

JASPER NATIONAL PARK Backcountry Guide



Snake Indian Falls



Fryatt Valley



Spruce Grouse



Geraldine Lakes



Marmot



Tonquin Valley

Welcome to the backcountry

Jasper National Park is the largest and most northerly of Canada's mountain national parks. It protects over 11,000 square kilometres of the Rocky Mountains, a beautiful and dramatic landscape supporting a rich variety of plants and animals. Many of the park's backcountry trails were established by early travellers including First Nations people, fur traders, explorers and adventurers.

With nearly 1000 km of trails and routes to choose from, backcountry camping is a great way to experience the rugged and untamed wilderness of Jasper National Park. This guide will help you plan a trip that is exciting, safe, and has low environmental impact.

For more detailed backcountry planning and trip information, visit www.pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry. Before setting out on a trip, check the latest trail conditions at www.pc.gc.ca/jaspertrails

On the trail

Jasper National Park offers a range of backcountry opportunities. Trails and campsites are designated as **semi-primitive, primitive or wildland**.

Here's what you can expect*:

Semi-primitive	Primitive	Wildland
<p>Receive the highest level of service. Expect windfall to be cleared and bridges, corduroys and signs maintained. Campsites are equipped with cable food-storage, picnic tables, throne pit privies and fireboxes (where fires are permitted).</p> <p>You are very likely to meet others on the trail.</p>	<p>Receive a lower level of service. Expect windfall to be cleared and bridges to be maintained annually, but may not be maintained prior to your trip. Campsites are equipped with bear poles and pit privies.</p> <p>More remote. You may meet others on the trail.</p>	<p>Little or no maintenance. Provide opportunities for experienced, self-reliant users to travel and camp in unmaintained areas of the park</p> <p>Many of these areas are extremely remote.</p>

*While we aim to achieve the above standards, inclement mountain weather and events can considerably change trail, river and campsite conditions instantly. Self-reliance is important in all backcountry areas.

Exploring the backcountry

Travelling with Horses

Park information centres have information about guided day or overnight horse trips in the park. *The Horse Users' Guide* (pc.gc.ca/jasperhorses) provides detailed information to individuals or groups planning a horseback trip. Call the Trail Office to obtain backcountry camping and grazing permits (see Information Sources).

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is permitted only on trails designated for bike use. Refer to the map for trails open to mountain biking.

Climbing, Mountaineering and Glacier Travel

Mountaineering parties can apply at a Parks information centre to bivouac in non-vegetated areas. Special restrictions may apply. A voluntary safety registration is recommended. **Visit pc.gc.ca/mountainsafety for more information.**

Fishing

Fishing is permitted in many backcountry lakes. A National Park Fishing Permit is mandatory. Provincial fishing permits are not valid in National Parks. Permits are sold at park information centres and Jasper retail outlets that sell angling supplies. Get a copy of the current Fishing Regulations Summary with your permit. **Visit pc.gc.ca/jasperfishing for more information.**

Managing Our Use

Humans have an impact in all areas of the park. The backcountry is especially vulnerable to our use. Park management regulations are in place to minimize our environmental impact. They include quota restrictions on trails and campsites, a limit on group size, a permit system and restrictions on special use.

Uniformed Parks staff you encounter in the backcountry may ask to see your Backcountry Camping Permit.



Photo: M. Babin

Grizzly Bear

Filtering water

Photo: M. Babin

Please leave no trace!

Garbage

Please—Pack it in and pack it out! You are responsible for everything you take into the backcountry and this includes garbage. **Do not dispose of garbage in pit toilets—it may attract animals.**

Shortcutting trails

Shortcutting between trail switchbacks damages both the soil and plant life. This not only ruins the look of an area, but makes it susceptible to further damage by erosion.

Collecting natural or cultural objects

Rocks, fossils, horns, antlers, wildflowers, nests and all other natural or historical objects in a national park are protected by law. Leave them as you found them for others to enjoy.

Camping

Please camp only at the campsites indicated on your Backcountry Camping Permit and use the tent pads (where provided). Check with park staff for special restrictions.

Washing

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 70 m away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Strain out those last bits of food waste and pack them out. Disperse strained water on land.

