

# JASPER NATIONAL PARK DAY HIKING GUIDE



Elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats and caribou must have established their own pathways through Jasper National Park long before humans arrived in the Canadian Rockies about 11 000 years ago. Indigenous peoples, followed by explorers, fur-company employees, railway surveyors and settlers discovered and used these hoofed-animal trails. Since the park was established in 1907, its natural trail network has been expanded and maintained for the benefit of everyone wanting to experience Jasper's wilderness. Whether you are strolling along the shores of Maligne Lake or hiking all day in the alpine, this guide will help you plan a trip that is safe, exciting and low impact. While we aim to achieve high standards, inclement mountain weather and events can considerably change trail conditions instantly.

The best way to discover the park is to take a day and explore each of its 5 major regions: 1 Around Town, 2 Maligne Valley, 3 Edith Cavell and 93A, 4 Miette Hot Springs, and 5 the Icefields Parkway. Each of them contains very unique terrain, waterways, wilderness and facilities.

- Easy
- Moderate
- ◆ Difficult

Note: Distances given in the trail descriptions are approximate. Times given are on-trail times for hikers.

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## Maligne Lake

At Maligne Lake, you can walk the lakeshore, enjoy a forest trail or hike to the top of an easy peak.

**Moose Lake Loop** ● 20  
2.7 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 59 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: The parking lot at the end of the Maligne Lake Road, starting at the Bald Hills Kiosk

This trail stays in the woods, but the landscape is fascinating with little hills and hollows among the overgrown debris of a huge landslide. Thousands of years ago, half a billion cubic metres of rock fell from the ridge on the other side of Maligne Lake, blocking the valley and enlarging the lake to its present size.

**Mary Schäffer Loop** ● 21  
3.2 km loop; no elevation gain; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: Turn in at the first parking lot at Maligne Lake. Take any path down to the shore and follow the paved trail left

This trail is an easy stroll. Passing Curly Phillip's historic boathouse, the trail reaches a viewpoint that features a set of interpretive panels. Leaving the shoreline, the trail passes through lichen-rich stands of pine, spruce and fragrant subalpine fir as it loops back to the parking lot.

**Lorraine Lake and Mona Lake** ● 100  
5.2 km return; elevation gain/loss: 80 m; 2-3 hours  
Trailhead: The parking lot at the end of the Maligne Lake Road, starting at the Skyline Kiosk

The trail climbs gently through a lodgepole pine forest. Both these lakes lie in hollows in landslide debris (see #20, Moose Lake Loop). If you are after a longer walk, continue on to Little Shovel Pass (20.6 km return; 548 m elevation gain).

## Bald Hills

10.4 km return; elevation gain/loss: 500 m; 4-6 hours  
Trailhead: The parking lot at the end of the Maligne Lake Road

This moderately steep trail travels along the old fire road up to treeline beside an alpine heather meadow. There are great views of the mountains and Maligne Lake.

**Opal Hills Loop** ◆ 23  
8.2 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 460 m; 4-6 hours  
Trailhead: The trail begins at the northeast corner of the farthest of the three lots to the left of the chalet

Hiking one of the steepest trails in Jasper rewards you with an alpine flower meadow and mountain vistas. This trail often has warnings or is closed during July and early August for bear activity.



## Edith Cavell Area and Highway 93A

The Cavell area offers fragrant subalpine forest, new growth where a glacier recently retreated from the valley, flowery alpine meadows and spectacular views of Mt. Edith Cavell and the Angel Glacier.

**Path of the Glacier Trail** ■ 41  
1.4 km return; elevation gain/loss: 70 m; 1 hour  
Trailhead: The end of the Cavell Road

This short, well-used trail takes you toward the great north face of Mt. Edith Cavell, across a rocky landscape recently covered with glacial ice.

**Cavell Meadows Trail** ■ 42  
6 to 7 km return; elevation gain/loss: 500 m; 3-5 hours  
Trailhead: The end of the Cavell Road

Take this moderately steep but well-graded trail through upper-subalpine forest, treeline vegetation and the alpine region beyond. Summer opening of the Cavell Meadows Trail may be delayed until conditions are dry enough to prevent trail and vegetation damage (usually around mid-July).

