

In the Shadow of the Great Divide . . .

The Icefields Parkway

Banff and Jasper National Parks



The Icefields Parkway and Bow Lake



Mt. Chephren

"How familiar soever high snowy mountains may have been to us . . . yet on beholding the grand dividing ridge of the continent all that we have seen before disappears from the mind and is forgotten, by the height, the sharp and indescribably rugged peaks, the darkness of the rocks, the glaciers and eternal snow."

David Douglas, 1827.
(Douglas, the Scottish botanist for whom the Douglas Fir is named, crossed the Great Divide via Athabasca Pass in 1827.)

The Icefields Parkway travels in the shadow of the Great Divide. Following the headwaters of three major river systems among the rugged mountains of the Eastern Main Ranges, this route will take you through scenes and experiences you'll never forget. It is one of the world's greatest mountain highroads, named for the chain of huge icefields that roofs the Rockies.

Not long ago, only packtrains travelled here, and a fast trip from Jasper to Lake Louise took almost two weeks. Today's parkway lets everyone visit areas once seen by only the hardest tourists.

Planning Your Trip

The parkway is a route built for leisurely sightseeing rather than high-speed travel. It winds around mountains and climbs through high passes. You can travel the 230 km between Lake Louise and Jasper in a day, with time to stop at points of interest. Or, as many visitors do, you can spend several days along the parkway, staying in campgrounds and exploring inviting side valleys on foot or horseback. No matter how long you spend, there will always be more to see.

Because the Icefields Parkway is not a through-road like the Trans-Canada, all vehicles travelling it must have a national park motor vehicle licence.

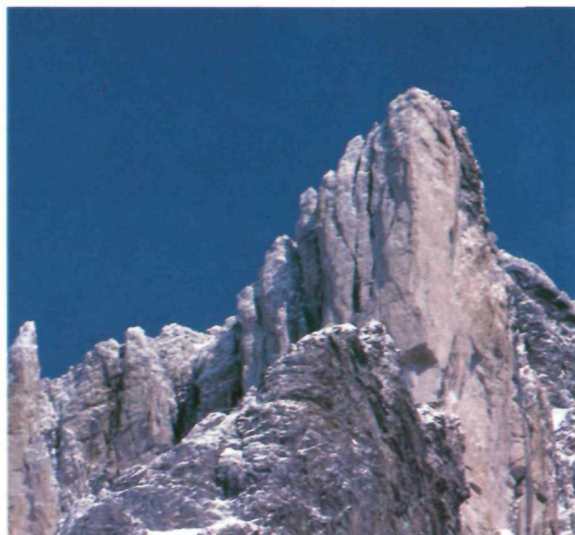


Driving by Mt. Coleman

Gas, accommodation and other services are available in only a few places along the route. Check the map on the reverse side for the services you'll need and plan your trip accordingly. Be prepared for varied weather conditions; snow can fall in the highest passes along the parkway even in midsummer.

The Land

The mountains along the parkway look different than those farther east or west. These are the Eastern Main Ranges — the highest, most rugged mountains in the Canadian Rockies. They form the Great Divide, the backbone of the continent, where mighty rivers begin in icefields and glaciers. These rivers and the glaciers that feed them etch uplifted sheets of rock, carving today's mountains.



Quartz sandstone cliffs on Mt. Wilson

The Life

As the parkway climbs high passes and plunges into valleys, you will pass through three different life zones and will have a good chance of seeing wildlife, especially at dawn and dusk. The map on the reverse side indicates some good places to see moose, wapiti, goats, and sheep. Black bears and deer are also seen from time to time. Please slow down and drive with extra care when you see animals beside the road.

Some of these animals may appear tame, but they can all be dangerous. In order to keep visitors safe and the birds and animals wild and free, it is illegal to entice, touch, or feed wildlife in a national park.



Moose

The Past

In the early 1800s, native people and fur traders used parts of this route to cross the mountain barrier. Later, surveyors, mountaineers and the hardest tour-



Jimmy Simpson, packer, ca. 1907. Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Canadian Rockies.

ists explored these valleys. The first Banff-Jasper road was built as a relief-work project during the depression years of the '30s; the present Icefields Parkway was completed in the early '60s.

Place names along the parkway recall the different groups of people that have visited the area. Some names, such as Sunwapta (turbulent water), are taken from native languages. Some commemorate fur traders

(Hardisty), mountaineers (Stutfield), explorers (Hector) or packers (Peyto). Others, such as Tangle Ridge, Cirque Lake and the Weeping Wall, are simply descriptive.

