails—expect to encounter hikers, vehicles and horseback riders. Ride in control and be ready to stop at any time.
- If you are passing other bikers, walkers or runners, please be courteous. Use your voice or use a bell to let them know you'll be passing on their left so they have a chance to move over.
- Bicycles are fast and quiet, and can easily spook horses. When approaching oncoming horses, move to the side of the trail, stop and allow the horse party to pass. When passing horses from behind, slow down, let riders know of your presence before you get too close, and ask for instructions.

### Safety

- You are responsible for your own safety. Be prepared for a breakdown or accident. Know how to repair your bike and carry the necessary tools and parts.
- Choose rides that match your group's abilities. Be conservative—start with easier, shorter trails. Parks Canada staff or bike shop employees can help you select a suitable route.
- Wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.
- Bring extra food, water and clothing. Surface water may be contaminated and unsafe for drinking. Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Travel with others and keep your group together.
- Avoid wearing earbuds. Be alert at all times.
- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada visitor centre about trail conditions, descriptions, and weather.

## More Information

**Banff Visitor Centres:**  
224 Banff Avenue and 327 Railway Avenue  
403-762-1550  
[parksCanada.gc.ca/banff](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banff)

**Trail Conditions Report:**  
[parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails)

**Environment Canada Weather Forecast:**  
403-762-2088  
[weather.gc.ca](http://weather.gc.ca)

For bike rentals, Banff area maps and guidebooks, visit a local retail biking outlet.

For more information on trails or to volunteer, contact the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance (BVMA).

**In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or satellite phone: 403-762-4506. Cell phone coverage is not reliable throughout the national park.**

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*Également offert en français*

# Family Friendly Rides

- 1 Sundance Trail**  
3.7 km one way  
Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m
- 2 Tunnel Campground Loop**  
6.4 km loop  
Elevation gain 70 m
- 3 Banff Legacy Trail (Banff to Canmore)**  
29 km one way  
Elevation gain 24 m, elevation loss 113 m

# Easy Rides

- 4 Healy Creek**  
5.5 km one way  
Elevation gain 95 m, elevation loss 100 m
- 5 Spray River East and West**  
11.3 km round trip  
Elevation gain 242 m, elevation loss 113 m
- 6 Cascade Ponds – Bankhead**  
2.7 km one way  
Elevation gain 52 m, elevation loss 12 m
- 7 Cascade Valley**  
14.6 km one way  
Elevation gain 230 m, elevation loss 60 m
- 8 Water Tower**  
4.3 km one way  
Elevation gain 97 m, elevation loss 82 m

# Moderate Rides

- 9 Brewster Creek**  
8.5 km one way  
Elevation gain 280 m, elevation loss 110 m
- 10 Redearth Creek**  
10 km one way  
Elevation gain 330 m, elevation loss 95 m
- 11 Spray River and Goat Creek (Banff to Canmore)**  
18.7 km one way  
Elevation gain 435 m, elevation loss 160 m
- 12 Lake Minnewanka**  
29.4 km one way  
Elevation gain 45 m, elevation loss 35 m
- 13 Banff Avenue Trail**  
3.3 km one way  
Elevation gain 65 m, elevation loss 50 m
- 14 Hoodoos to Surprise Corner**  
4.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 115 m, elevation loss 90 m
- 15 Tunnel Bench Loop**  
9.7 km loop  
Elevation gain 60 m
- 16 Tunnel Technical Trails**  
2.7 km loop  
Elevation gain 80 m
- 17 Middle Springs**  
7 km of trails  
Elevation gain 124 m, elevation loss 124 m
- 18 Sulphur Mountain Westside**  
7.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 885 m

# Difficult Rides

- 19 Topp Notch**  
3.9 km one way  
Elevation gain 299 m, elevation loss 357 m
- 20 Rundle Riverside (Banff to Canmore)**  
13.9 km one way  
Elevation gain 265 m, elevation loss 296 m
- 21 Lower Stoney**  
4.2 km one way  
Elevation gain 11 m, elevation loss 328 m
- 22 Upper Stoney**  
4.8 km loop  
Elevation gain 228 m, elevation loss 243 m
- 23 The Toe**  
7.9 km of trails  
Elevation gain 82 m, elevation loss 82 m

All elevations are an approximate to give riders an idea of what to expect on each route. Elevations are calculated as the total amount of elevation gained and the total amount of elevation lost (all the ups and downs) over the entire distance of an out-and-back trail or a loop.



