

Jasper National Park BACKCOUNTRY GUIDE

Tonquin Valley



WELCOME

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 1,000 km of trails were established by early travellers including Indigenous Peoples, fur traders, explorers and adventurers. This guide serves as an orientation to Jasper's backcountry trails and will help you start planning a trip that is exciting and safe with a low environmental impact.



TRAIL ETIQUETTE



What can you expect?

- **Wildlife.** Trails in Jasper are used just as frequently by wildlife as they are by humans. Always make noise in the backcountry to avoid surprising wildlife on the trail.
 - **Horses.** Many backcountry trails in Jasper are historical horse routes and still see frequent horse traffic. Always yield to horses.
- What is your responsibility?**
- **Share the trail.** Hike in single file as a group OR take up no more than half the trail width.
 - **Don't tune out.** Headphones prevent you from hearing approaching trail users and wildlife.
 - **Keep pets on a short leash** while passing (or being passed by) other users. Other users may be frightened by dogs or unsure how to pass safely.
 - **Yield to horses.** Stay downhill. Greet the rider and the horse. Ask the rider how to proceed.

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

Two-Day/One-Night Trips

Saturday Night Lake Loop **24.3 km loop; elevation gain/loss over entire loop: 99.0 m/-99.0 m; maximum elevation: 1652 m**

Trailhead • (P2) Southwest end of the Jasper townsite.

Campgrounds • (39) Saturday Night Lake (40) Minnow Lake

This well-marked trail begins and ends in the Jasper town-site and follows a plateau below treeline. This is a good selection for the novice or early-season hiker.

Big Bend **12.6 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 94 m/-162 m; maximum elevation: 1404 m**

Trailhead • Sunwapta Falls, 54.5 km south of the Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.

Campground • (49) Big Bend

This route follows a wide, well-packed fire road that ends with spectacular views of Dragon Peak and the Athabasca River.

Notes • The suspension bridge after Athabasca Crossing Campground (50) is washed out, and the Athabasca River is impassable.

Whirlpool **13.2 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 162 m/-157; maximum elevation: 1269 m**

Trailhead • Km 6.4 at end of Moab Lake Road, off of Highway 93A South.

Campground • (55) Whirlpool

This portion of the historic Athabasca Pass Trail is a well-packed fire road that passes Moab Lake and follows the Whirlpool River through a burn area from the 2000 Moab Lake Fire.

Notes • The Simon Creek Bridge beyond Tie Camp Campground (56) is washed out. Travel to Middleforks Campground (58) and beyond is not recommended until October.

Jacques Lake **24.4 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 345 m/-271 m; maximum elevation: 1588 m**

Trailhead • 28 km from the Jasper townsite on Maligne Lake Road at the south end of Medicine Lake.

Campground • (38) Jacques Lake

This trail travels through a narrow valley, skirts four lakes, and crosses a watershed in less than 13 km, with little change in elevation. This is a great trip for novice hikers.

Notes • The Jacques Lake trail can flood heavily in the spring. Please check the trail report before starting your hike. No fishing in Jacques Lake.

Utopia **12.6 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 312 m/-350 m; maximum elevation: 1688 m**

Trailhead • Miette Hot Springs

Campground • (51) Utopia

This route passes the old hot spring building and three natural hot springs before continuing upward through Utopia Pass and down to Utopia Campground.

Nigel Pass **22.4 km return; elevation gain/loss to campground: 376 m/-215 m; maximum elevation: 2229 m**

Trailhead • 112 km South of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway at Nigel Creek.

Campgrounds • (15) Boulder Creek, (16) Four Point

This introduction to the Brazeau area takes you uphill past historical Camp Parker and through the stunning Nigel Pass. After crossing the upper reaches of the Brazeau River, you can spend the night at Boulder Creek Campground. Be sure to check out Jonas Pass if you have time.

Notes • Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July.

Hidden Cove **8 km return**

Trailhead • Parking lot at the end of Maligne Lake Road.

Campground • (12) Hidden Cove

Hidden Cove is a paddle-in campground designed to provide an introductory paddle and camping opportunity for beginner canoeists and kayakers.



Hidden Cove

Three-Day/Two-Night Trips

Skyline **44 km through hike; elevation gain/loss from Maligne Lake: 1595 m/-2123 m; maximum elevation: 2534 m**

Trailhead • Parking lot at the end of Maligne Lake Road.

Campgrounds • **Night One:** (28) Little Shovel, (29) Snowbowl; **Night Two:** (30) Currator, (31) Tekarra

A classic Rockies trail that is mostly above treeline. The elevation allows for panoramic views that extend over much of the park, and encompass vast alpine meadows and windswept ridges.

Recommended direction is from Maligne Lake to Maligne Canyon (northwest).