Stops of Interest

Bow Summit

The highest point on the parkway is Bow Summit, 2088 m above sea level and 40 km north of Lake Louise. Here, the road crosses alpine meadows near the source of the Bow River before dropping into the Mistaya valley.

You can climb even higher by following the short access road to the Bow Summit-Peyto viewpoint area. You will find hiking trails leading to a high viewpoint overlooking blue-green Peyto Lake, and, in July and August, an astonishing array of alpine flowers.

Saskatchewan River Crossing

Saskatchewan River Crossing, site of the old horse ford across the North Saskatchewan, is close to the junction of three rivers. One of these, the Howse, was the route used in 1807 by fur trader and explorer David Thompson to cross the Great Divide. Today's David Thompson Highway leads east from the Crossing to the city of Red Deer, 261 km away. If you take that route out of the mountains, plan a stop at Rocky Mountain House, a national historic park, where more can be learned about the days of the fur trade.

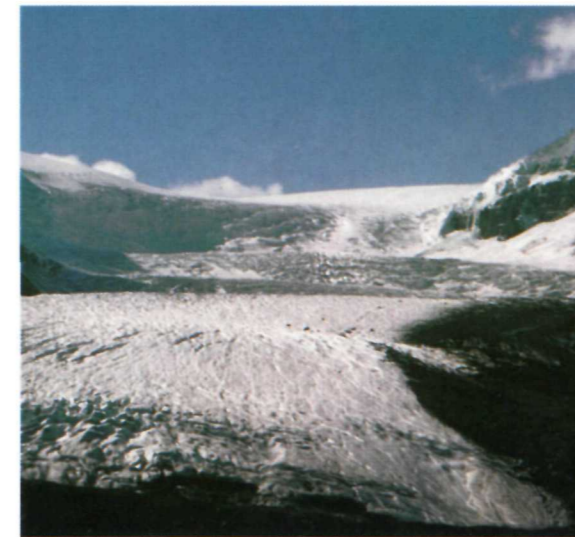


View of Saskatchewan Glacier from Parker Ridge

Columbia Icefield Area

The largest of the chain of icefields along the Great Divide is the Columbia Icefield. This 325 km² accumulation of ice feeds eight large glaciers, three of which — the Athabasca, the Dome, and the Stutfield — can be seen from the parkway. Better yet, you can actually touch a glacier. A short side trip from the parkway takes you to the toe of the Athabasca Glacier.

A visit to the Columbia Icefield Centre (easily visible beside the parkway) will help you discover what there is to see and do in the area.



The Athabasca Glacier

Sunwapta Falls

South of Jasper (55 km), you may drive a 0.4 km access road to Sunwapta Falls. A footbridge affords thrilling views into a deep, right-angled canyon where the Sunwapta River turns a corner to plunge toward the Athabasca River.

A short hiking trail follows the riverbank to more falls and rapids downstream.

Athabasca Falls

At Athabasca Falls, 32 km south of Jasper, a footbridge and trail skirt thundering falls and a steep-walled canyon.

Highway 93A, a section of the first Banff-Jasper road, provides an alternate route between Athabasca Falls and Jasper townsite. Some Jasper visitors use the northern portion of the parkway and 93A as a half-day loop drive.

Trail Access

Many trails lead from the Icefields Parkway to backcountry areas; trailheads are shown on the map overleaf. You may get information and backcountry use permits at park information centres.



Information and Park Interpretation

Throughout your trip along the Icefields Parkway, park staff will be happy to assist you. Park naturalists give evening programs and lead guided hikes throughout the summer, interpreting park features to visitors. Information staff at the Columbia Icefield Centre can provide you with maps, brochures and schedules for interpretive events to help you plan your activities. Roadside signs at viewpoints describe the landscape, life and history of Divide country.

Should you have any further questions or comments about your trip please write to:



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Jasper National Park
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Published by authority of
The Minister of the Environment
© Minister of Supply and
Services Canada 1990
QS-W033-000-EE-A12