Campfires

Campfires are a luxury in the mountains and are not permitted in some areas (see map). If you choose to have a fire, use the metal fireboxes provided, keep your fire small and use only deadfall. Tend to your fire at all times and extinguish it completely before you move on. Gas stoves are cleaner and more efficient for cooking. We recommend you use one.

Food storage

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears, **all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment** must be hung from the food storage cables provided at designated campsites. In wildland camping areas, bear-resistant containers are required to store food.

Human waste

Use the pit toilets provided. When there are no facilities nearby, select a spot away from trails, campsites and at least 70 m from water sources. Dig a hole 12 to 16 cm, to the dark-coloured, biologically active soil layer. Loosely fill the hole with soil afterward. Use as little toilet paper as possible.



For more information on low impact travel in the backcountry contact: leavenotrace.ca or 1-877-238-9343.

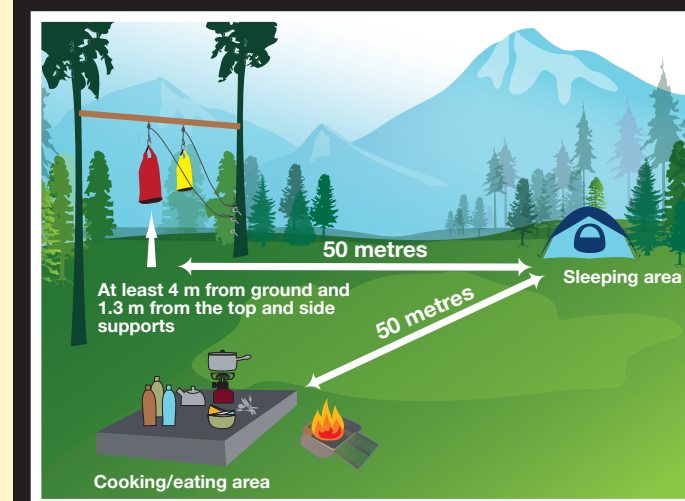


Brazeau in September

Jonas Pass

Photo: G. Gormley

How to properly store your food



Safety

Playing it safe

All outdoor activities involve some degree of risk. Rapidly changing weather, steep, rugged or unfamiliar terrain, avalanches (at any time of year), cold, swift-flowing streams, canyons, rapids and waterfalls, glacial crevasses, falling rocks and wild animals are all backcountry hazards visitors may encounter. Caution and self-reliance are essential.

Water

Giardia lamblia is a parasite carried by humans and some domestic and wild animals. These parasites can occur in any surface water in the park and may contaminate the water supply. Boil your drinking water or purify it with a water filter or iodine tablets.

Wildlife

Never forget that park animals are wild and can be dangerous. Any animal can become aggressive if it feels threatened, so keep your distance — 30 metres from most animals, and at least 100 metres from bears.

Bears

Both black and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. Learn more about how to reduce the risk of bear encounters by reading the wildlife safety brochures available at park information centres or on the web at pc.gc.ca/jasper-bears.

Dogs

Wild animals see dogs as either prey or predator. They can provoke confrontations with wildlife and affect your safety. This is why dogs must be kept on leash while in a national park. Please note that dogs are not allowed in some backcountry areas to protect caribou.

Remember - YOU are responsible for your own safety.

Checklist

- Select a trip which best suits your party's abilities and experience,** interests, equipment and the time you have available.
- Familiarize yourself with the trail you have selected.** This includes using additional reference guides and topographic maps.
- Obtain a Backcountry Camping Permit from a Park Information Centre.**
- Check trail conditions and weather** prior to departure.
- Be prepared to be self-sufficient** during inclement and rapidly changing mountain conditions by packing the right clothing and camping gear.
- Let a friend or family member know** about your travel plans – or use Parks Canada's safety registration service.
- Check the trailhead kiosk prior to your hike.** It contains valuable information about closures and warnings.

For further details on PLANNING YOUR TRIP visit pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry.