Notes • Campfires are not permitted. Use of a stove is mandatory. Snow may hinder travel until mid-July. Recommended travel between July 1 and mid-September.

Tonquin Valley **43 km through hike; elevation gain/loss from Astoria Trail: 1437 m/-1635 m; maximum elevation: 2232 m**

Trailheads • Km 12.7 on Cavell Road (Astoria Trailhead) and km 6.3 on Marmot Basin Road (Portal Creek Trailhead).

Campgrounds • **Night One:** (44) Clitheroe, (46) Amethyst Lake, (45) Surprise Point; **Night Two:** (47) Maccarib, (48) Portal

The Tonquin Valley's scenery is unrivalled. This area is one of Canada's premiere alpine regions. The valley offers a unique combination of rugged peaks, ghostly ice and fertile lakes. There are several excellent day hikes in the area.

Recommended direction is from Astoria Trailhead to Portal Creek Trailhead.

Notes • Campfires are not permitted. Use of a stove is mandatory. Snow may hinder travel until July. Recommended travel between July 1 and September. Regular horse use and rain during July and August may make trails muddy and challenging for hikers.

Fryatt Valley to Brussels **35.4 km return; elevation gain/loss to Brussels: 302 m/-158 m; maximum elevation: 1677 m**

Trailhead • Km 2 of the Geraldine Road, off Highway 93A North just north of Athabasca Falls.

Campgrounds • (34) Lower Fryatt (bikes allowed), (35) Brussels

This alpine valley tucked into one of Jasper's great mountain ranges is a jewel that rewards all your effort. Camp at Brussels and explore the upper valley and beautiful Fryatt Lake on day two, or tackle the infamous headwall and the small hanging valley beyond.

Notes • Biking is permitted to Lower Fryatt Campground.

Four-Day/Three-Night Trips

Poboktan Creek and Jonas Pass **54 km one way; elevation gain/loss from Sunwapta Station: 1695 m/-2044 m; maximum elevation: 2492 m**

Trailhead • Sunwapta Station, 72 km south of the Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway.

Campgrounds • **Night one:** (26) Poboktan, (25) Waterfalls; **Night two:** (23) Jonas Cutoff; **Night three:** (16) Four Point, (15) Boulder Creek

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.

Notes • No fires at Jonas Cutoff (23). Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of Jonas Pass. Horse use is prohibited in Jonas Pass. Dogs are prohibited at Poboktan Creek, Jonas Pass and Poboktan Pass.

Brazeau Loop **80 km loop; elevation gain/loss over entire loop: 2145 m/-2145 m; maximum elevation: 2492 m**

Trailhead • 112 km South of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway at Nigel Creek.

Campgrounds • **Night one:** (16) Four Point, (19) Brazeau River, (21) Brazeau Lake; **Night two:** (22) John-John, (23) Jonas Cutoff; **Night three:** (16) Four Point, (15) Boulder Creek

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 winds through extensive alpine meadows and three passes.

Recommended direction is counter clockwise to Brazeau Lake, through Poboktan pass, and finally through Jonas Pass.

Notes • No fires at Jonas Cutoff (23). Snow levels may hinder travel until mid-July. Campsites are located at the beginning and end of Jonas Pass. Horse use is prohibited in Jonas Pass. Dogs are prohibited in Pokoktan Pass, Jonas Pass and Poboktan Creek.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

When and where to go

Early May to late June: Spring in the mountains means snow in the alpine, and sometimes muddy trails in the valleys. During this time of year, valley bottom hikes are the best option.

Early July to mid-September: Alpine trails are typically snow free at this time of year, although snow can persist much later in the summer in some places. This is a good time of year to explore alpine trails. Be aware of changing weather conditions. Freezing temperatures and snow are not uncommon above 1500 m.

Mid-September to late October: Autumn in the mountains brings shorter days, fewer bugs and cooler temperatures. The option to explore alpine trails still exists, but weather is unpredictable, nights are cold and snow is likely.

Backcountry camping permits

A backcountry camping permit is required for all overnight trips. It can be obtained online at parkscanada.ca/bookjasperbackcountry or by calling the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS) at 1-877-737-3783. A non-refundable reservation fee applies. Jasper backcountry bookings typically open up in late January. Visit parkscanada.ca/jasperbackcountry for more information.

Refunds and cancellations

If you cancel your backcountry reservation at least three days prior to your start date, you will receive a full refund of your camping fee less the original, non-refundable reservation fee and cancellation fee. If your plans change please take advantage of our refund policy and make your space available to others. To cancel, contact the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS) at 1-877-737-3783.

BACKCOUNTRY ETIQUETTE

Campfire

All backcountry travellers should carry a portable stove for cooking. Campfires 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.

Garbage

You are responsible for everything you take into the backcountry and this includes garbage. Do not dispose of garbage in pit toilets or bear lockers—it attracts animals.

