Winter Trails in the Banff Area



Parks Parcs
Canada Canada

Canadä

Winter, a season to play . . .

Welcome to 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 expansive mountain landscape than to get out there in the snow.

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



How to Use this Guide

Stop by the visitor centres or visit

Whether you want to explore the national park by foot, ski, snowshoe or fat bike, this guide lists the recommended trails for each activity.

parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails for trail conditions and closures before heading out.

For all trails, be prepared as conditions can change quickly; easy and moderate trails can become difficult due to weather change, icy conditions or poor visibility.



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

MODERATE

- Suitable for most visitors who have some basic trail experience.
- · Gently rolling with short steep sections.
- Moderate elevation gain or loss.

Trails are shared in the national park, which means you could see people fat biking while you are winter hiking, or people skiing while you are snowshoeing.

Plan Ahead and **Prepare**

Winter **Safety**

Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards associated with outdoor recreation. 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.
- Visit parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails for up-to-date information on trail conditions, warnings and closures.
- When trails are icy, hiking poles and ice cleats can garbage bin. make winter hiking much more safe and enjoyable. Dogs are not allowed on some trails: read the trail

Dogs 😭 🔞

control at all times.

Trail **Etiquette**

In Banff National Park, we share the trail:

more information.

Dogs cause stress for wildlife. Dogs, like wolves and

can trigger aggressive behaviour from wildlife such

as cougars and elk. To prevent unsafe situations for

yourself, your dog, wildlife and other people, it is your

• Ensure your dog is on a leash and under physical

descriptions or visit parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails for

The track-set portion of the trail is for classic skiing

prevent ruts. If your feet or tires sink deeper than

only. The flat, groomed lane is for other users.

Walk and fat bike only on hard-packed trails to

When climbing, please yield the right of way to

• If you fall, move off the track as quickly as possible.

• When taking a break, step to the side, leaving room

Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

CÉDEZ

Skiers yield to descending skiers

Track-set for classic skiing only

Snowshoers and

hikers

yield to

2.5 cm (1 inch), conditions are too soft.

descending skiers and fat bikers.

for others to pass.

Fat bikers

yield to

all users

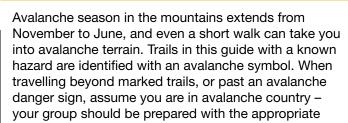
Pick up and dispose of your pet's waste in a

covotes, may be seen as a threat. Off-leash dogs

- Study descriptions and maps before heading out. Always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Tell somebody where you are going, when you will be back and who to call if you do not return.
- Expect that trail conditions and winter hazards may change throughout the day. Consult weather forecasts and be prepared for changing weather and emergencies.
- Winter hazards include avalanches, disorientation, thin ice, hypothermia and frostbite. From November to March, make sure your vehicle is
- winterized. Snow tires, proper clothing, and an emergency kit are recommended. Visit **511.alberta.ca** for road reports.

Avalanche Risk 🧥

knowledge, skills and equipment.



Check the current avalanche forecast at avalanche.ca or a Parks Canada visitor centre. Visit **parksmountainsafety.ca** for more information on backcountry travel and how to stay safe in the mountains.

Recommended Packing List

- Trail guide and map
- Full water bottle or thermos
- High-energy food Bear spray
- Hiking poles and ice cleats
- First aid kit and repair kit Lightweight emergency blanket, candle and lighter or waterproof matches
- Headlamp or flashlight with spare batteries
- Toque or winter hat and gloves Sunscreen and sunglasses
- Hand and toe warmers
- Extra warm clothing in case of an emergency
- Cell phone or satellite emergency
- communication device Helmet when fat biking

Visit parksmountainsafety.ca for additional information on winter packing.



In Banff National Park, Class 1 pedal assist electric bicycles are only allowed on roads or trails that are identified with the e-bike symbol in the trail descriptions. E-bikes equipped with an accelerator (throttle) are prohibited on all trails in Banff National Park.

Roam **Public Transit**



Trails identified with a bus symbol indicate that the trailhead is accessible by public transit. Limited bike rack space available on buses. Skis and snowshoes are welcome inside buses. Pick up a Roam Public Transit brochure at the Banff visitor centres or visit roamtransit.com for fares, maps and schedules.





