

DAY HIKES IN JASPER NATIONAL PARK



All around you are the natural wonders of Jasper National Park. To explore some of its valleys and mountainsides, hike the trails described in this folder. Ranging from short, easy walks to longer uphill treks, these hikes all take a day or less. The trail descriptions include trail length, access and an outline of the terrain and features.

Overnight hikes are also available in the park. Before heading into the backcountry on overnight trips, ask for information and your park use permit at the trail office in Jasper townsite or at the Icefields Centre.

An exciting possibility on any hike is seeing some of the wildlife native to the park. Never forget that these animals are wild and can be dangerous if approached. Before setting out, take time to read the "You Are in Bear Country" folder available at most park offices and facilities.

ENJOY YOUR HIKE!

JASPER VICINITY

The following trails are all close to Jasper townsite. Trailheads can be reached either by walking or driving. The numbers of the trail descriptions correspond with numbers shown on yellow diamond-shaped markers posted along the trails. These markers will help you find your way, especially where trails fork or cross one another.

1 Old Fort Point

Length — 6.5 km return
Trailhead — To reach the trailhead, follow Highway 93A south of Highway 16. Turn onto the Lac Beauvert Road and follow it to the right-hand parking lot just beyond the bridge spanning the Athabasca River.

This short, moderately steep trail is ideal for hikers interested in both the human and natural history of the park.

From the parking lot, climb the staircase to a cairn commemorating David Thompson, one of the area's early explorers. About 20 m beyond the cairn, the trail forks. The branch to the left starts up concrete steps and continues up the open ridge to a high viewpoint. The trail then descends gradually to a junction. The left branch circles

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trail loops through the lake district of Pyramid Bench. Camping is allowed only at established primitive campsites at Saturday Night Lake, High Lakes and Minnow Lake. In season, trout fishing is possible in all the lakes except Cabin, which is the source of the townsite's water supply. A national parks fishing permit is required and may be obtained from park offices as well as some sporting goods stores in Jasper townsite.

From the parking lot opposite the town pool, the trail angles to the left across the steep slope. It then widens and leads to the Cabin Lake fire road and up to Cabin Lake. The trail skirts the north shoreline of the lake, then passes a series of swamps in the valley below before reaching the Saturday Night Lake trail junction at km 8.8. The path to the lake is a 0.5 km moderate climb.

The main trail continues on through a number of small hills and valleys interspersed with low boggy areas. At the High Lakes junction (km 13.4), a short path leads to the campsite at High Lakes. The main trail continues along the plateau and then descends quite steeply to the Minnow Lake junction at km 17.6. The lake is 0.8 km northwest of the junction.

The remainder of the trail follows a gentle downhill grade, passing Caledonia Lake at km 22.4, the junction to Hibernia Lake at km 24, and Marjorie Lake at km 24.8. Another 2.6 km brings you to the end of the trail beside the mobile home subdivision.

5 The Whistlers

Length — 7 km one way
Trailhead — Turn left at km 2.8 on the Whistlers Mountain Road and proceed to the parking lot.

This is an uphill hike that requires good physical condition and stamina. The trail climbs approximately 1200 m vertical, but the effort is well rewarded by the panoramic views of the Miette and Athabasca River Valleys from the summit. Along the way the route passes through the three major life zones of the park — montane forest in the valley bottoms, subalpine forest on the mid-slopes and, near the summit, alpine tundra. Each is characterized by its own plants and animals, which are well represented along the trail.

The trail begins with a series of long switchbacks bordered

around to the starting point, and the one to the right leads to the Valley of the Five Lakes.

2 Pyramid Lake

Length — 17.4 km
Trailheads — If you are on foot, you may start from the townsite at the parking lot opposite the swimming pool. As well, there are numerous access points along Pyramid Lake Road: the parking lot at Cottonwood Slough, the riding stables, Pyramid Lake Motel and the Pyramid Lake Island picnic area.

This is actually a number of trails joined together which wind over the Pyramid Bench, an escarpment above Jasper townsite. The proximity of this area to the townsite, as well as its many possible routes make it popular for both summer and winter exploration.

If you choose the starting point opposite the pool, the trail begins with a relatively steep climb to Pyramid Bench. On the bench, the terrain becomes gently rolling. The trail passes through moderately dense forest, crosses the Cabin Lake fire road and arrives at Cottonwood Slough. At this point, it crosses Pyramid Lake Road. It then crosses Cottonwood Creek and is joined by a trail on the left; the two trails separate after a short distance. The left branch leads to the riding stables.