**Moab Lake** ● 120  
1 km return; elevation gain/loss: 100 m; 1 hour  
Trailhead: At Moab Lake Road parking lot

Take a short 500 m stroll down to a quiet, pretty lake.



## Icefields Parkway

For these hikes, travel south from Jasper townsite along Highway 93, the Icefields Parkway. The Icefield Centre is 103 km from Jasper.

**Wilcox Pass** ■ 50  
2.4 km return to the first viewpoint; 1 hour  
8 km return to the pass; elevation gain/loss: 390 m, 2-3 hours  
Trailhead: 3.1 km south of the Icefield Centre at the entrance of Wilcox Campground

Rise quickly above treeline to the expansive meadows of this glacier-carved landscape. Bighorn sheep are often seen in this area.

**Parker Ridge** ■ 51  
5.4 km return; elevation gain/loss: 250 m; 3 hours  
Trailhead: 9 km south of the Icefield Centre

After a series of switchbacks you'll be rewarded with dramatic views of the Saskatchewan Glacier—headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River.

**Nigel Pass** ■ 53  
14.4 km return; elevation gain/loss: 365 m; 5 hours  
Trailhead: 13 km south of the Icefield Centre

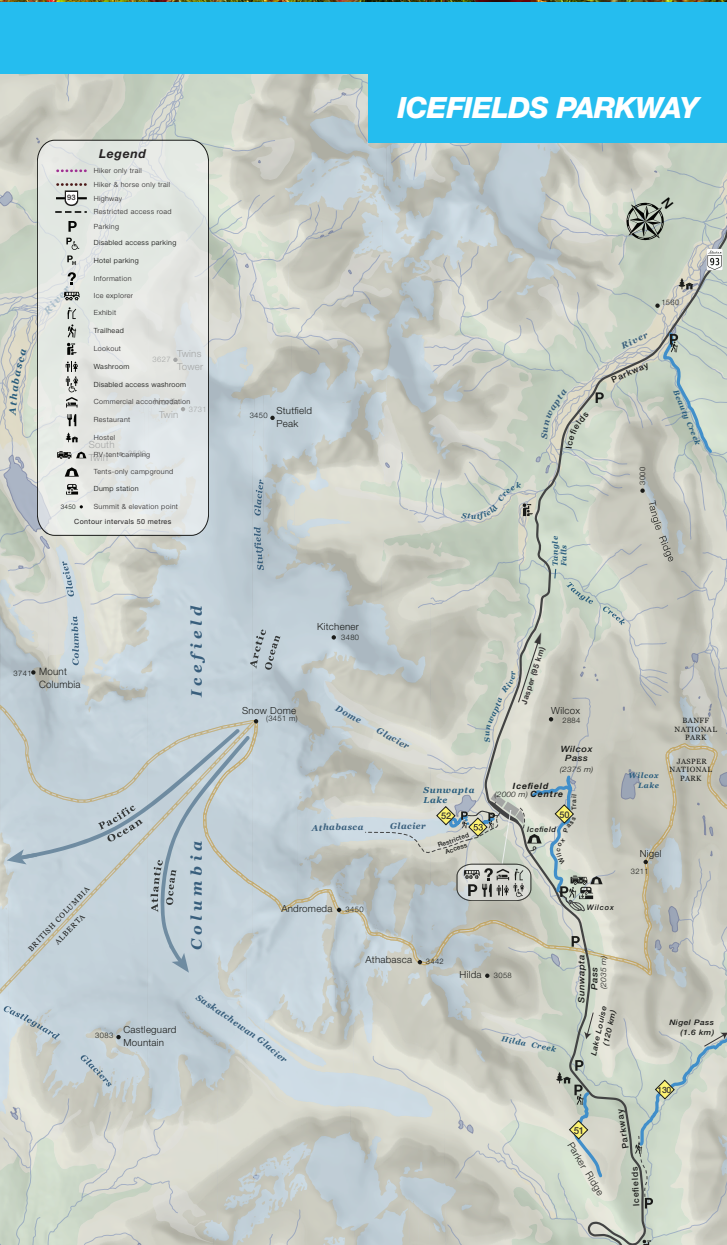
A consistent and gentle grade ensures that it doesn't take long to reach treeline as you head towards the wide-open scenery of the Banff-Jasper park boundary.