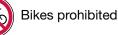
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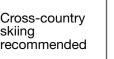


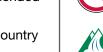
Fat biking

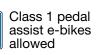










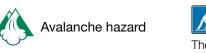


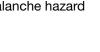


Flat grooming for other users

Dogs on leash at

Dogs prohibited







Do not stop in this area.

Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel

Elevation gain 435 m, elevation loss 160 m



Goat Creek and Spray River

Creek trailhead above Canmore and ski or bike downhill most of the way to Banff. Bikes are prohibited on Spray River West (2) in the winter. Vehicle shuttle recommended. **Avalanche hazard:** Avalanche paths from Sulphur Mountain cross the Spray River 4.5 - 5 km from the Spray River trailhead.



Tunnel Mountain Winter Trails

Two seasonally closed campgrounds offer first-time skiers the

perfect place to try out a new sport. Get your evening fitness fix

forested loops of Village 1. Dogs are prohibited on ski trails.

5.6 km one way from Spray River West trailhead to

Trailhead: Spray River West trailhead, past the Fairmont

This locals' favourite is double track-set with skate-skiing lane,

Avalanche hazard: Avalanche paths from Sulphur Mountain

cross the Spray River 4.5 - 5 km from the Spray River trailhead.

5.5 km one way from Healy Creek/Brewster Creek trailhead

West Trailhead: Healy Creek/Brewster Creek trailhead on

East Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start

This forested trail is a taste of the backcountry, close to town. Track

setting occurs when adequate snow is available. For a shorter one-

way trip, arrange for a drop-off at the Healy Creek/Brewster Creek

trailhead, and ski or fat bike into the town; a short trail will bring you

offering rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley. Bring a snack;

with 2.6 km of lit trails in Trailer Court or explore the 5.4 km guiet,

Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court

8 km all loops

No elevation gain

Spray River bridge

Banff Springs Hotel

Do not stop in this area.

(3) Healy Creek

to Sundance Canyon junction

the Sunshine Village access road

at Sundance Trail west of the building

Elevation gain 95 m, elevation loss 100 m

along Cave Avenue to the Banff Avenue bridge.

4a) 6.3 km one way to Cascade River bridge

Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 50 m

Elevation gain 250 m, elevation loss 85 m

Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area parking lot

This wide trail is double track-set with a skate-skiing lane to

return trip. For an additional 2 km round trip, ski the trail to

Cascade River bridge and single track-set for the remaining route

Starting point: Parking area on the HI Hostel road south of

A series of interconnected single track-set trails that wind through

spruce forest. The main trail runs from Castle Junction to Castle

Mountain Lookout trailhead along the Bow Valley Parkway

Goat Creek trailhead: 8 km south of Canmore on Spray

Spray River West trailhead: Parking area behind the

to Stoney Creek on pleasant rolling terrain. Enjoy a fun downhill

4a + 4b) 15.1 km one way

5a) 3.9 km of trails

5b) 5 km one way

Castle Junction

19 km one way

Minimal elevation gain

Minimal elevation gain

Campground entrance

🞢 闲 🗐 Route 2

(2) Spray River West Trail

Elevation gain 105 m, elevation loss 70 m

🞢 😭 🚱 🛝 🗐 Route 2

there is a picnic spot beside the river near the bridge.

cross-country Ski Trails 11.1 km one way (2.6 km from trailhead to Brewster Creek junction, plus 8.5 km to Sundance Lodge) Elevation gain 315 m, elevation loss 150 m Trailhead: Healy Creek/Brewster Creek trailhead on the **Sunshine Village Access Road**



This trail offers valley views through open and forested areas. Track setting occurs when adequate snow is available. For the more experienced, take the trail to Sundance Lodge. Note that hills can get icy.

