



Winter Trails in the Banff Area

Welcome to winter in Banff National Park, Canada's first national park. Whether you are here for a family adventure or a relaxing getaway, there is no better way to experience Banff's pristine mountain landscape than on foot.

Lace up your boots, wax up your skis, strap on a pair of snowshoes and enjoy one of our many winter trails.

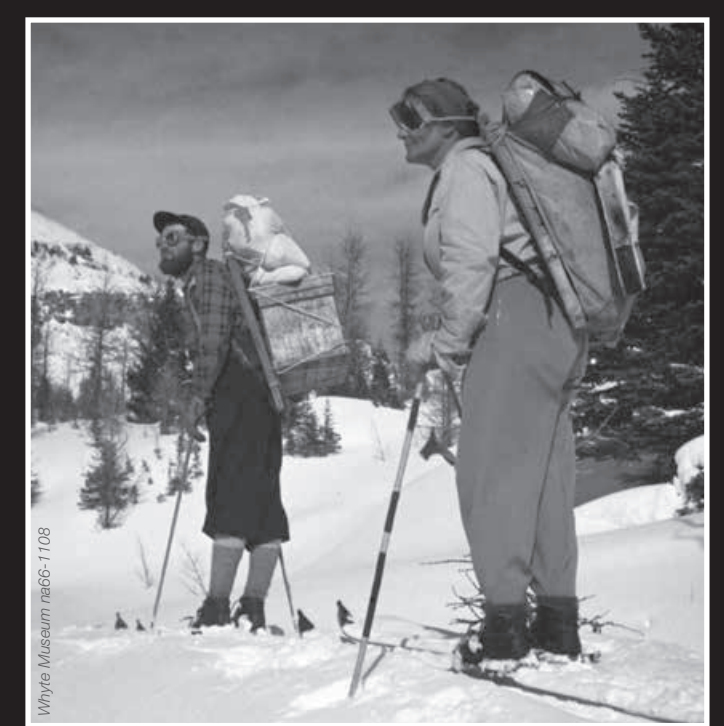


Photo: Museum 066-1108

Season

Although snow can fall at any time of year in Banff National Park, optimal skiing, winter walking and snowshoeing opportunities are from late-December to early-April.

Winter Walking and Snowshoeing Trails

The winter walking and snowshoeing trails outlined in this publication follow summer hiking trails. They are not groomed or maintained during the winter season and may be slippery. Weather can change quickly and dramatically in Banff National Park. Be prepared to adjust your activity based on current conditions. As a general rule, if there is fresh snow, conditions may be better suited for snowshoeing; if the snow is old and well-travelled, it may be better for winter walking. If you are looking for trails not listed in this publication, visit the Banff Visitor Centre for additional trip planning assistance.

CROSS COUNTRY SKI - EASY

- 1 Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court**
5.7 km of trails
Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court Campground entrance. Turn right after campground kiosk and park at barricades. Two seasonally closed campgrounds offer first time skiers the perfect place to try out a new sport. Get your evening fitness fix with 2.6 km of lit trails in Trailer Court or explore the quiet, forested loops of Village 1. The trailhead is within walking distance of Roam public transit.
- 2 Sundance Trail to Sundance Canyon**
3.2 km one way
Trailhead: Park at Cave & Basin National Historic Site. Trail starts west of building. This trail offers spectacular views of the Bow Valley while winding through forested areas to the Sundance Canyon picnic area. Sections of the trail are single and double track set.
- 3a Castle Junction**
9.5 km of trails in area
Trailhead: Castle Junction on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A) A series of interconnected single track set trails that wind through spruce forest. The main trail runs from Castle Junction to Castle Mountain Lookout.
- 3b Baker Creek to Protection Mountain Campground**
3.9 km
Trailhead: Across the road from Baker Creek Chalets This single track set trail (labelled #2 on-site) runs parallel to the parkway, and starts across the road from the Baker Creek Chalets.