Beyond the stables, the trail continues toward Pyramid Lake and is crossed or joined by a number of other trails along the way. It passes behind the Pyramid Lake Island picnic area.

Just past this picnic area, the trail turns to the right and begins a steady climb to the top of the hill. The views from this summit are superb and well worth the effort. The trail then drops and follows the edge of a draw to another junction from which trails lead back to any of the starting points.

3 Saturday Night Lake Circle

Length — 27.4 km loop
Trailheads — parking lot opposite the town pool, or at the far west end of town near the mobile home subdivision

Offering either a long day hike or an overnight trip, this

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from Medicine Lake some 16 km to the south. Several of these outlets can be seen along the lower portions of the trail. Avoid the slippery, sloping river bank.

To return to Old Fort Point by an alternate route (10.5 km), cross Maligne Road and the bridge. The trail crosses Signal Mountain fire road after about 1 km. About 1 km farther, keep right where a trail branches to the left. Another junction is encountered 2.5 km farther on. The right branch leads to Lake Annette. Staying to the left, the trail skirts above Jasper Park Lodge golf course and leads back to Old Fort Point.

If you have only a short time available, you may drive to Maligne Canyon parking lot and walk down a portion of the canyon trail. An exhibit and trailside signs introduce visitors to the story of the canyon and to the rest of Maligne Valley. For more information, you may wish to purchase a copy of the Parks Canada publication, "Maligne — Valley of the Wicked River".