Camping

Please camp only at the campsites indicated on your backcountry camping permit, and use the tent pads (where provided) to minimize impact on vegetation.

Food storage

To reduce your campsite's attractiveness to bears and other wildlife, all food, garbage, toiletries and cooking equipment must be hung from the food storage cables, or locked in food lockers provided at designated campsites. When no food storage options are available (see trail directory), bear-resistant containers are recommended to store food. Please clean food lockers after use.



Mccarib Pass

OTHER WAYS TO EXPLORE

Horseback riding

Park information centres have information about guided day or overnight horse trips in the park. For overnight trips, a backcountry permit and grazing permit is required. Please visit or call the Jasper Information Centre to obtain your permits. Visit parkscanada.ca/jasperbackcountry for more information.

Mountain biking

Mountain biking is allowed on select backcountry trails (see map). If planning an overnight trip, you must have a backcountry permit. Bikers can more easily startle wildlife, horses and other trail users. Please be respectful of all other users while biking in the backcountry.

Climbing, mountaineering and glacial travel

Mountaineering parties can apply at a Parks Canada information centre to bivouac in non-vegetated areas. Special restrictions may apply. Visit parksmountainsafety.ca for more information.

Random camping

Random camping is permitted in designated areas only. Visit or call an information centre for more information and to reserve. Special rules and conditions apply to random camping.



Maligne Lake

Weather

Rain or snow can fall any time of year in the mountains. Pack for all weather conditions and be aware that daily weather in the mountains often differs from the forecast. Always check the Environment Canada weather forecast at weather.gc.ca before embarking on your trip.

Self-serve backcountry guides

Visit parkscanada.ca/jasperbackcountryguides to view and download detailed guides on Jasper's backcountry trails. These guides provide information that goes well beyond what is offered in this brochure. **It is highly recommended you consult these guides before leaving for your trip.**

Some of the information you can find in these guides are:

- More suggested itineraries
- Detailed trail maps
- Distances between major trail junctions and campgrounds
- Elevation profiles for the trail
- Campground information
- Safety considerations specific to the trail
- In-depth backcountry etiquette and best practices
- Equipment checklists



Guides

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, including 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.

CHECKLIST

- Select a trip that 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, our self-service guides and topographical maps
- Obtain a backcountry permit online at parkscanada.ca/bookjasperbackcountry or by phone at 1-877-737-3783
- 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.
- Check the trailhead kiosk prior to your hike; it contains valuable information about closures and warnings

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

Remember, you are responsible for your own safety.

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 hazards visitors may encounter in the backcountry. Caution and self-reliance are essential.

Giardia lamblia is a water-borne parasite that can be present in any surface water. Boil, filter or chemically treat all water before drinking.

Ticks carrying Lyme disease may be present in the park. Visit health.alberta.ca for more information.

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

Park animals are wild and can be dangerous. Any animal can become aggressive if it feels threatened. Keep your distance; 30 m from most animals and 100 m from carnivores. Moose and elk can be especially dangerous in the fall during the rut, and when calves are young in the spring.

Both black and grizzly bears are of special concern to backcountry travellers. Carry bear spray with you in the backcountry and note that it is safer to travel in groups of three or more. Learn more by visiting a parks information centre or parkscanada.ca/bears-and-people.

If travelling into the backcountry for extended periods of time, it is recommended to carry a personal locator such as a SPOT device or an inReach.

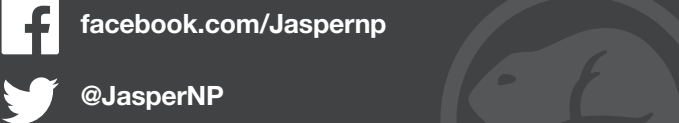
MORE INFORMATION

- **JASPER TOWNSITE INFORMATION CENTRE:** 780-852-6176
- **ICEFIELD CENTRE:** 780-852-6288, open mid-April to mid-October
- **WEBSITE:** parkscanada.gc.ca/jasper
- **JASPER TRAIL CONDITIONS REPORT:** parkscanada.ca/jaspertrails
- **WEATHER:** weather.gc.ca
- **AVALANCHE INFORMATION:** parksmountainsafety.ca
- **BEAR INFORMATION:** parkscanada.ca/bears-and-people
- **MAPS AND GUIDE BOOKS:** Friends of Jasper National Park at 780-852-4767 or www.friendsofjasper.com

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Call 911 or, if using a satellite phone, call the park dispatch office at (780) 852-3100. Cell phone reception is unreliable.