Sharing the Trail

Hikers, horse parties and mountain bikers often share trails and campsites in certain parts of the park. Respect for others can go a long way toward reducing conflicts. Make noise if you are travelling quickly or silently, move off the trail to allow larger parties to pass, and avoid sudden movement around horses as they may spook.



Photo: M. Gormley

Skyline Trail

Photo: G. Gormley

Planning your trip

Where to go?

The ideas on the back of this guide are a good starting point for selecting a trip that meets your needs and abilities. For more information, visit the Jasper National Park website or talk with park information centre staff, who can provide you with up-to-date information (see Information Sources).

When to go?

The summer season usually begins in May in the valley, but most alpine areas are still snow-bound until late June. At this time of year low-elevation trails are the best option. Be prepared for mud. The best time for an alpine trip is late **June to mid-September**, although snow often persists in high passes until the middle of July. Even in summer, mountain weather can be unpredictable. Always be prepared for rain. Freezing temperatures and snow are not uncommon above 1500 metres. Trails are the busiest at this time of year. **Mid-September through October** can be a lovely time of year on the trails, the bugs are dead and there are fewer people on the trails. But temperatures are much colder with a greater chance of snowfall, and the days are shorter. **November to April** is winter in the mountains. Winter travelers need to be prepared to cope with cold temperatures, short days, deep snow and avalanche danger. Winter guidelines are in effect at this time of year. pc.gc.ca/mountainsafety

Reservations

Campsite reservations are strongly recommended. You can make a reservation by phoning the Trail Office 780-852-6177 up to 3 months before your departure date. A non-refundable registration fee applies. **Book early for semi-primitive and primitive campsites (see map), as these are most popular.**

Backcountry camping permits

A backcountry camping permit is mandatory for all overnight trips and can be obtained by phoning the Trail Office (780) 852-6177. Frequent backcountry travellers can purchase an annual backcountry pass, valid in all the mountain national parks for a full year after purchase date. If you have an annual backcountry pass, you also need a backcountry camping permit for each trip. Annual backcountry pass holders pay only the reservation fee for their backcountry camping permit.

Note to Alpine Club of Canada hut users:

If you are staying at an Alpine Club of Canada hut you must either obtain a backcountry camping permit from the Alpine Club, or bring along your annual backcountry pass.

Voluntary Safety Registrations

If you do not have a reliable local contact to leave your detailed backcountry travel information with, you can

register your trip in person at park information centres. A safety registration ensures that if you do not return by the date and time recorded, a search will be initiated on your behalf. If you use the service, you must report back immediately upon your return to a park information centre.

Fees

Backcountry camping fees, excluding the reservation fee, are entirely refundable up to 48 hours before your proposed date of departure. If your plans change, please take advantage of our refund policy and make your space available to others.

For updated fee information visit: pc.gc.ca/jasperfees

Weather

The most predictable thing about mountain weather is its unpredictability. Rain or snow can fall at any time of the year and freezing temperatures are possible even during the summer. The best way to deal with the weather is to prepare for all conditions. For a detailed weather forecast, contact the Environment Canada Weather Office at 780-852-3185 or visit their website at www.weatheroffice.gc.ca.

Guidebooks on Jasper's trails

Guidebooks and maps are available at the Friends of Jasper or bookstores.

The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide
by Brian Patton and Bart Robinson

Classic Hikes in the Canadian Rockies
by Graeme Pole

Jasper-Robson: A Taste of Heaven
by Don Beers

Hiking Jasper and Mount Robson
by Rob Bryce

Maps of Jasper

Government of Canada NTS topographic maps, 1:50,000

Gemtrek Jasper and Maligne Lake, 1:100,000, Columbia Icefield 1:75,000, Best of Jasper 1:35,000

National Geographic Trails Illustrated 1:100,000, T903, Jasper North, T902, Jasper South

Map-it-First: mapitfirst.ca

For more information on each trail, trip planning and topographical maps visit: pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry



Trip ideas

Two-Day Trips

3 Saturday Night Lake Loop **Semi-Primitive**
24 km Elevation gain/loss: 786 m
 Maximum elevation: 1640 m

This well-marked trail begins and ends in the Jasper townsite. It follows a plateau below timberline, making it a good selection for the novice or early season hiker.