CROSS COUNTRY SKI - MODERATE

- 3c Castle Mountain Lookout to Protection Mountain Campground**
6.4 km
Trailhead: Castle Mountain trailhead
This single track set trail links the two existing cross country ski trails on the Bow Valley Parkway. Travel this unique path to discover a new perspective on the original auto-route through Banff National Park.
- 4 Spray River Trail West and East**
4a) 5.7 km one way from Spray River West trailhead to Spray River bridge
4b) 5.6 km one way from Spray River bridge to Spray River East trailhead (Golf Course Road)
West trailhead: Park at Spray River West trailhead (behind The Fairmont Banff Springs)
East trailhead: Park at the Bow Falls day-use area and cross the Spray River Bridge (gated in winter). Trail starts at the Spray River East trailhead.
The entire trail is double track set with an additional skating lane on the west side of the river. This trail is the locals' favourite offering rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley, with views of The Fairmont Banff Springs. Bring a snack; there is a picnic spot beside the river at the bridge.
Avalanche Hazard: From the Spray River trailheads, infrequent avalanche paths from both Mount Rundle and Sulphur Mountain cross the Spray River shortly before the bridge at km 4.5 - 5km. Do not stop in this area.
- 5 Goat Creek and Spray River**
18.7 km one way
Trailhead: Goat Creek trailhead 8 km south of Canmore on Smith-Dorrien Road or Spray River West trailhead.
The double track set trail can be skied in either direction. Most people choose to start at the Goat Creek trailhead located just outside the park boundaries above Canmore and ski downhill most of the way to Banff. Vehicle shuttle recommended.
- 6 Brewster Creek**
6a) 2.6 km one way to Brewster Creek Junction
6b) 5 km one way
6c) 13.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge
West Trailhead: Brewster Creek parking lot
East Trailhead: Park at Cave & Basin National Historic Site. Trail starts west of building.
This trail offers scenic valley views through open and forested areas. Track setting occurs when adequate snow is available. For the more experienced, take a detour to Sundance Lodge.
- 7 Redearth Creek**
10 km one way
Trailhead: Redearth Creek trailhead, 20 km west of Banff on the Trans-Canada Highway.
The trail climbs gradually through lodgepole pine forests to the Shadow Lake trail. The last few kilometres back to the highway can be exhilarating, be extra cautious if conditions are icy.
Avalanche Hazard: From the Redearth Creek trailhead, two infrequent avalanche paths cross the trail at kms 3.3 and 4.4. At kms 6.3 - 8, beyond two bridges, infrequent avalanche paths from Copper Mountain exist above the trail. Do not stop in these areas.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

8 Cascade Valley

8a) 7.2 km one way to Cascade River bridge (from parking area)
8b) 15.4 km one way to Stoney Creek bridge (from parking area)
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka parking lot
Double trackset with skating lane to Cascade River bridge. Single trackset with pleasant rolling terrain for the remaining route to Stoney Creek. A sunny trail with good views and a fun downhill return trip. For a short 1.3 km ski, try the trail from Lake Minnewanka day-use area to Upper Bankhead.