8 Mina Lake — Riley Lake Loop

Length — 9 km
Trailhead — parking lot across from the town swimming pool

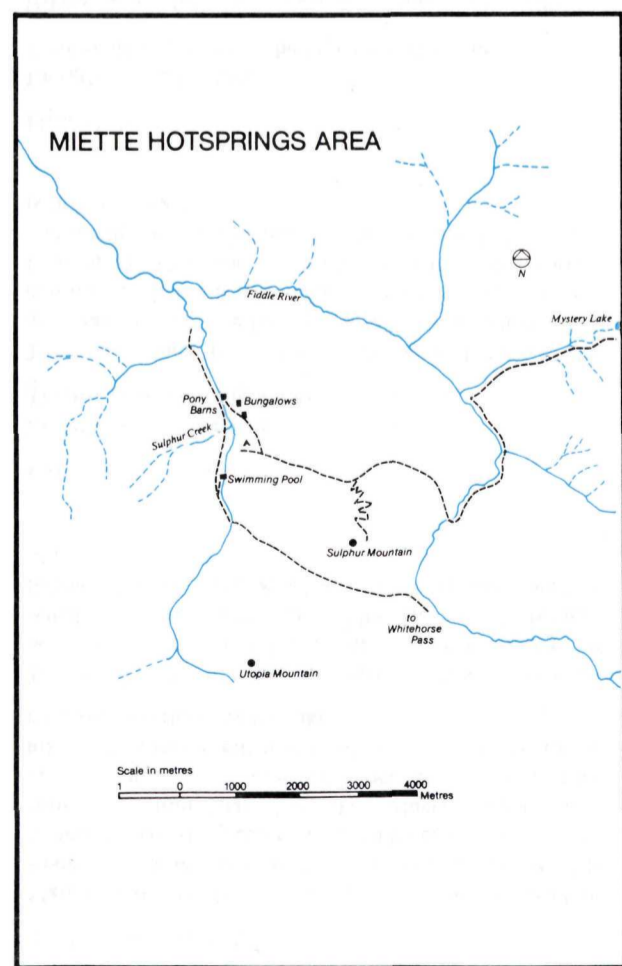
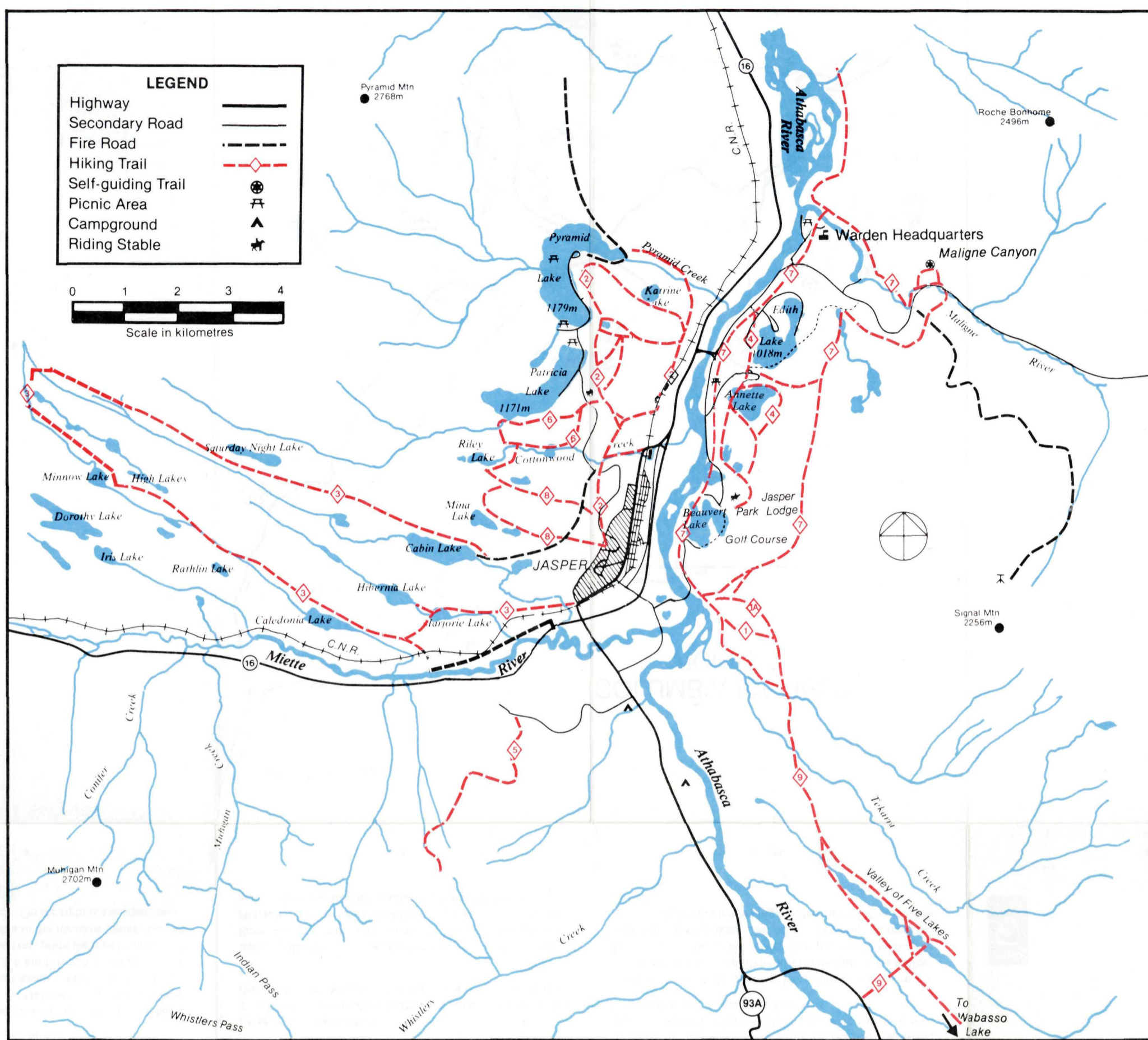
This loop trail offers a pleasant walk through a forest of lodgepole pine, trembling aspen, spruce, cottonwood and Douglas fir.

From the parking lot, the trail climbs to the left across a fairly steep hill. It then widens and, after a short distance, intersects Cabin Lake fire road. It continues across the road, to a large pond, and then to Mina Lake.

The trail follows the right side of the lake, winds through the forest, and at km 3.5 a spur trail leads 2.4 km down to the shore of Riley Lake. The main trail continues back to Cabin Lake fire road at km 7. A left turn onto this road takes you down to an intersection with trail #2 near the Pyramid Lake Road. Turn right to head back to the starting point.

9 Valley of the Five Lakes — Wabasso Lake

Length — 11.2 km to parking lot at km 9.6 on the Icefields Parkway, or 19.3 km to parking lot at km 15 on the Icefields Parkway
Trailhead — Old Fort Point parking lot



This trail offers a variety of features — rolling hills, forests, meadows, marshes, streams and lakes. A careful observer will detect signs of mule deer, elk, beaver, bear, coyote and squirrels. The lakes are home to brook and rainbow trout. Fishing is permitted, as outlined in the national park angling regulations. Occasionally, the lakes are warm enough for swimming.