TRAILHEADS: Townsite - Junction of Bonhomme St. and Patricia St.

139 Jacques Lake **Semi-Primitive**
12 km one way Elevation gain: 41 m, loss: 8 m
 Maximum elevation: 1540 m

This unique trail travels through a narrow mountain valley, skirts four lakes and crosses a watershed - all in less than 13 km and with little change in elevation. A good choice for novice hikers. Camping is not permitted at Beaver Lake.

TRAILHEAD: South end of Medicine Lake, 28 km from Jasper townsite

126 Big Bend **Primitive**
15.6 km return Elevation gain/loss: 267 m
 Maximum elevation: 1400 m

Rolling along the upper Athabasca Valley, this trail follows a wide, well-packed fire road that is easily traversed on foot or bike. Make a day of it, or stay overnight at Big Bend Campground.

TRAILHEAD: Sunwapta Falls, 54.5 km south of Jasper townsite

Four Day Trips

130 131 132 Brazeau Loop **Semi-Primitive**
80 km Elevation gain/loss-clockwise loop: 2351 m
 Maximum elevation: 2475 m
Caribou range - dogs not allowed

The "grand tour" of the southern ranges, this circuit includes one of the park's largest backcountry lakes and an extraordinary alpine traverse with glaciated peaks, lush wildflowers and a variety of wildlife. The trail passes through extensive alpine meadows and three passes.

NOTES: Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. No fires at Jonas Cutoff ▲23. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of the 20 km pass section. Horse use prohibited in Jonas Pass.

TRAILHEAD: 112 km south of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway at Nigel Creek.

132 130 Poboktan - Jonas Pass **Semi-Primitive**
54 km to Nigel Creek, one way Elevation gain: 1691 m and loss: 1346 m. Maximum elevation: 2470 m
Caribou range - dogs not allowed

A shorter alternative to the Brazeau loop, this is an impressive hike with over 13 km of travel above treeline. Good views and prime habitat for park wildlife including hoary marmot and woodland caribou. See notes for Brazeau loop above.

TRAILHEAD: Sunwapta station, 72 km S of Jasper townsite on Icefields Parkway.

Seven to Ten Day Trips

In wildland camping areas, toilets and food storage may not be present in some locations. Bear-resistant containers are required to store food.

115 Athabasca Pass **Wildland**
98 km return Maximum elevation: 1755 m, Minimum elevation: 1210 m

This remote historic trail follows the Whirlpool River valley, the traditional route of early fur traders crossing the Rocky Mountains. Large gravel flats and glaciers dominate the scenery in sections. Most major crossings are bridged as you climb toward Athabasca Pass National Historic Site. Some horse traffic.

NOTE: Bikes allowed to Tie Camp.

TRAILHEAD: Km 6.4 of Moab Lake road, off Highway 93A south

150 North Boundary **Wildland**
179 km Maximum elevation: 2020 m, Minimum elevation: 1355 m

North Boundary country possesses its own unique brand of beauty - a wilderness of broad valleys and distant views that is inhabited by an array of wildlife. The trail is rugged in places although most major river crossings are bridged. Some horse traffic. Very remote, trail is maintained infrequently.

NOTES: Due to a recent flooding, Blue and Caracajou Creek bridges may be out.

TRAILHEADS: End of Celestine Road, 53 km from Jasper townsite; Rock Lake, 32 km from Hwy 40 to Grande Cache; and at Mount Robson, 88 km west of Jasper townsite on Highway 16.