WINTER WALKING - EASY

- 9 Johnson Lake**
2.8 km loop
Trailhead: Park at Johnston Lake day-use area, walk just past the picnic tables. This picturesque trail follows the lakeside shoreline. Breathtaking views of Cascade and Rundle mountains. Nestled amongst Douglas fir, spruce and pine trees, visitors can experience the richest biological zone in Banff National Park – the montane ecoregion.
- 10 Tunnel Mountain Drive**
1.7 km one way
Trailhead: Start at the closed gate at the intersection of Tunnel Mountain Drive and St. Julien Way. Closed to vehicles in the winter, this route provides splendid snowshoe opportunities with views of Cascade Mountain. It also connects with the Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint trail (#14).
- 11 Johnston Canyon**
11a) 1.1 km one way to the Lower Falls
11b) 2.7 km one way to the Upper Falls (from parking area)
Trailhead: Johnston Canyon day-use area, 22 km west of Banff on Bow Valley Parkway (1A).
Travel in the depths of the canyon along walkways that lead to the Lower Falls or to the spectacular 30 m high frozen Upper Falls. The trail is usually very slippery – cleats are strongly recommended. Travel an additional 3.5 km beyond the Upper Falls to reach the Ink Pots.
- 12 Stewart Canyon**
1.5 km one way
Trailhead: Past the Lake Minnewanka day-use area
A short walk through the Lake Minnewanka day-use area will lead you to the trailhead. Explore the Cascade River which feeds Banff National Park's largest lake. This trail can be very icy, especially during the spring.
- 13 Marsh Loop**
2.8 km loop
Trailhead: Start at the Cave and Basin parking lot.
This trail is located in the wide expanse of the Bow Valley and circles the Cave and Basin Marsh. It comes alive in the winter with birds and is a great place to see animal tracks!
- 14 Hoodoos Viewpoint**
14a) 5.1 km one way from Surprise Corner to Hoodoos viewpoint
Trailhead: Start at Surprise Corner parking lot on Tunnel Mountain Drive.
14b) 2.3 km one way on Douglas Fir trail to Hoodoos viewpoint
Trailhead: Start just past Douglas Fir Resort at intersection of Tunnel Mountain Road and Tunnel Mountain Drive.
From Surprise Corner, the trail takes you through forested areas until you reach the Douglas Fir trail. This sunny trail provides open vistas to the Hoodoos viewpoint. Keep an eye out for wildlife and watch for icy sections. You can make a loop or return to town along Tunnel Mountain Road.
- 15 Fenland Trail**
2.1 km loop
Trailhead: Fenland trail parking lot on Mt. Norquay Road
This is a peaceful interpretive trail under old growth spruce trees. Great for families with young children. For a longer walk from Banff to townsite, start at Central Park and follow the Bow River to the Fenland trailhead. Walk east, just over the railway tracks on Mt. Norquay Road (0.9 km one way).
- 16 Spray Connector**
2 km one way
Trailhead: Start at the Spray River West trailhead and take the Spray Connector located 0.7 km on the left side of the trail to end at the Spray River East trailhead located on the Golf Course Road.
For those seeking a short outing close to town, the Spray Connector links the Spray River East trail to Spray River West trail via a small scenic bridge. If conditions are icy, ice cleats are strongly recommended.

WINTER WALKING - MODERATE

- 17 Ink Pots via Moose Meadows**
5.3 km one way
Trailhead: Moose Meadows trailhead 27 km west of Banff on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A)
A quiet alternative to the busier Johnston Canyon trail, this trail climbs through thick forest to an open meadow with brilliantly coloured mineral springs.
- 18 Tunnel Mountain Summit**
2.4 km one way
Trailhead: Lower parking lot on St. Julien Road below The Banff Centre.
Reach the summit of a mountain in the heart of Banff's townsite. Take in breathtaking views of the Bow and Spray valleys. This steep trail can be extremely icy. Ice cleats and hiking poles are strongly recommended.

WINTER SAFETY

Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards associated with outdoor recreational activities. Even short trips from the Town of Banff can have serious consequences.

- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada Visitor Centre for help with trip planning.
- For recent information on trail conditions, warnings and closures, visit pc.gc.ca/trails.
- When trails are icy, hiking poles and ice cleats can make winter walking much more enjoyable.
- Study descriptions and maps before starting out and always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Tell somebody where you're going, when you will be back and who to call if you don't return.
- Expect that trail conditions and winter hazards may change throughout the day. Consult weather forecasts and pack prepared for changing weather and emergencies.
- Winter hazards include avalanches, disorientation, thin ice, hypothermia and frostbite.

AVALANCHE RISK

Be aware that thousands of avalanches occur throughout Banff National Park every year. Travellers wishing to venture beyond the limits of the trails described in this brochure should assume that they are travelling in avalanche terrain and should come prepared with the appropriate knowledge, skills and equipment. Trails in this brochure that may be affected by avalanches have been identified with an avalanche symbol.

For more information on the avalanche hazard, visit parksmountainsafety.ca or a Parks Canada Visitor Centre. Look for the **Avalanche Terrain Ratings** brochure and the current **avalanche forecast**.