From the parking lot, trail #1A leads to a junction. Follow the left branch to the lakes. Before reaching the lakes, the trail divides again. The branch to the left leads through the Valley of the Five Lakes, while the one to the right proceeds directly toward Wabasso Lake. As the trail leaves the lakes, it climbs on a low ridge. Descending on the other side, it crosses Wabasso Lake trail and a small valley where considerable evidence of beaver activity exists.

MIETTE HOTSPRINGS AREA

Although best known for the sulphur hot springs and swimming pool, the Miette area offers enough activities to fill a day. From Jasper townsite, travel 42 km northeast via Highway 16 to Pocahontas. Another 17 km drive up to Miette Hot Springs road will bring you to one of the more popular points of interest in Jasper National Park.

Fiddle River Trail

Length — 5.5 km
Trailhead — Go through the swimming pool building and follow the boardwalk past the springs.

After about 100 m, the boardwalk joins the trail from the

riding stables. The trail continues up Sulphur Creek for a short distance, then crosses the creek and climbs through a lodgepole pine and spruce forest to a small subalpine meadow.

A descent with some steep sections and switchbacks leads to Fiddle River. The horse trail crosses the river, but you may continue upstream without crossing, although the trail is less distinct. The trail continues 19 km to Whitehorse Pass.

Mystery Lake Trail

Length — 10.5 km one way
Trailhead — Look for a narrow dirt road at the top of the campground. Follow this road for about 0.5 km to the start of the trail.

The trail climbs fairly steeply for 1.5 km for an elevation gain of 304 m and then descends to the Fiddle River. The high point of the trail offers some excellent views of the Miette area.

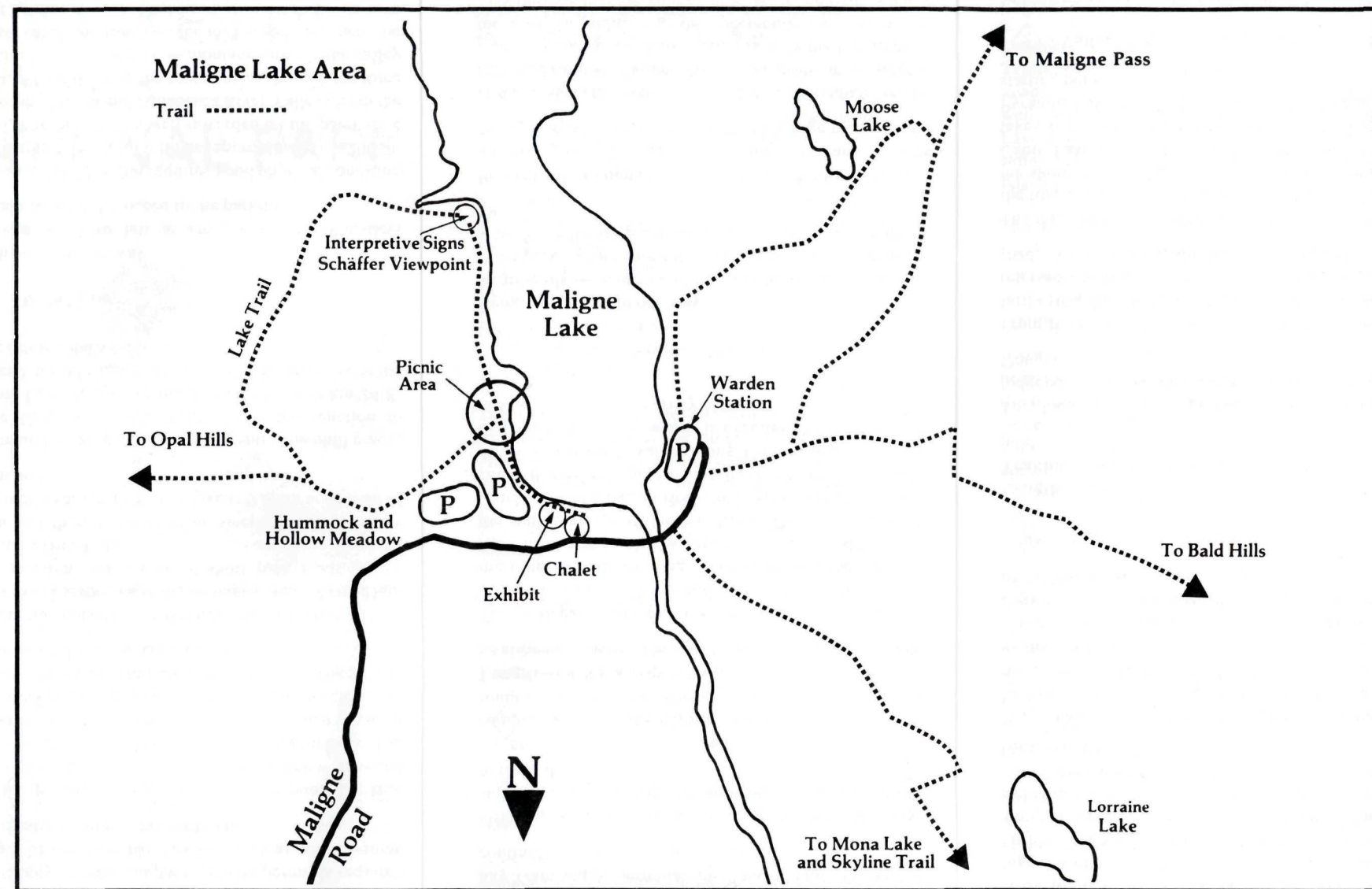
The trail continues another 6.2 km (11 km total from campground) to Mystery Lake, but unbridged river crossings make foot travel difficult and sometimes impossible, except during low water.