130 South Boundary **Wildland**
120 km Maximum elevation: 2262m, Minimum elevation: 1580 m

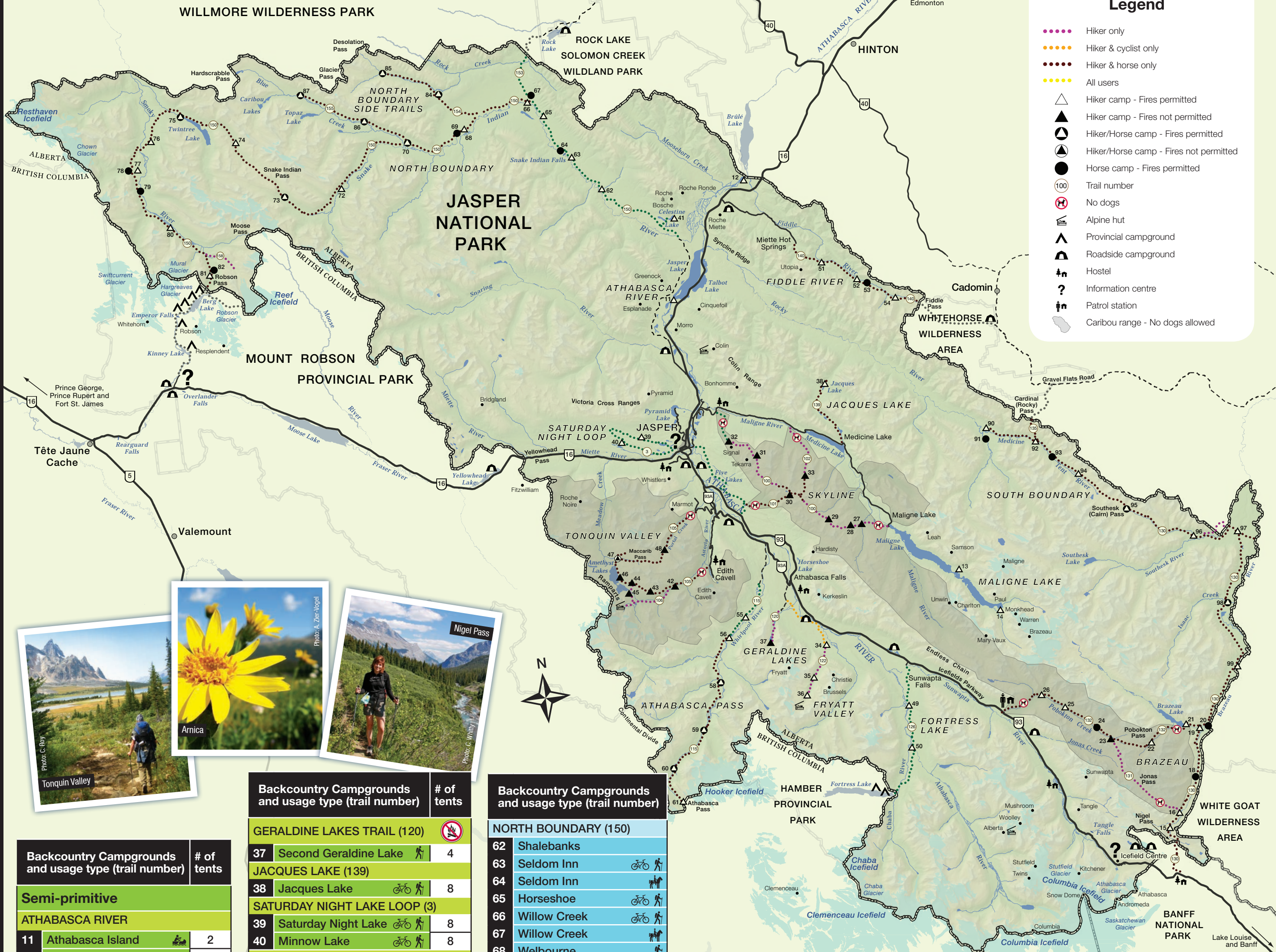
This high country trek travels through lowland forest and over two alpine passes. Most major water crossings are bridged but the smaller streams may require fancy footwork. Much of this trail is very remote.

NOTES: Due to a recent landslide and post-fire deadfall, the trail between Jacques Lake and Rocky Forks Campground is very difficult to navigate. Travel through this area is not recommended. Beyond Brazeau Lake, trail is maintained infrequently. Overlaps popular Brazeau loop trail. Check on campsite availability.