**Forefield Trail** ■ 53  
3.6 km return; minimal elevation gain; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: Directly across from the Icefield Centre

Cross the moraines and glacial debris that the Athabasca Glacier has left behind.

**Toe of the Athabasca Glacier** ■ 52  
1.8 km return; elevation gain/loss: 60 m; 1 hour  
Trailhead: Across from the Icefield Centre, at end of Toe of Glacier Road

Once across the bridge, you're walking on glacially smoothed limestone surfaces that were under the ice in the 1950s. The upper loop provides great views of the toe of the glacier and surrounding features.



## Miette Hot Springs Area

If you like to hike in the park's high country, you normally have to wait until mid-June for the snow to go—except in the Miette Hot Springs area, where the trails are usually clear by late May.

**Pocahontas Mine Trail** ● 31  
Lower loop: 800 m, 20 minutes  
Upper Loop: 1.7 km, 45 minutes  
Step back in time as you stroll through the old Pocahontas Mine site.

**Jasper House Trail** ● 33  
700 m return, 20 minutes

A short walk to a viewpoint looking across the Athabasca River towards the Jasper House National Historic Site.

**Source of the Springs** ■ 140  
1.2 km return; elevation gain/loss: 75 m; 30 min  
Trailhead: Miette Hot Springs parking lot

The trail begins with a walk through the ruins of the old pool building and continues up the creek to the hot springs themselves, where the sulphurous water comes out of the rock. Stroller friendly.

**Sulphur Skyline** ◆ 30  
8 km return; elevation gain/loss: 700 m; 4-6 hours  
Trailhead: Miette Hot Springs parking lot

If you would like to reach the summit of a peak, choose this challenging trail. At the summit, the views of the Fiddle River Valley, Utopia Mountain and Ashlar Ridge are spectacular.

**Caution:** This area is well-known for afternoon thunderstorms. Start early and stay below the treeline if the weather looks threatening.

## Plan Ahead and Prepare

**Remember, you are responsible for your own safety.**

- Before heading out, check trail and weather conditions on-line or at an information centre (see below).
- Travel with a friend or group. Choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Pack adequate food, water, clothing, first aid kit, bear spray and maps. Be prepared for emergencies and changes in weather.
- Tell somebody where you are going, when you will be back and who to call if you do not return.

**Stay on maintained trails**

- To prevent trail damage, stay on the trail and avoid shortcuts.

**Leave what you find and take what you bring**

- Pack out all garbage, including diapers and food waste.
- Dispose of human waste at least 70 m from any water source. Bury solids 15 cm deep. Pack out toilet paper.
- Artifacts like antlers, rocks, wildflowers, etc. are protected by law and must be left undisturbed.

**Water from lakes and streams**

Parasites can occur in any water body in the park and may contaminate the water supply. Boil your drinking water or purify it with a water filter or iodine tablets.

**Backcountry (780-852-6177)**

A backcountry camping permit is required for any overnight trip. Visit [pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry](http://pc.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry) for more information and to book a trip.

**Fishing** - A National Park fishing licence is required.

**Ask the Information Centre for additional guides on biking, backcountry and fishing.**

**How was your trip?**

Please send us your comments at [jnp.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:jnp.info@pc.gc.ca) and report trail conditions to park staff.



**Warning! Walking on the Athabasca Glacier is not safe.** As the Athabasca Glacier recedes, the ice at the toe has become hollow and is collapsing. The underlying water is extremely cold, fast moving and unpredictable. There is a serious risk of injury, hypothermia and drowning.

Over the years several people have died from falling into crevasses on the Athabasca Glacier. These deep, ice-cold cracks in the glacier lie hidden below a thin covering of snow that may collapse under a person's weight.