8 F edearth Creek

10.5 km one way Elevation gain 335 m Trailhead: Redearth Creek trailhead





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 icv. **Avalanche hazard:** From the trailhead, two avalanche paths cross the trail at kilometres 3.3 and 4.4. Between kilometres 6.3 and 8, avalanche paths from Copper Mountain exist above the trail. **Do not stop in these areas.**



Snow conditions on snowshoe trails are best after a

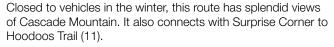
Snowshoeing Trails

recent snowfall.

(9) Tunnel Mountain Drive

Elevation gain 130 m, elevation loss 135 m Starting point: The closed gate at the intersection of Tunnel Mountain Drive and St. Julien Road



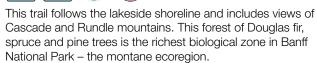


(10) Johnson Lake

2.8 km loop Minimal elevation gain Trailhead: Johnson Lake Day-use Area







11 Surprise Corner to Hoodoos

4.8 km one way Elevation gain 115 m, elevation loss 90 m Trailhead: Surprise Corner, east end of Buffalo Street





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.

4.8 km loop Elevation gain 205 m Trailhead: Kiosk at the south end of Mount Norquay ski area parking lot





This narrow trail climbs through the forest to the Stoney Lookout where you can enjoy views of Cascade Mountain and the Bow Valley below. From there, continue north and descend on a twisting trail that winds above the ski-area lodge.

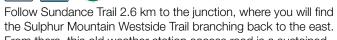


13 **25a** Sulphur Mountain Westside

Elevation gain 885 m Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start at

Sundance Trail west of building





the Sulphur Mountain Westside Trail branching back to the east. From there, this old weather station access road is a sustained climb for snowshoers or hikers with ice cleats. 14 Ink Pots via Moose Meadows



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A quieter alternative to the busier Johnston Canyon Trail, this trail climbs through thick forest to an open meadow with brilliantly coloured mineral springs.



Winter Walking Trails 2.4 km one way Elevation gain 260 m Trailhead: Lower parking lot on St. Julien Road. Trailhead is Trails can be icy in the winter. Hiking poles and ice a 15 minute/1 km walk from downtown Banff.

cleats are recommended when exploring. Cleats are designed to fit over shoes or boots and can be purchased at the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and most outdoor stores in the town of Banff.



15) Fenland Trail

2.1 km loop No elevation gain

Trailhead: Fenland Trail parking lot, west of Mt. Norquay Road. Trailhead is a 20 minute/1.5 km walk from downtown



This interpretive trail under old growth spruce trees is great for families with young children. For a longer walk from the Banff 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) Marsh Loop

2.8 km loop Minimal elevation gain Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site parking lot



This trail is located in the wide expanse of the Bow Valley and circles around a marsh. It comes alive with birds in the winter and is a great place to see animal tracks.



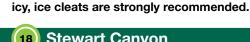
2 km one way

Minimal elevation gain Starting point: Park at the Bow Falls Day-use Area, walk past the gate and across the bridge. Follow the Golf Course Road 350 m to the Spray River East trailhead kiosk on your right. Go past the kiosk, head southwest and take a left on the trail closest to the Spray River.









(18) Stewart Canyon

1.5 km one way Minimal elevation gain Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, kiosk at the far end of picnic area



Explore the Cascade River which feeds Banff National Park's largest lake. This trail can be very icy, especially during the spring.



(19a) (19b) Johnston Canyon 19a) 1.2 km one way to the Lower Falls

19a + 19b) 2.5 km one way to the Upper Falls Elevation gain 120 m Trailhead: Johnston Canyon Day-use Area **M M**

Travel in the depths of the canyon on wide trails and narrow bridges with railings that lead to the Lower Falls or to the

Elevation gain 50 m

spectacular 30 m high frozen Upper Falls. The trail is usually very icy – ice cleats are strongly recommended. Travel an additional 3.2 km beyond the Upper Falls to reach the lnk Pots.



adjacent to this trail. Stay on the trail at all times. 22 (25a) (25b) Sundance Canyon

trongly recommended.

M M

Elevation gain 655 m

Tunnel Mountain Summit

cleats are strongly recommended.

Reach the summit of a mountain in the heart of the Banff

townsite. Take in breathtaking views of the town and Bow Valley.