Sulphur Skyline Trail

Length — 4.8 km one way
Trailhead — Follow Mystery Lake trail for about 2.5 km to its high point. Nearby, Sulphur Skyline trail branches off to the right.

The trail switchbacks up Sulphur Mountain for an elevation gain of 684 m. A walk along the ridgetop to the 2062 m summit passes through the subalpine and alpine life zones. Early summer is the best time to see native wild flowers in bloom.

From the summit, Utopia Mountain (2577 m) dominates the view to the south while Ashlar Ridge can be seen in the northwest. Bighorn sheep may often be observed in this area.



MALIGNE LAKE AREA

Maligne Lake, the largest glacier-fed lake in the Canadian Rockies, is a 48 km drive from Jasper townsite. World-famous Spirit Island can be reached by canoe, rowboat or commercial tour boat. The lake's elusive rainbow and brook trout attract novice and expert anglers alike. Day hikers can explore either the valley bottom or the alpine meadows overlooking the lake.

To reach the lake from Jasper townsite, follow Highway 16 northeast for about 3 km to the bridge spanning the Athabasca River on the right. After crossing the bridge, follow Maligne Lake Road 45 km to the north end of Maligne Lake.

Lake Trail (east side)

Length — 3.2 km return
Trailhead — at Maligne Lake Chalet

This trail is ideal for an easy, short walk. It follows the northeast shore of the lake, passing by the boathouse and continuing on to a display at a viewpoint on the first bay. Leaving the shoreline, the path passes through a spruce and subalpine fir forest and loops back to the chalet. There is little elevation gain.

Opal Hills

Length — 8.2 km loop
Trailhead — far end of the highest parking lot

Hikers work for their reward on this trail! With an elevation gain of 305 m, the trail leads to a spectacular view of Maligne Lake. During mid-summer, subalpine meadows are full of a variety of wild flowers.

A short distance from the parking lot, the trail reaches a large meadow containing several cone-shaped hills. These glacial deposits are called kames. From there, the trail climbs steeply for about 1.6 km through a lodgepole pine forest to a junction. Beyond this point the trail forms a loop that circles behind two hills in the meadow above. On the left is a gentler uphill grade. On the right is a steeper, more direct route to the meadows.

Mona and Lorraine Lakes

Length — 2 km one way
Trailhead — above the parking lot on the west side of Maligne Lake

This is a pleasant, easy hike through a lodgepole pine forest to two small kettle lakes.

The trail climbs gently through the forest to km 2 where a short spur leads to Lorraine Lake on the left. If you continue for a short distance along the main trail, you will meet another spur trail that leads down to Mona on the right.