## Lower Sunwapta Falls

2.6 km return; elevation gain/loss: 87 m; 1 hour  
Trailhead: 54 km (30 min) south of Jasper on Hwy 93

Lower Sunwapta Falls is composed of three major waterfalls. The combination of solitude and open views to the surrounding mountains make this short hike very rewarding.

**Athabasca Falls** ■  
Day-use area  
Trailhead: 30 km (20 min) south of Jasper, junction of Hwy 93 and 93A

Feel the spray of the Athabasca River as it thunders into the canyon below. Stay on designated trails and behind railings. The rock beyond is slippery and dangerous.

## Miette Hot Springs

## Safety

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

**Keep wildlife wild, and yourself safer**

- Travel in groups and make noise to avoid surprise encounters.
- Do not feed, touch or approach wildlife. Stay at least 30 m away from most animals and 100 m away from bears.
- Carry bear spray and know how to use it.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times.

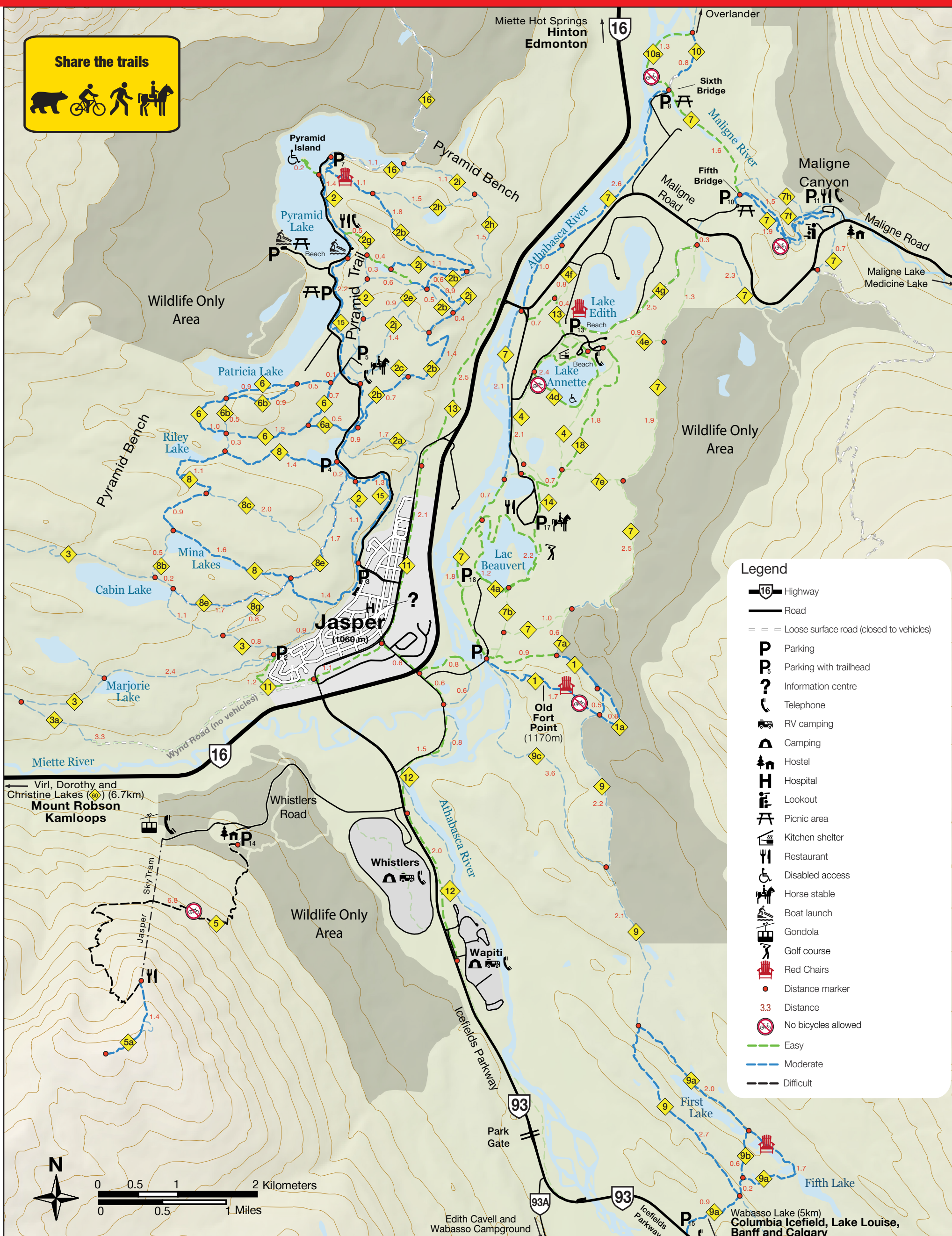
**Avalanches**  
Be careful when crossing snow slopes or when exposed to avalanche paths.