FOLLOW US ON:



Campground	Coordinates ZONE 11		User Type	# of Tent Pads	Toilet Type	Food Storage	Fires Allowed	Dogs Allowed
	Easting UTM	Northing UTM						
Athabasca River								
11 Athabasca Island	427733	5879954	👤	2	Privy	Lockers	🔥	🐕
Maligne Lake								
12 Hidden Cove	458351	5839334	👤	4	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
13 Fisherman's Bay	465958	5833854	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
14 Coronet Creek	471337	5827442	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
Brazeau								
15 Boulder Creek	492962	5790100	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
16 Four Point	494770	5792240	👤	8	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
19 Brazeau River	499608	5804813	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
21 Brazeau Lake	497590	5805604	👤	8	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
22 John-John	491965	5803508	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
23 Jonas Cutoff	485891	5805050	👤	8	Barrel	Cable	🔥	🐕
25 Waterfalls	479517	5810723	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
26 Poboktan	476187	5813156	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
Skyline								
27 Evelyn Creek	452481	5843006	👤	4	Privy	Lockers	🔥	🐕
28 Little Shovel	450945	5842879	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
29 Snowbowl	447486	5844389	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
30 Curator	442160	5848882	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
31 Tekarra	437972	5855684	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
32 Signal	433941	5858434	👤	4	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
33 Watchtower	444843	5851566	👤	4	Barrel	Cable	🔥	🐕
Fryatt Valley								
34 Lower Fryatt	444505	5825366	👤	4	Privy	Lockers	🔥	🐕
35 Brussels	441868	5820614	👤	8	Barrel	Cable	🔥	🐕
36 Headwall	440486	5818059	👤	4	Barrel	Cable	🔥	🐕
Geraldine Lakes								
37 Second Geraldine Lake	435994	5826817	👤	4	Barrel	Cable	🔥	🐕
Jaques Lake								
38 Jaques Lake	449874	5865109	👤	8	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
Saturday Night Lake								
39 Saturday Night Lake	420720	5860925	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
40 Minnow Lake	417672	5860555	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
Tonquin Valley								
42 Astoria	422681	5837524	👤	4	Privy	Lockers	🔥	🐕
43 Switchback	418802	5837175	👤	8	Privy	Lockers	🔥	🐕
44 Clitheroe	416199	5838929	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
45 Surprise Point	415545	5837389	👤	4	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
46 Amethyst	414457	5840086	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
47 Maccarib	414561	5842975	👤	8	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
48 Portal	421730	5843293	👤	4	Barrel	Lockers	🔥	🐕
Fortress Lake								
49 Big Bend	455753	5814286	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
50 Athabasca Crossing	455310	5807841	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
Fiddle River								
51 Utopia	451970	5883747	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
52 Slide Creek	456952	5880414	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
54 Whitehorse	462424	5876790	👤	4	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
Athabasca Pass								
55 Whirlpool	432762	5831268	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
56 Tie Camp	429859	5828494	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
58 Middle Forks	427613	5822011	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
59 Scott Camp	424019	5814972	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
60 Kane Meadows	418614	5809695	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
61 Athabasca Pass	419003	5804471	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
North Boundary								
41 Celestine Lake	429335	5893692	👤	8	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
62 Shalebanks	420005	5899584	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
63 Seldom Inn	416098	5904980	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
65 Horseshoe	411954	5912951	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
66 Willow Creek	410612	5914645	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
68 Welbourne	400416	5911090	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
70 Blue Creek	391067	5910390	👤	-	Privy	Cable	🔥	🐕
72 Three Slides	380383	5905210	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
73 Oatmeal	371608	5905189	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
74 Byng	365296	5914411	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
75 Twintree	357430	5919640	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
76 Donaldson Creek	352417	5916365	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
77 Chown Creek	349209	5912358	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
80 Wolverine North	353440	5903140	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
81 Adolphus	358730	5894746	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
84 Little Heaven	396428	5917532	👤	-	Bar	-	🔥	🐕
85 Spruce Tree	388697	5922116	👤	-	Bar	-	🔥	🐕
86 Ancient Wall	382686	5915583	👤	-	Privy	-	🔥	🐕
87 Natural Arch	376081	5920440	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
South Boundary								
90 Rocky Forks	473484	5854938	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
92 Medicine Tent	480791	5851834	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
94 La Grace	486511	5846015	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
95 Cairn Pass	493151	5839715	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
96 Cairn River	502779	5834066	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
97 Southesk	509593	5833803	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕
98 Isaac Creek	506581	5823234	👤	-	Privy	Pole	🔥	🐕
99 Arete	506649	5813317	👤	-	Bar	Pole	🔥	🐕



WOODLAND CARIBOU

The woodland caribou found in Jasper are a threatened species. Less than 50 caribou are left in south Jasper.

What can you do to help woodland caribou?

- Stay on designated trails
- If you see a caribou give them space. Especially during calving (June – early July) and the rut (late September – early October)

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

Bring a carabiner

FOOD STORAGE

Lockers

Pole

Cable

TOILET TYPES

Barrel

Privy

Bar