If you wish to travel farther, continue another 2.4 km to Evelyn Creek. Beyond the creek, the trail switchbacks up to tree line and Little Shovel Pass at km 10.3

Bald Hills

Length — 5.2 km one way
Trailhead — just above the northwest shore parking area

Some uphill effort is required here. The summit was once the site of a fire lookout station and, therefore, offers good views of Maligne Valley, the Opal Hills, Maligne Range and Queen Elizabeth Ranges.

Follow the gravel fire road as it winds its way through a lodgepole pine forest. At km 3.2, there is a trail junction to the left offering a steep alternative to the road route. The road climbs steadily up to the site where the lookout station was located. The alpine meadows at the top come alive with a variety of wild flowers in mid-summer.

Moose Lake

Length — 2.6 km return
Trailhead — The trail starts about 200 m up the Bald Hills fire road at the Maligne Pass trail sign to the left of the road.

Because this trail stays within the forested valley bottom, there are few mountain views. It has its own distinct character, enhanced by wild flowers during early summer and, as its name implies, a chance of spotting moose.

After a short section over relatively level terrain, take a left turn off the main trail to head to Moose Lake. From Moose Lake the trail follows gentle downhill terrain to Maligne Lake and then to the parking lot.

Lake Trail (west side)

Length — about 1 km
Trailhead — at the northwest parking area

This trail has no specific destination, but it permits exploration of the northwest shore and the beaches of Maligne Lake. From its starting point, the trail leads down to the lake and past the warden station. Farther along, it becomes indistinct and is often crossed by other trails. It is important to maintain a good reference point, such as the lake, before setting off to explore any of these.

MOUNT EDITH CAVELL AREA

This area offers the visitor a close look at an old subalpine forest, new growth where a glacier recently retreated from the valley, alpine meadows, glaciers and, above all, Mount Edith Cavell itself.

From Jasper townsite, drive 7 km south along the Icefields Parkway, then 5 km along Highway 93 A to the Mount Edith Cavell Road. From there a 14 km drive takes you to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Path of the Glacier Trail

Length — 1.6 km
Trailhead — the parking lot at the upper end of Mount Edith Cavell Road

This short loop trail passes through a portion of the upper valley of Cavell Creek that was covered with glacial ice as recently as the turn of the century. Along the way a series of signs tell the story of how the glacier melted away, leaving exposed a barren landscape, which is only now being colonized by plants and animals.

From the end of the parking lot a stairway leads to the paved trail that goes uphill parallel to the side of the valley. Just beyond the point where the pavement ends is a viewpoint overlooking the valley bottom. Across the valley, Angel Glacier sits high on the side of Mount Edith Cavell.

From the viewpoint the trail drops into the valley bottom and returns to the parking lot. Because of the danger of avalanching snow and falling rock, hikers should not cross the creek and venture close to the other side of the valley or climb on the mountainside itself.

Cavell Meadows

Length — 8.0 km return
Trailhead — same as Path of the Glacier trail

With time and energy you may take this trail from the upper limits of the subalpine forest into the meadows at treeline and the alpine region beyond. Along the way there are spectacular views of Angel Glacier. The upper section of the trail may still be under snow in early summer, but by mid-July a spectacular display of mountain wild flowers may be seen there. You may also see marmot, pika and ptarmigan along this trail.

Follow Path of the Glacier trail and watch for a sign just beyond the end of the pavement that indicates the route branching to the left which leads to the meadows. This trail goes over a large ridge of boulders and then parallels it for a short distance before switchbacking up through the forest. As the trail reaches treeline, the terrain levels out. At a viewpoint across the valley from the glacier, stop to catch your breath while you listen and watch for avalanches on Mount Edith Cavell. From there follow a loop through the meadows and return to the parking lot by the same trail.

Published by authority of
 the Minister of the Environment
 Minister of Supply and
 Services Canada 1985
 QS-W068-000-EE-A5



Canada

COLUMBIA ICEFIELD VICINITY

Rugged mountain terrain and alpine vegetation make the area around Columbia Icefield especially satisfying for hikers. The day hikes that follow cover the southern portion of Jasper National Park and the northern region of Banff National Park. For reference, all distances to trailheads are given from the Icefield Centre, 104 km south of Jasper townsite on the Icefields Parkway (Highway 93).

Wilcox Pass

Length — 6.5 km one way

Trailhead — The trail begins on the left side of the entrance road, just inside the gate to Wilcox Creek campground, 2.5 km from the Icefields Centre.