RECOMMENDED PACKING LIST

- Trail guide and map
 - Full water bottle or thermos
 - High energy food
 - Sunscreen and sunglasses
 - First aid kit
 - Repair kit
 - Lightweight emergency blanket, candle and lighter or waterproof matches
 - Headlamp or flashlight
 - Extra clothing that would allow stopping in case of emergency
 - Carry a cell phone or satellite communication device appropriate for the area you will be visiting
- For additional information on winter packing, visit parksmountainsafety.ca

TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

- EASY**
 - Suitable for any type of visitor.
 - Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than 2-3 hours.
 - Little or no elevation gain or loss.
- MODERATE**
 - Suitable for most visitors who have some basic trail experience and are generally prepared.
 - Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than 5 hours.
 - May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections.

***Note: Easy and moderate trails can become difficult trails due to weather change, icy conditions and poor visibility.**

LEGEND

- Suitable for snowshoeing
- Ice cleats recommended
- Dogs on leash at all times
- Dogs not permitted
- Pick up after dogs
- Avalanche Hazard

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

- In Banff National Park, we share the trail.
- Do not walk or snowshoe on the track set portion of cross country ski trails. The packed smooth middle is for skate skiing and the groomed tracks are for classic skiing.
 - Do not skate-ski on the track set portion of a classic ski trail.
 - When climbing, please yield the right of way to descending skiers.
 - If you fall, move off track as quickly as possible.
 - When taking a break, step to the side, out of tracks.
 - Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

DOGS

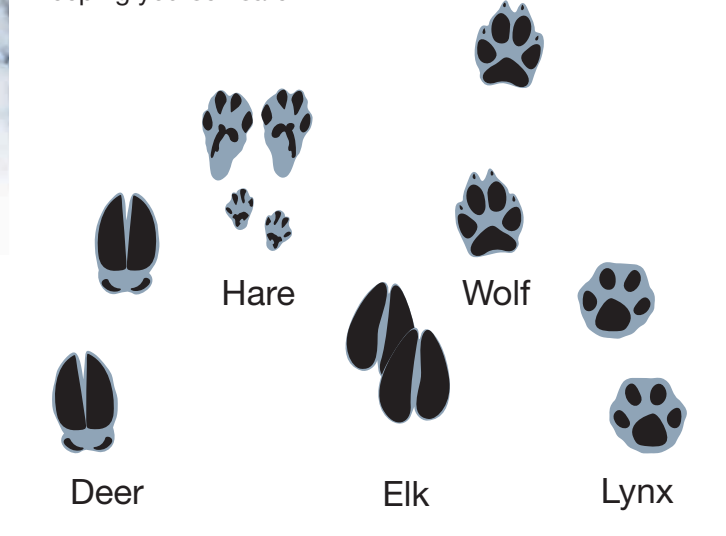
- If you are planning to take your dog out on a trail, please respect the following:
- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times.
 - Dogs are not allowed on the following groomed cross country ski trails: Cascade Valley, Spray River Trail, Goat Creek and Spray River, Redearth Creek and Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court.
 - Dogs can add stress to wildlife; the sight of a dog reminds some animals of predators like wolves and coyotes. Prevent your dog from chasing wildlife.

WILDLIFE

Winter offers a unique glimpse of wildlife as tracks in the snow reveal the story of their movements. It is a challenge for wildlife to survive a Rocky Mountain winter, but you can help make it easier. If tracks are observed, do not follow them towards the animal.

Although bears hibernate during winter, they can awake at any time for short periods. Carnivores such as cougars and wolves remain active throughout the year. If you see wildlife, do not approach; give them lots of space and observe from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens.

While dangerous interactions with humans are rare, please visit pc.gc.ca/Banff-wildlife to learn more about keeping yourself safe.



Have you tried snowshoeing?

Explore the trails in an authentic, traditional way by snowshoe! If you can walk, you can snowshoe – and you don't need any special gear – just snowshoes. Like hiking, pick a trail that suits your challenge and you're off to solitude and clean, fresh air. Travel by foot to enjoy Banff's scenery up close and personal, and you might even spot some wildlife.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Banff Visitor Centre:
224 Banff Avenue, 403-762-1550
pc.gc.ca/banff
- Environment Canada Weather Forecast: 403-762-2088
weather.gc.ca
- Alberta Transportation Road Report:
511 (in Alberta) or 1-855-391-9743
511 Alberta.ca
- BC Road Report: 1-800-550-4997
DriveBC.ca
- Avalanche Bulletin: parksmountainsafety.ca
- For avalanche education and training, visit avalanche.ca
- For Banff area maps and guidebooks, visit a retail outlet in the Town of Banff.