**Looking for a paved cruise or epic ride?**  
Pick up the Road Riding Guide at a Parks Canada visitor centre or view online at [pc.gc.ca/banff-brochures](http://pc.gc.ca/banff-brochures)

## LEGEND

Family Friendly Rides	Visitor Centre	Picnic Shelter
Easy Rides	Toilet	Bike Repair Station
Moderate Rides	Police	Bridge
Difficult Rides	Hospital	Golf Course
Trans-Canada Highway	Parking	Gondola
Bow Valley Parkway	Campground	Canoe Docks
Road	Day-use Area	Stables
Other trails	Viewpoint	Public Transit Stop
	Backcountry Camping	

### EASY

- Suitable for all cyclists, including those with little or no experience.
- Flat to gently rolling with no obstacles.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

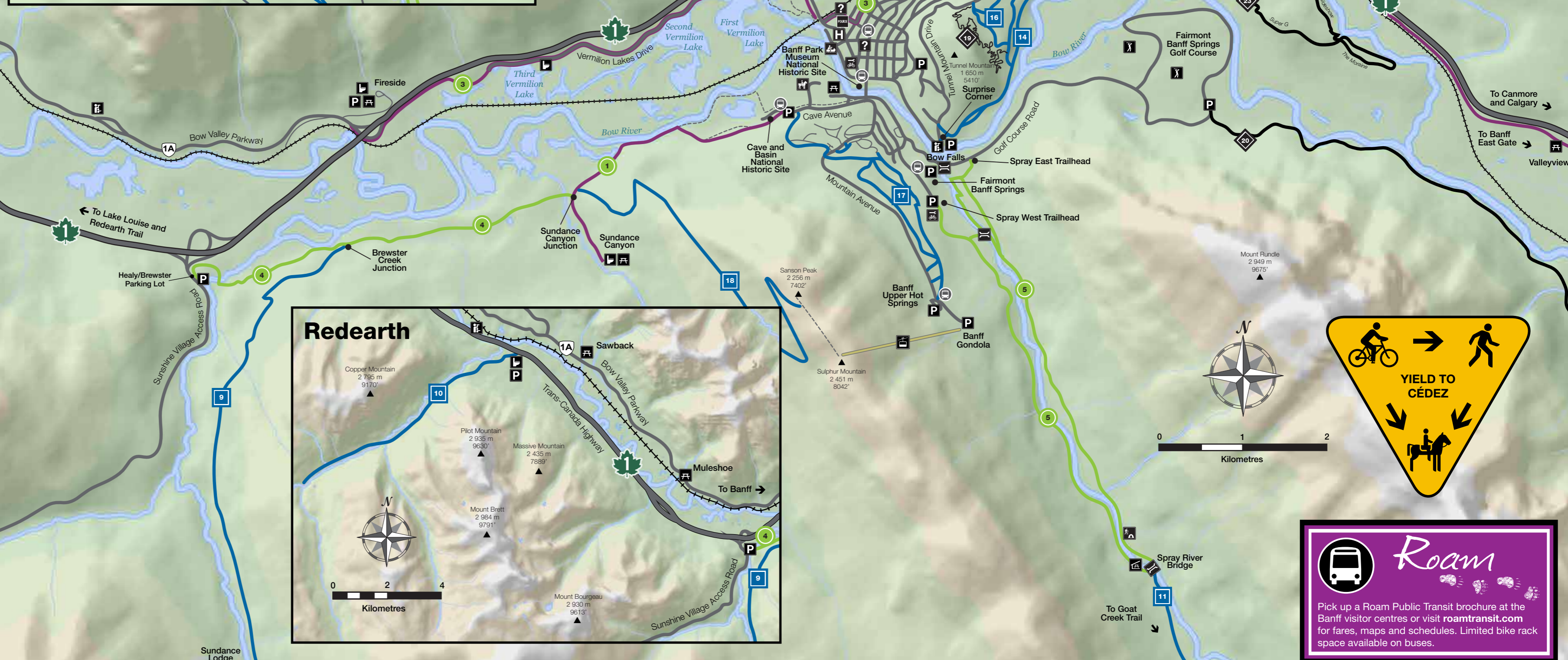
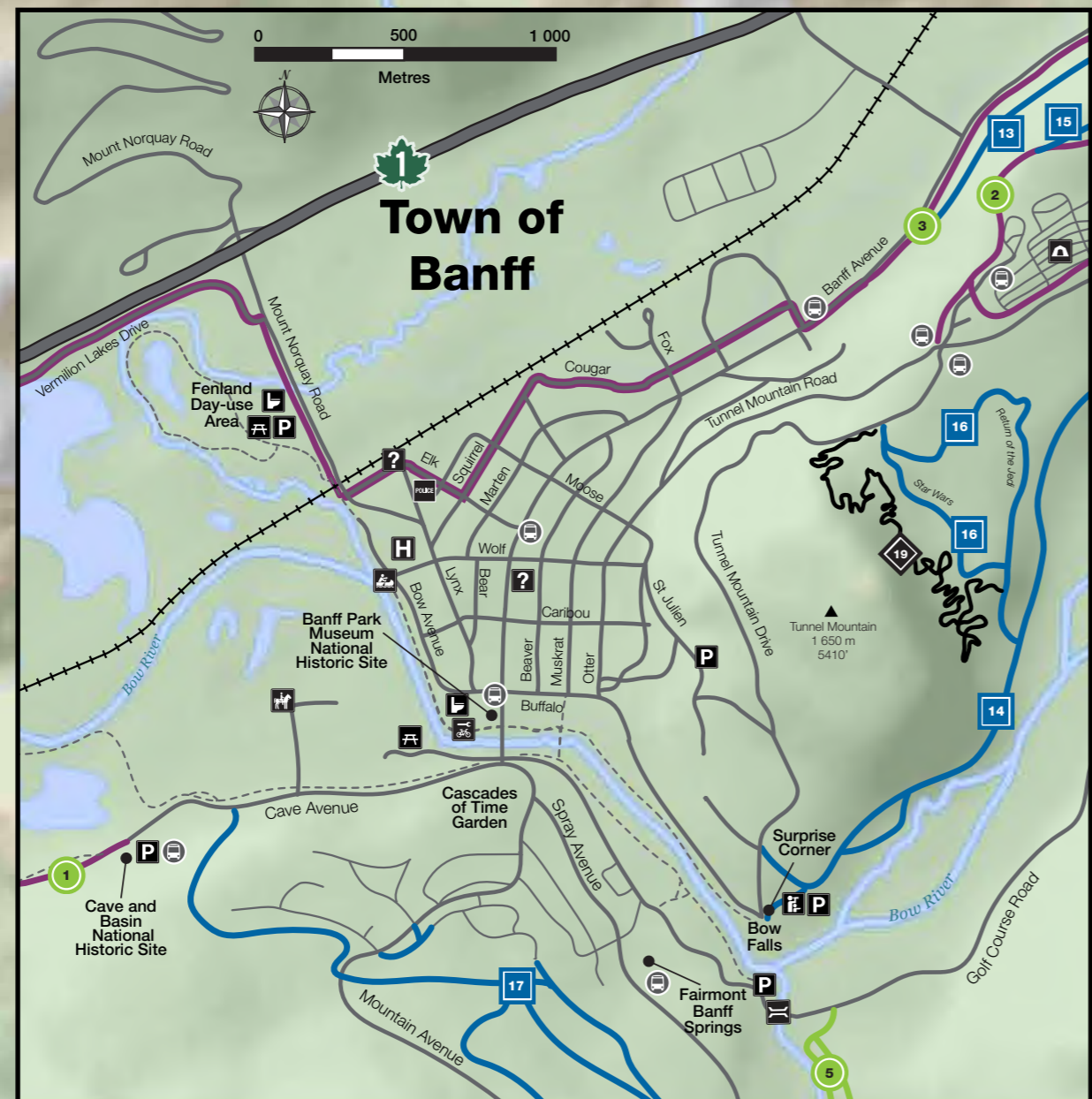
### MODERATE