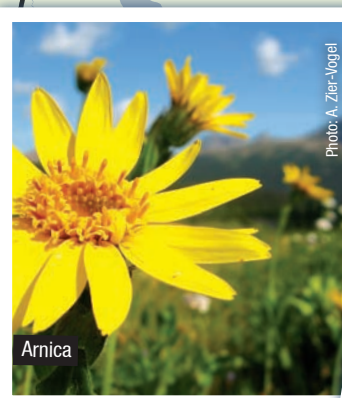
TRAILHEADS: Rocky Pass via Hwy 40, 77 km SE of Hinton. Nigel Pass: 112 km from Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.



Skyline Trail



Tonquin Valley



Arnica



Nigel Pass

Backcountry Campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	# of tents
Semi-primitive	
ATHABASCA RIVER	
11 Athabasca Island	2
12 Brûlé	2
MALIGNE LAKE	
13 Fisherman's Bay	8
14 Coronet Creek	8
BRAZEAU (130,131,132)	
15 Boulder Creek	4
16 Four Point	8
18 Wolverine South	4
19 Brazeau River	4
20 Brazeau Meadows	8
21 Brazeau Lake	8
22 John-John	4
23 Jonas Cutoff	8
24 McCready	8
25 Waterfalls	4
26 Poboktan	4
SKYLINE (100, 101, 102)	
27 Evelyn Creek	4
28 Little Shovel	8
29 Snowbowl	8
30 Curator	8
31 Tekarra	8
32 Signal	4
33 Watchtower	4
FRYATT VALLEY (122)	
34 Lower Fryatt	4
35 Brussels	8
36 Headwall	8

Backcountry Campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	# of tents
GERALDINE LAKES TRAIL (120)	
37 Second Geraldine Lake	4
JACQUES LAKE (139)	
38 Jacques Lake	8
SATURDAY NIGHT LAKE LOOP (3)	
39 Saturday Night Lake	8
40 Minnow Lake	8
NORTH BOUNDARY (150)	
41 Celestine Lake	8
TONQUIN VALLEY (105, 106)	
42 Astoria	4
43 Switchback	8
44 Clitheroe	8
45 Surprise Point	4
46 Amethyst	8
47 Maccarib	4
48 Portall	8
Primitive	
FORTRESS LAKE (126)	
49 Big Bend	4
50 Athabasca Crossing	4
FIDDLE RIVER (140)	
51 Utopia	4
52 Slide Creek	4
53 Slide Creek	4
54 Whitehorse	4
Wildland	
ATHABASCA PASS (115)	
55 Whirlpool	4
56 Tie Camp	4
58 Middle Forks	4
59 Scott Camp	4
60 Kane Meadows	4
61 Athabasca Pass	4

Backcountry Campgrounds and usage type (trail number)	
NORTH BOUNDARY (150)	
62 Shalebanks	
63 Seldom Inn	
64 Seldom Inn	
65 Horseshoe	
66 Willow Creek	
67 Willow Creek	
68 Welbourne	
69 Welbourne	
70 Blue Creek	
72 Three Slides	
73 Oatmeal	
74 Byng	
75 Twintree	
76 Donaldson Creek	
77 Chown Creek	
78 Chown Creek	
79 Timothy Slides	
80 Wolverine North	
81 Adolphus	
82 Adolphus	
84 Little Heaven	
85 Spruce Tree	
86 Ancient Wall	
87 Natural Arch	
SOUTH BOUNDARY (130, 135)	
90 Rocky Forks	
91 Rocky Forks	
92 Medicine Tent	
93 Medicine Tent	
94 La Grace	
95 Cairn Pass	
96 Cairn River	
97 Southesk	
98 Isaac Creek	
99 Arête	



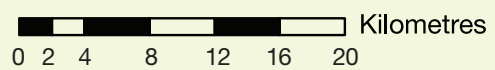
Woodland caribou

The woodland caribou found in Jasper are a threatened species. Less than 100 caribou are left in south Jasper.

What you can do to help woodland caribou:

- Stay on designated trails and if you see caribou give them space.
- Dogs are not allowed in caribou habitat (see map).
- Avoid hiking in caribou habitat during calving season (June - early July) and rut season (late September to early October).

To find out more about caribou conservation in the mountain national parks, visit www.pc.gc.ca/caribou.



THIS IS NOT A TOPOGRAPHIC MAP. IT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR ROUTE FINDING.