## More Information

JASPER TOWNSITE INFORMATION CENTRE: 780-852-6176  
ICEFIELD CENTRE: 780-852-6288, open late April to September  
WEBSITE: [pc.gc.ca/jasper](http://pc.gc.ca/jasper)  
JASPER TRAIL CONDITIONS REPORT: [pc.gc.ca/jaspertrails](http://pc.gc.ca/jaspertrails)  
WEATHER: [weather.gc.ca](http://weather.gc.ca)  
AVALANCHE INFORMATION: [pc.gc.ca/avalanche](http://pc.gc.ca/avalanche)  
BEAR INFORMATION: [pc.gc.ca/bears-and-people](http://pc.gc.ca/bears-and-people)  
MAPS AND GUIDE BOOKS: Friends of Jasper National Park at 780-852-4767 or [www.friendsofjasper.com](http://www.friendsofjasper.com)

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These easy multi-use trails provide opportunities to explore and access areas close to the town of Jasper.

**Jasper Discovery Trail**   
8.3 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 120 m; 2-3 hrs  
Trailhead: This loop around the town can be started nearly anywhere. Follow the bear symbol.  
The Jasper Discovery Trail is split into three sections. Explore one part or travel the whole 8.3 km. There's something to suit nearly everyone. Along the trail, look for signs, maps, markers and kiosks to guide your way.

**Wapiti Trail**   
4.7 km one way; no elevation gain; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: The junction of Connaught Drive and Highway 93A North/Hazel Avenue  
Use this trail to access Whistlers and Wapiti campgrounds on Highway 93.

**Bighorn**   
4.3 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 33 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: The north-east end of the Jasper Discovery Trail  
This trail provides access to lakes Annette and Edith via the Moberly Bridge on Highway 16. Use caution when crossing the highway.

**Red Squirrel**   
1 km one way; no elevation gain; ½ hour  
Trailhead: The junction of Hwy 16/93A  
This trail provides access to and from historic Old Fort Point and Jasper Park Lodge. Portions of the trail are adjacent to the beautiful Athabasca River.

These trails lie on the east side of the Athabasca River.

**Lake Annette Loop**   
2.4 km return; no elevation gain; 1-1.5 hours  
Trailhead: Lake Annette parking lot  
This accessible interpretive trail offers a paved loop along the shores of Lake Annette. Bicycles and horses are not permitted.

**Old Fort Point Loop**   
3.8 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 130 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: From Highway 93A North, follow the Old Fort Point/Lac Beauvert access road. Cross the bridge and park in the lot on the right.  
Old Fort Point is a prominent bedrock hill standing 130 m above the Athabasca River. The trail is steep in places, but it provides an excellent view of Jasper and its surroundings.

**Maligne Canyon**   
2.2 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 100 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: Fifth Bridge, 8 km east of Jasper via Highway 16 and the Maligne Road.  
The Maligne Canyon Trail provides the best views of Jasper's famous limestone gorge. Water gushes from springs along the way; interpretive signs explain how Maligne Canyon is connected to Medicine Lake by a cave system.

**The Overlander Trail**   
15.5 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 65 m; 5-6 hours  
Trailhead: Sixth Bridge, 7.5 km east of Jasper via Highway 16 and the Maligne Road.  
One of the park's signature trails, this route passes by an early valley homestead and through prime montane habitat.

