



JASPER NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Jasper's Best Kept Secrets

June 2010

Jasper National Park's best kept secrets are not her thundering waterfalls and canyons, spectacular glaciers, or signature icons such as Mount Edith Cavell or Maligne Lake. Jasper's best kept secrets are found throughout the Park, awaiting personal discovery - they may involve a trail experience, a surprise wildlife encounter, a stunning view, an insight into the past, or a welcoming interaction with a local resident.

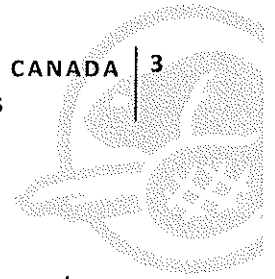
Fifteen examples of Jasper's best kept secrets include:

1. **Superb "view from the edge" experiences** – Jasper's two through-highways offer numerous roadside pull-offs that are unpublicised gems, many of which offer trailheads inviting brief or longer explorations off pavement.
2. **Accessible Wilderness** – an extensive network of day and overnight trails that is second to none in the Canadian Rockies, and are a platform for diverse experiences and discovery for all ages and skill levels, from the most cautious stroller to the most adventurous.
3. **Outfitted trips** – among the oldest traditions in Jasper National Park is the offer of knowledgeable guides who provide anything from day excursions to overnight stays at rustic and colourful subalpine lodges. The spectacular views and experiences of staying at lodges like the two operations at Amethyst Lake in the Tonquin Valley are undiminished since the first days of outfitting early in the 20th century.
4. **Jasper Lake** – sure you've driven by this gateway lake surrounded by mountain scenery, but have you lingered to appreciate its many moods, studied its reflections, waded the sandflats, compared its descriptions by early explorers, and walked the short trail to discover the story of Jasper House National Historic Site across the river? Here you'll learn about the 1829 supply post for the early fur trade while taking in views of the Athabasca River and back drops of Pyramid Mountain and the Palisades.





5. **Pyramid Bench trails** – a quick hike or bike right out the backdoor takes you above town into a rolling landscape of lakes and wetlands, rocky ridges and mixed forests of pine, aspen and Douglas fir. Excellent views of Pyramid, Roche Bonhomme and Signal mountains, and the upper Athabasca valley. A local birding hotspot is Cottonwood Slough.
6. **Athabasca East Bank trails** – a trail system along the Athabasca River from the Maligne River confluence to Old Fort Point and beyond keeps you in touch with this Canadian Heritage river and the historic route to Athabasca Pass. It is a hotspot for wildflowers and wildlife. Roche Bonhomme and the slopes of Signal Mountain as prominent backdrops.
7. **Lake Annette** – across the river from town, this lake is a favourite picnic area enjoyed by generations of visitors and locals - particularly when the water warms up for swimming. A new trail, part of the “easy trail” system connects Lake Annette to town.
8. **Authentic small town mountain culture** - Spend any time around the community of Jasper and pretty soon a pattern emerges. Small town logistics and friendliness make getting around easy. Jasper is designed as a hub radiating out from the Jasper Park Information Centre (a National Historic Site). Its generous green space has welcomed visitors for nearly a hundred years – early Park visitors arrived by train until highways were built. The local scene is an enthusiastic and diverse community of long time residents and recent arrivals who love to get out in the park and readily share their experiences. Strollers and cultural explorers will enjoy Jasper’s Discovery Trail, the Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives and the Brushfire Gallery.
9. **Headwaters - A tapestry of Aboriginal traditions** - The least known aspect of Jasper’s history are the traditions and stories of the Aboriginal people that used the area over thousands of years before it became a park. Jasper’s mountain passes were unknown to Europeans until the beginning of the 19th century, despite being the headwaters of three major Canadian rivers. Its valley corridors and footpaths across the Rockies were used by Aboriginal people for over nine thousand years. Groups of Aboriginal people from both sides of the continental divide -speaking many languages, met and intermingled here. Today, descendents of these groups are reconnecting with the park and sharing the cultures and traditions of Cree, Stony, Shuswap, Iroquois, Ojibwai, Beaver, Métis and others.
10. **Jasper Métis homesteads** –for a brief period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of families established homesteads in the park, engaged in trade, hunting and trapping and agriculture. They shared extensive family networks in the region. Visitors can drive to the Ewan Moberly site and learn the history of the families, or experience the more remote John Moberly site by hiking or biking the Overlander trail. It can also be reached by canoeing the Athabasca River. The picturesque and practical settings chosen by the settlers