Please note — This trail usually remains wet until late July; hikers will find it most enjoyable after that time.

Seventy-five years ago, Athabasca Glacier still covered the bedrock where the Icefields Parkway now runs. Therefore, outfitters travelling between Banff and Jasper used Wilcox Pass to avoid this barrier.

The first section of the trail is relatively steep. Once in the pass, the trail becomes indistinct and you may roam at will through the alpine area. Here, during mid-summer, a variety of wild flowers may be seen. Bighorn sheep, moose, grizzly, eagles and ptarmigan may also be seen in the area. Clear views of Athabasca Glacier, Dome Glacier and a cirque on Mount Athabasca are only part of the hike's reward.

Most hikers retrace their steps after spending some time in the alpine meadows. However, it is possible to follow the historic route through the pass to a point on the Icefields Parkway near Tangle Falls. Turn toward the slope on your right as you drop down out of the pass. The trail becomes clearer near treeline at the base of this hill.

Parker Ridge

Length — 2.4 km one way

Trailhead — This trail begins 8.8 km south of the Icefields Centre. Look for the trail sign at the parking lot on the right side of the parkway as you travel south toward Lake Louise.

For an excellent view of Saskatchewan Glacier, follow the well defined trail as it switchbacks up to the top of the ridge. The total elevation gain is 275 m. During mid-summer, a variety of wild flowers bloom in the alpine meadows, which are also range for mountain goats.

Please follow the established pathway; shortcutting the trail results in irreparable damage to delicate alpine vegetation and can lead to erosion of the thin soil cover.

Nigel Pass

Length — 6.1 km one way

Trailhead — To reach the trailhead, travel 12 km south from the Icefields Centre to Camp Parker access road which is on the left side of the parkway. Park on this road, but please do not block the gate.

This trail goes through subalpine meadows, offering views of Mount Athabasca, Parker Ridge, Nigel Peak and Mount Saskatchewan.

After a short walk along the road, the trail exits on the right and leads gently down toward Nigel Creek. From there the trail passes through subalpine forest which gradually opens out into meadows. The final kilometre to the pass has a total elevation gain of 275 m.

An optional 0.3 km walk farther along the trail leads to the south fork of Brazeau River and a view into Brazeau Valley.

Panther Falls

Length — 0.8 km one way

Trailhead — 12.9 km south of the Icefields Centre at the parking lot on the left side of the parkway

From the lower corner of the parking lot, there is an excellent view of Bridal Veil Falls across the valley. A short downhill walk leads to Nigel Creek Canyon and thundering Panther Falls. An alternative route from the upper corner of the parking lot provides a high overlook of the canyon and falls.

Because neither viewpoint is fenced, exercise extreme caution when wandering.

North Saskatchewan Headwaters

Length — 1.2 km one way

Trailhead — on the right side at the big bend in the highway, 16 km south of the Icefields Centre

The starting point for the North Saskatchewan River's eastern journey to Hudson Bay is the focal point of this walk.

The trail starts at the edge of the forest across the gravel flats. It climbs about 1 km along the canyon to a viewpoint. The canyon drops 12 m below the trail allowing a view of unusual rock formations created by the pounding action of rushing water.

Saskatchewan Glacier

Length — 8 km one way

Trailhead — the old concrete bridge, 16.8 km south of the Icefields Centre on the south side of the parkway, just past the big bend in the highway.

From beside the bridge, you may see the entire North Saskatchewan River disappear into a 50 m gorge carved into Devonian rock.

Cross the old concrete bridge on foot and take the trail through the trees to the right; do not follow the gravel road. After a 1.6 km walk, the trail joins an old fire road continuing up the hill and then crosses some outwash flats, passing an old cabin along the way. The trail continues up the south side of the Saskatchewan River along the gravel flats for approximately 6 km to the toe of the glacier.

Beauty Creek — Stanley Falls

Length — 3.2 km one way

Trailhead — 15.2 km north of the Icefields Centre

Travelling past the Stutfield Glacier viewpoint toward Jasper, look for a dike and culvert on the right side of the parkway. Walk along the dike, to the old Banff-Jasper Highway and turn to the right. Near the remains of the old bridge, the trail continues as a forested walk along a deep canyon, passing seven other waterfalls before reaching Stanley Falls.