West of Jasper the Pyramid Bench is bordered by the Miette River and more lakes.

**Saturday Night Lake Loop**   
4.2 km one way to Caledonia Lake; 2-3 hours or 24.6 km total loop; elevation gain/loss: 540 m; 7-9 hours  
Trailhead: Cabin Creek Drive near the south-west end of Jasper  
A gentle uphill walk takes you past Marjorie Lake to Caledonia Lake. From there the grade steepens toward Minnow Lake and the rest of the Saturday Night Lake Loop; a long day-hike, a half-day bike ride or an easy overnight backpack (Wilderness Pass required).

**Viri, Dorothy and Christine Lakes**   
8.6 km return; elevation gain/loss: 250 m; 4-6 hours  
Trailhead: 11.5 km west of Jasper off Highway 16  
Steep in places, the hike to beautiful Christine Lake is well worth the effort. Be careful crossing the railway tracks!

**The Whistlers Trail**   
6.8 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 1200 m; 3-5 hours up; 2-3 hours down  
Trailhead: 2.8 km up the Whistlers Road  
The effort required to hike this steep trail is well rewarded by panoramic views of the Miette and Athabasca valleys. Warning: there is avalanche danger when the upper part of this trail is snow-covered.

**The Whistlers Summit Trail**   
1.1 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 150 m, 1 hour  
Trailhead: Tramway upper terminal  
Venture up for a 360-degree view of the Athabasca Valley and surrounding mountains.

### Pyramid Bench

The trail routes described below are on the Pyramid Bench, a lake-dotted terrace adjacent to Jasper.

**Pyramid Trail**   
5.2 km one way; elevation gain/loss: 118 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: Jasper Activity Centre Parking Lot  
Use this connector as your gravel freeway to the Pyramid Bench trail system and Pyramid Lake.

**Cottonwood Creek Loop**   
5.1 km return; elevation gain/loss: 60 m; 1-2 hours  
Trailhead: Jasper Activity Centre Parking Lot  
This loop offers an exceptional views and a quiet forest.

**Overlook Loop**   
5.3 km return; elevation gain/loss: 75 m; 2 hours  
Trailhead: North end of Pyramid Lake Road  
This loop accesses one of the best views in the area. High above the town, the Miette, Maligne and Athabasca valleys welcome you.

**Mina - Riley Lakes Loop**   
9 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 172 m; 3-4 hours  
Trailhead: Jasper Activity Centre parking lot  
This popular trail takes you to Mina Lakes where you may see Barrow's goldeneye ducks and loons. Past Upper Mina Lake you can shortcut back to town via Trail 8c or continue on to small but scenic Riley Lake.

**Keep dogs on a leash**  
All domestic animals must be kept on leash at all times. Pets are not permitted in some areas. Look for notices on trailheads and info centres to find out where these restrictions are.

**YOUR FEES AT WORK**  
Over the next four years, Parks Canada is investing heavily to repair and upgrade aging infrastructure in our national parks and national historic sites.  
Visit the Jasper road construction map and list of infrastructure projects at [pc.gc.ca/jasperinfrastructure](http://pc.gc.ca/jasperinfrastructure) to see if any road or facility work might impact your trip.

### South of Jasper

**Valley of the Five Lakes**   
4.5 km loop; elevation gain/loss: 66 m; 2 hours  
Trailhead: 9 km south on Highway 93  
The five small lakes, each a different depth and thus a different hue of blue-green, are the highlights of this outing. Watch for beavers along the boardwalk across the Wabasso Creek wetlands.

**Wabasso Lake**   
6.4 km return; elevation gain/loss: 38 m; 2-3 hours  
Trailhead: 14.6 km south on Highway 93  
This trail crosses several low ridges, with a fine view of Mt. Edith Cavell from the last ridge. Wabasso Lake was created by beavers.

### Trail Signage

**Official trails** around the town of Jasper are marked with yellow diamonds.  
This extensive trail system is maintained by park staff.  
**Wildland trails** are marked differently. You are welcome to use these trails, but they are not maintained or shown on park maps.  
If a trail is not signed, it is not part of the official trail network.