speaks of their knowledge and love of the land. Their specific origins, circumstances and colourful story are little known or commemorated in Canadian History and can be uniquely be experienced here.

11. **Palisades Stewardship Education Centre** – this secret is getting out: awareness is growing of Parks Canada’s premiere youth education centre where learning and collaboration flourish among partners including Marmot Basin, Outward Bound Canada, and Grande Yellowhead Regional School District. The centre delivers exceptional experiences to Canadian Youth, targeting students in Grades 9 to 12, who participate in ecology and culture-based projects and undertake outdoor recreational activities to discover ways to experience the mountain landscape and ecosystem. Goals of the Palisades Stewardship Education program are to foster passion and appreciation for Canada’s National Parks and National Historic Sites among young Canadians.
12. **Caribou** - You can reach into your wallet and touch a caribou (they’re featured on the Canadian quarter) but in many areas of Canada these animals are just a memory on the landscape. Throughout North America, woodland caribou range has receded northward and many populations across Canada are now in decline. Woodland caribou occur in four mountain national parks: Jasper, Banff, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier. These herds make up the Southern Mountain population and have been listed as “threatened” under the Species at Risk Act. Biologists think that population declines are caused by several factors, many of which are influenced by human activities. Parks Canada is a participating authority in national caribou recovery. Coupled with on-going research and monitoring, Parks Canada (led by Jasper National Park) will be inviting the public and Aboriginal people to participate in developing caribou conservation strategies for the four mountain national parks.
13. **Fire Management** Fire burning...fire burning..... not necessarily the words that Parks Canada wants to hear on a hot dry summer day. However, fire is an important component of the ecosystem...a component that has been suppressed since the early 1900’s. Over the past few decades, Parks Canada has been working to reintroduce fire onto the landscape, to restore park ecosystems to a more natural state, and reverse the dangers of unnaturally old forests. In Jasper National Park, Parks Canada is using a combination of prescribed fires, appropriate wildfire response and selective thinning, including activities under the park’s FireSmart/ForestWise program. Visit Whistlers Campground to view the most recent fire management initiative during the 2009/2010 winter where Firesmart crews removed 3000 trees to reduce the risk of wild fire impacting the campground.
14. **Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site** - 9000 years ago, Aboriginal peoples were travelling through Yellowhead pass now referred to as the boundary between Jasper National Park and Mount Robson BC Provincial Park. In the early 1900’s as part of Canada’s nation



building, two railways were constructed through the pass. Since then the pass has been a key transportation and utility corridor connecting Alberta and British Columbia. Head west from Jasper and stop at the Portal Lake picnic area to learn about Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site at the Parks Canada and Mount Robson Provincial Park's new interpretive displays. Roll out the picnic table cloth or stretch your legs on a short loop hike along the shoreline of Portal Lake.

- 15. Cottage Tenting** - New to camping? Don't like the idea of buying gear or the hassle of setting up camp? Then perhaps luxury tenting is for you. Whistler's campground is now offering canvas-walled *cottage tents*, where you can 'rough it' without getting your clothes ruffled. Each cottage tent has all the basic comforts of home - wooden floors, beds, heat, lights and cooking gear. Parks Canada will even provide an optional introduction to camping. For more information or to reserve your spot call 1-877-RESERVE (737-3783) or by visiting www.pccamping.pc.gc.ca