Canada

**The Icefields Parkway
POINTS OF INTEREST**

Km from Trans-Canada Highway	Km from Jasper
230	0
Jasper Townsite. Information Centre. Services: RCMP, park wardens, gas, phones, accommodation and food.	
	2
Whistlers Campground. Turnoff for Skytram and hostel. Services (summer only): accommodation and food.	
226	4
Wapiti Campground. (Summer and Winter camping.)	
223	7
Junction with Highway 93A which provides access to Marmot Basin, Mt. Edith Cavell, Tonquin Valley trailheads, and Wabasso campground. Rejoins parkway at Athabasca Falls.	
220	10
Trailhead: Valley of Five Lakes. Look for wapiti.	
216	14
Trailhead: Wabasso Lake.	
205	25
Viewpoint: Whirlpool Valley. Mts. Hardisty, Kerkeslin, and Edith Cavell. Interpretive sign.	
202	28
Horseshoe Lake.	
199	31
Athabasca Falls. Picnic site. Viewpoints. Interpretive trail. Junction to Hwy. 93A. Nearby trailheads: Geraldine Lakes, Fryatt Valley.	
198	32
Park Warden Station: emergency aid. Hostel.	
195	35
Mt. Kerkeslin Campground.	
192	38
Viewpoint: Mts. Fryatt, Brussels, and Christie. Mountain goat mineral lick. Interpretive sign.	
189	41
Picnic site.	
180	50
Viewpoint: Athabasca Valley. Interpretive sign.	
179	51
Honeymoon Lake Campground.	
177	53
Road to parking area for Buck and Osprey Lakes.	
175	55
Sunwapta Falls junction, road to viewpoint: Sunwapta Falls, 15 minute walk to lower falls. Picnic site. Services (summer only): accommodation and food, gas.	
170	60
Picnic site. Bubbling springs.	
158	72
Park Warden Station: emergency aid. Trailhead: Poboktan Creek.	
155	75
Jonas Creek rock slide.	
153	77
Jonas Creek Campground.	
145	85
Mushroom and Diadem Peaks. Interpretive sign.	
144	86
Hostel.	
135	95
Viewpoint: Stutfield Glacier. Interpretive sign.	
132	98
Emergency telephone.	
131	99
Viewpoint: Tangle Falls. Interpretive sign. Watch for sheep!	
130	100
Viewpoint: Sunwapta Canyon. Mt. Kitchener. Interpretive sign.	
127	103
Icefield Centre. Information. Fishing licenses, backcountry use permits, voluntary safety registration. Interpretive exhibits. Services (summer only): accommodation, food, gas, emergency telephone.	
125	105
Columbia Icefield Campground.	
124	106
Wilcox Creek Campground.	
122	108
Boundary between Banff and Jasper National Parks. Sunwapta Pass.	
118	112
Hostel	
117	113
Trailhead: Parker Ridge, 3 km round trip.	
114	116
Trailhead: Nigel Pass.	
113.5	116.5
Viewpoint: Panther Falls. Short trail to base of falls.	
113	117
Viewpoint: North Saskatchewan River, Cirrus Mtn.	
112	118
Trailhead: Saskatchewan Glacier.	
111	119
Viewpoint: North Saskatchewan River, Cirrus Mtn.	
110	120
Viewpoint: Nigel Creek Canyon.	
105	125
Viewpoint: Weeping Wall.	
103	127
Cirrus Mtn. Campground.	
101	129
Trailhead: Alexandra Trail, Castleguard Meadows, Thompson Pass.	
93	137
Trailhead: Sunset Pass and Sunset Lookout.	
90	140
Viewpoint: Mts. Amery and Saskatchewan.	
88	142
Rampart Creek Campground Hostel.	
78	152
Trailhead: Glacier Lake.	
77	153
Junction with David Thompson Highway. Services: accommodation, food, gas, public telephones.	
76	154
Viewpoint: Howse and Mistaya River Valleys.	
74	156
Park Warden Station: emergency aid.	
71	159
Trailhead: Mistaya Canyon (15 minute walk), Sarbach Lookout, Howse Pass.	
57	173
Waterfowl Lake Campground. Trailhead: Chephren Lake, Cirque Lake.	
56	174
Viewpoint: Waterfowl Lakes, Mts. Chephren and Howse. Interpretive sign. Look for moose!	
48	182
Viewpoint: Snowbird Glacier	
40	190
Turnoff to Bow Summit area. Interpretive exhibits and Peyto Lake viewpoint. Trailhead: Peyto Lake.	
37	193
Viewpoint: Bow Glacier. Interpretive sign. Trailhead: Bow Glacier Falls. Turnoff for services: accommodation, food, emergency telephone.	
34	196
Viewpoint: Bow Lake. Picnic site.	
33	197
Viewpoint: Crowfoot Glacier. Interpretive sign. Trailhead: Helen and Katherine Lakes. Dolomite Pass.	
24	206
Mosquito Creek Campground. Hostel. Trailhead: Molar Pass.	
18	212
Trailhead: Hector Lake.	
16	214
Viewpoint: Hector Lake. Interpretive sign.	
3	227
Picnic site: Herbert Lake.	
0	230
Junction: Trans-Canada Highway and Icefields Parkway. Lake Louise: 2 km. (RCMP, park wardens, park information centre , gas, phones, accommodation and food). Banff: 59 km.	

Km from Trans-Canada Highway Km from Jasper