- Suitable for most cyclists who have some basic experience and are prepared with proper equipment and water.
- Gently rolling with short, steep sections and infrequent obstacles.
- Moderate elevation gain or loss.

### DIFFICULT

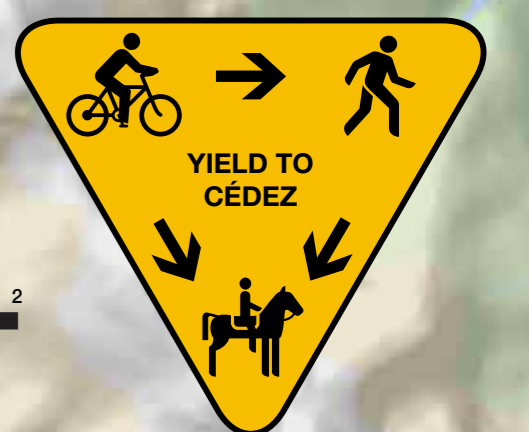
- Suitable only for cyclists who have experience and are prepared with proper equipment and water.
- Long, steep sections with frequent obstacles.
- Major elevation gain or loss.

Your speed and quietness puts you at risk for sudden wildlife encounters. **Always carry bear spray**, ensure it is accessible, and know how to use it. Visit [parkscanada.gc.ca/bearspray](http://parkscanada.gc.ca/bearspray) for more information.



**July 10 to Sept 15**  
The Lake Minnewanka trail is closed, shortly after Stewart Canyon bridge, to cycling to ensure visitor safety and allow bears to feed on berries, a critical food source. Dogs are not permitted on the trail during this period.

Roam Public Transit to Lake Minnewanka runs in the summer only. Visit [roamtransit.com](http://roamtransit.com) for more information.



**Roam**  
Pick up a Roam Public Transit brochure at the Banff visitor centres or visit [roamtransit.com](http://roamtransit.com) for fares, maps and schedules. Limited bike rack space available on buses.