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or 403-762-4506 Banff Dispatch. Cell phones are not always reliable throughout the park.

CROSS COUNTRY SKI

- 1** **Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court**
5.7 km all loops
No elevation gain
- 2** **Sundance Trail to Sundance Canyon**
3.2 km one way
Elevation gain 77 m
- 3a** **Castle Junction**
9.5 km of trails in area
Minimal elevation gain
- 3b** **Baker Creek to Protection Mountain Campground**
3.9 km of trails in area
Elevation gain 16 m

- 3c** **Castle Mountain Lookout to Protection Mountain Campground**
6.4 km one way
Elevation gain 16 m
- 4a** **Spray River Trail West and East**
5.7 km one way from Spray River West Trailhead to Spray River Bridge
Elevation gain 18 m
- 4b** **Spray River Trail West and East**
5.6 km one way from Spray River Bridge to Spray River East Trailhead (Golf Course Road)
Elevation gain 56 m
- 5** **Goat Creek and Spray River**
18.7 km one way,
elevation gain 274 m
- 6a** **Brewster Creek**
2.6 km one way to Brewster Creek Junction
Elevation gain 10 m
- 6b** **Brewster Creek**
5 km one way
Elevation gain 16 m
- 6c** **Brewster Creek**
13.5 km one way to Sundance Lodge
Elevation gain 173 m

- 7** **Redearth Creek**
10 km one way
Elevation gain 325 m
- 8a** **Cascade Valley**
7.2 km one way to Cascade River Bridge (from parking area)
Elevation gain 70 m
- 8b** **Cascade Valley**
15.4 km one way to Stoney Creek Bridge (from parking area)
Elevation gain 171 m

WINTER WALKING

- 9** **Johnson Lake**
2.8 km loop
No elevation gain
- 10** **Tunnel Mountain Drive**
1.7 km one way
Elevation gain 5 m
- 11a** **Johnston Canyon**
1.1 km one way to the Lower Falls
Elevation gain 51 m
- 11b** **Johnston Canyon**
2.7 km one way to the Upper Falls (from parking area)
Elevation gain 115 m
- 12** **Stewart Canyon**
1.5 km one way
Elevation gain 30 m
- 13** **Marsh Loop**
2.8 km loop
Elevation gain 17 m
- 14a** **Hoodoos Viewpoint**
5.1 km one way from Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint
Elevation gain 30 m
- 14b** **Hoodoos Viewpoint**
2.3 km one way from Douglas Fir Trail to Hoodoos Viewpoint
Elevation loss 39 m
- 15** **Fenland Trail**
2.1 km loop
No elevation gain
- 16** **Spray Connector**
2 km one way
Elevation loss 46 m

- 17** **Ink Pots via Moose Meadows**
5.3 km one way
Elevation gain 217 m
- 18** **Tunnel Mountain Summit**
2.4 km one way
Elevation gain 192 m

LEGEND

	Easy Cross Country Ski Trail		Banff Park Museum National Historic Site
	Moderate Cross Country Ski Trail		Lake Minnewanka
	Snowshoe / Winter Walking Trails		Cascade Ponds
	Trans-Canada Highway		Vermilion Lakes Drive
	Bow Valley Parkway		Hoodoos Viewpoint
	Road		Bow Falls
	Road closed in winter		Banff Upper Hot Springs
	Avalanche Hazard		Cave and Basin National Historic Site
	Banff Visitor Centre		Surprise Corner
	Washrooms		Tunnel Mountain Campground
	Police		
	Parking		
	Campground		
	Backcountry Campground		
	Day Use Area		
	Viewpoint		
	Hospital		
	Shelter		
	Golf Course		
	Gondola		

Share the trails
Partageons les sentiers

DONE WITH THIS BROCHURE? Please return to a park facility or share it with others.

HOW WAS YOUR TRIP? Please send your comments to banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca

