



BACKGROUND

Visitor Experience in the Maligne Valley



Photo : Caroline Roy

Who visits the Maligne Valley?

About one-fifth of visitors to Jasper National Park make the trip up the Maligne Valley - 360,000 visitors in the summer and 20,000 between November and April.

For the most part, visitors to the Maligne Valley are similar to the average park visitor:

- 68% are first-time visitors
- 53% are travelling with only one other person
- 12% are part of an organized tour
- Roughly two-thirds are 35 or older. Only 17% of visitors are 17 years or younger.
- Almost half are Canadian; 23% are European and 18 % are American



What attracts people to the Maligne Valley?

Most come to view its scenery, to participate in an activity or because it is an iconic destination.

How long do visitors stay in the Maligne Valley?

Given limited overnight accommodations in the valley, the vast majority of visitors (96%) are day trippers. The average length of a summer visit to Maligne Lake is 3.5 hours, with 85% of visitors spending between one and six hours in and around the lake.

What activities do visitors engage in?

The valley offers a wide range of facilities, activities and services for visitors. The majority of visitors are focused on sightseeing activities, such as driving the road, stopping for short walks or picnics, taking the boat cruise on Maligne Lake. The most popular stops along the road are Maligne Canyon, Medicine Lake and the north end of Maligne Lake.

Many visitors also come to the valley to participate in recreational activities. Popular summer activities include hiking, boating and fishing. Winter activities include skiing, snowshoeing and ice walks in the Maligne Canyon.





What facilities and services in the Maligne Valley support visitor activities?

The main components of the visitor offer include:

- Thirty-nine kilometers of Maligne Lake Road
- Eight pull-outs and scenic viewpoints
- Thirteen picnic areas
- Ninety-nine kilometers of official trails
- Ten backcountry campgrounds
- Commercial boat cruise operation on Maligne Lake
- Curly Phillips boat house and boat rentals; dock and rental boats at Beaver Lake
- Two public boat launches
- Two restaurants and gift shops
- Maligne Lake Chalet (offers afternoon tea)
- Three overnight lodgings: Maligne Canyon Hostel, Shovel Pass Lodge, Shangri-la Cabin
- Eighty-one interpretive panels at different locations throughout valley
- Roving interpreters and Wildlife Guardians in peak season
- Guided options offered by commercial operators for virtually every activity in the valley

What's working well?

Satisfaction among visitors to the valley is very high. Almost all the visitors surveyed in a 2012 visitor survey would recommend the valley to others. Ninety-nine percent felt that the visit had met or exceeded their expectations.

Parks Canada has made a significant reinvestment in Maligne Canyon since 2009, upgrading trails, fencing, bridges and signs. There have also been improvements to other infrastructure in the valley, such as trailhead kiosks and pedestrian signs at Maligne Lake.

What needs improvement?

Many of the facilities and infrastructure in the valley date from when the Maligne Lake Road was upgraded in 1971 and need to be refreshed. There is little sense of arrival to the valley and signage (including interpretive panels) in many locations is poor.

Although popular wilderness opportunities, such as the Skyline Trail and Maligne Lake campgrounds are priorities for investment, Parks Canada is challenged to maintain wilderness trails and facilities throughout the valley.



There are many activities for visitors to choose from in the summer. However, there are fewer activities for sightseers and beginner recreationalists in winter and in the shoulder seasons.

Although we have limited information about New Canadians, youth and less-experienced park users, Parks Canada would like to connect more of these visitors with the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Maligne Valley.

Through the Maligne Valley Implementation Strategy planning process, we will be asking:

How can we improve the visitor experience in the Maligne Valley, while protecting the important ecological and social values at the heart of this experience?

Please send us your ideas at maligne@pc.gc.ca.

For more information on visitor experience in the Maligne Valley, please contact Jennie Sparkes for a copy of the *Maligne Valley Situation Analysis* at maligne@pc.gc.ca



Photo : Rogier Gruys