This steep trail can be extremely icy. Hiking poles and ice

5.5 km to top of gondola, plus 0.5 km to Sanson Peak

Switchbacks on the slopes of Sulphur Mountain provide a steady

uphill hike to a summit renowned for its stunning mountain views.

Take a 0.5 km side trip on the boardwalk along the ridge ending

1903 weather observatory. If conditions are icy, ice cleats are

at Sanson Peak. You will find more great views, the Sulphur

Mountain Cosmic Ray Station National Historic Site and the

Avalanche hazard: There is hazardous avalanche terrain

Trailhead: Banff Upper Hot Springs parking lot

1 Soute 1

3.7 km one way, plus 2.1 km loop Elevation gain 155 m, elevation loss 60 m Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start at **Sundance Trail west of building**

Follow the Sundance Trail to this moderately difficult canyon loop.

Bikes are not permitted past the bike racks. This trail can

a smooth ride over firm snow, but deep fresh snow

or warm conditions are no fun and leave ruts in the

23a 23b Tunnel Mountain Winter Trails

has something for everyone, and the trails are lit at night. For a

5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead to Spray

Trailhead: Park at the Bow Falls Day-use Area, walk past

Road 350 m to the Spray River East trailhead kiosk on your

right. Go past the kiosk, head southwest and take a left on

the gate and across the bridge. Follow the Golf Course

This trail offers rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley. As

the snow falls throughout the year, snowshoers flatten the trail

Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 80 m

slightly more difficult terrain, try the 2.5 km fat bike loop

Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court

that meanders through coniferous forest.

be icy - ice cleats are strongly recommended.

Fat Biking Trails

add grip to your ride.

23a) 3.4 km of trails

No elevation gain

Minimal elevation gain

Campground entrance

23b) 2.5 km loop

River bridge

the east-most trail.

Recommended



path going up through thick forest. Beware of icy conditions. The trail levels-off gradually until it reaches an open meadow; head left on nice rolling singletrack. This north-facing slope retains snow well and is a reliable fat biking experience. The trail ends at

Tunnel Bench Loop

9.7 km loop Elevation gain 60 m



28 (18) Lake Minnewanka

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 rolling single

Banff Visitor Centres

Environment Canada Weather Forecast

511 (in Alberta) or 1-855-391-9743 / 511.alberta.ca

Catalogue No: R64-372/1-2021E



Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m



forested areas to the Sundance Canyon picnic area. Sections of the trail are single and double track set. Bikes are not permitted past the bike racks.





Route 1

Tunnel Mountain Road. Return the same way or connect with the Tunnel Bench Loop (Coastline) to return to town.

The wide tires of a fat bike add extra surface area for Starting point: Hoodoos Viewpoint parking area



varied entry-level singletrack with minimal elevation gain. Take

7.8 km one way to Aylmer Pass junction Elevation gain 45 m, elevation loss 35 m

224 Banff Avenue and 327 Railway Avenue 403-762-1550 / parkscanada.gc.ca/banff

Avalanche Bulletin

Banff Dispatch

the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and retail outlets in the town of Banff.

Cell phone coverage is not reliable throughout the national park.

3.7 km one way

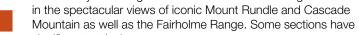
This trail offers views of the Bow Valley while winding through















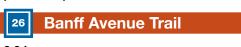
403-762-2088 / weather.gc.ca

403-762-1470

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or satellite phone: 403-762-4506.

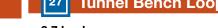
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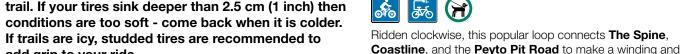
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, trail starts west of building



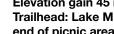












Alberta Transportation Road Report

Avalanche education and training

Guidebooks and topographic maps are available at

and fat bikers compact the snow, creating a hard-packed trail © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada

track. Some sections may be very icy – be alert.

Trail Conditions Report

Également offert en français

Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, kiosk at far end of picnic area Looking for a place to get a feel for fat biking on wide, groomed trails? Want to enjoy a quiet stroll in nature with your dog or try out snowshoeing after a big snowfall? The flat terrain of Trailer Court

More **Information**

