

# Beautiful

THE CANADIAN ROCKIES  
OFFER VISITORS  
SPECTACULAR SIGHTS  
AND A PLACE TO RELAX.  
THE BREATHTAKING  
BEAUTY OF ALBERTA'S  
BANFF IS A NATURAL  
WONDER. WITH SOARING  
PEAKS OF SNOW-  
COVERED MOUNTAINS  
AND GLACIERS, BANFF  
HAS BEEN WELCOMING  
INTERNATIONAL  
VISITORS FOR MORE  
THAN A CENTURY.

Photography provided by:  
Alberta Economic Development's  
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# Banff





Beginning with Hot Springs in the fall of 1883, three Canadian Pacific Railway construction workers stumbled across a cave containing hot springs on the eastern slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains. From that humble beginning was born Banff National Park, Canada's first national park and the world's third. At 4,540 ft (1,384 m) above sea level, the city of Banff is "Canada's Highest Town."

A train whistle blows in the distance as a reminder of the area's railway roots while designer shops dot the streetscapes. From a sleepy summer resort that used to close its doors in the winter months, Banff has now grown into a year-round attraction. People from all over the world come in search of the Banff experience, whether it's in the restaurants, shops and cultural activities, or adventures in the wilderness. On Banff's bustling main avenue, virtually every language, from German and Japanese to French and Spanish, can be heard. Yet only minutes away from all the action, a quiet walk along the banks of the Bow River reminds you that the town is located inside Canada's premier national park.

### Banff National Park

Today, Banff National Park spans 2,564 square miles (6,641 square km) and is one of four adjoining mountain parks. In total the parks comprise of more than 7,813 square miles (20,235 square km) of spectacular Canadian Rocky Mountain landscape. For current visitors, bathing in these same hot springs is but one of many activities offered in Canada's foremost national park. When you visit the Banff area, and nearby Lake Louise, you will see why each year more than 4.5 million visitors come to



DESPITE SNOW AND ICE, BANFF'S VALLEYS, MOUNTAINS, GLACIERS, FORESTS, MEADOWS AND RIVERS OF BANFF NATIONAL PARK ARE SOME OF THE WORLD'S PREMIER DESTINATION SPOTS.



enjoy the unique feeling of the Canadian Rockies and to experience why the United Nations in 1985 declared the area a "World Heritage Site."

Banff National Park is a year-round playground in the Canadian wilderness, a four-season recreational area that offers everything from 7,558 acres of downhill skiing/snowboarding terrain to hundreds of miles of mountain trails. Visitors can explore the landscape by bus or car, canoe or raft, on foot or skis. The many sightseeing opportunities are popular photographed sites depicting some of the most spectacular scenery and wildlife on earth.

Banff National Park is a hiking wonderland, containing over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of trails, more than any other

mountain park. Hikers can find anything from a one-hour jaunt up a mountain to a month-long backcountry excursion into the lonely, wild regions of the park.

Banff is home to a number of outstanding geological and ecological features. The park is in the Rocky Mountain natural life zone, with terrain divided into three separate eco-regions: the mountain, the sub-alpine and the alpine. Each eco-region is characterized by a different plant and animal regime, as well as a different climate and elevation.

The Trans-Canada Highway, the Banff-Radium Highway, the scenic Bow Valley Parkway and the awe-inspiring Icefields Parkway are all major travel routes that bisect the park, enhancing visitors' chances of seeing the abundant wildlife inhabiting the mountain regions. Lucky travelers may see elk, deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, moose, black bears, grizzly bears, wolves, and a host of other large and small mammals.

The weather in the Canadian Rockies is variable due to the high elevation and rugged topography. Cool, crisp air and warm days are typical of autumn in the Canadian Rockies. Warming Chinook winds can bring spring-like conditions in winter, while spring offers both skiing and golfing opportunities. The summer climate is pleasant with low humidity, warm temperatures and daylight hours stretching until 11 p.m.

Despite snow and ice, Banff's valleys, mountains, glaciers, forests, meadows and rivers of Banff National Park are some of the world's premier destination spots. Visitors can tour historic sites, soak in hot springs, stroll along the shores of Lake Louise or spend a night in the historic Banff Springs Hotel. Visitors can also continue their journey and drive the Icefields Parkway into the majestic mountains of adjoining Jasper National Park.

*Story provided by the Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau.  
For more information, call 403-752-8421 or visit  
[www.banfflakelouise.com](http://www.banfflakelouise.com)*



## Neighboring Lake Louise

In 1882, guided by a Stoney Indian, Tom Wilson became the first white man to discover what native Indians called "Lake of Little Fishes." He named his discovery Emerald Lake, but it was later changed by the Geographic Board to Lake Louise in honor of Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria.

Lake Louise, with its blue-green water set against the stark backdrop of Victoria Glacier, is probably the most beloved and most photographed scene in the Canadian Rockies. Not only have international royalty, Hollywood stars and heads of state come to Lake Louise to relax, but increasingly the rest of the world is discovering its simple charms as well. Romantic and relaxing, the pace in Lake Louise attracts people who want to savour the finer things of life; a good book in front of a fireplace, the stillness of the outdoors, or a quiet walk after dinner. The Chateau Lake Louise presents lakeside views of the towering Victoria Glacier, offering old-world charm and elegance amidst the wilderness. The lower village of Lake Louise holds an array of fine dining, first class accommodations and shopping. A scenic drive will bring visitors to the awe-inspiring Moraine Lake.



## Quick Facts About Alberta

- Canada's first/oldest national park - **Banff National Park**
- One of the world's most photographed lakes - **Moraine Lake**
- Alberta is the only place in North America where the prairie, boreal forest and mountain ecosystems collide.
- Alberta has 300 species of birds, 90 mammals, 18 types of reptiles and amphibians, 50 species of fish and 1,700 flowering plants.