

Canadian Rockies Hiker

An Extraordinary Inn-to-Inn Hiking Adventure in the Canadian Rockies

Few areas can match the sheer spectacle of the Canadian Rockies, an alpine wonderland of towering summits laden with glistening glaciers, sapphire lakes and subalpine meadows blanketed with wildflowers. Our carefully selected routes and creative itinerary feature both this region's most-renowned sights and the lesser-known treasures that make our trip so special. Each day highlights a unique facet of this magical paradise, blending the best of Banff, Jasper and Yoho national parks.

Carrying only a light daypack, you will share alpine meadows with bighorn sheep, experience the best day hikes to be found in three of the Canadian Rockies' premier National Parks, and raft thrilling whitewater. Whether you are a light hiker, a seasoned adventurer, or a family with varied ability levels, our daily hiking options guarantee you a getaway to match your sense of adventure.

Day 1. Hiking Banff National Park's Valley of the Ten Peaks to Larch Valley and Sentinel Pass, Deer Lodge (private baths)

After assembling in Banff at 8:00 a.m. we head west to Lake Louise in the heart of Banff National Park. Nothing is a more fitting welcome to our alpine adventure than a hike from the crystalline waters of Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks to the stunning Larch Valley, a sub-alpine meadow of mosses, wildflowers, and the valley's namesake, soft-needled larch trees.

Time permitting we continue hiking to the top of Sentinel Pass, the highest point reached by a maintained trail in the park. Here we look across the Valley of the Ten Peaks at the Wenckhemna Range, dominated by the ice-draped summit of Mount Fay (10,675').

Tonight, we savor the heavenly comforts of the historic Deer Lodge, featuring gourmet dining and an idyllic setting just a short walk from the shores of Lake Louise. Do not miss the lodge's rooftop jacuzzi that affords stunning views of the surrounding peaks.

- Moraine Lake to Larch Valley [3.0 miles roundtrip; 1,150 feet of elevation gain, then loss];
- Longer option: Moraine Lake to Sentinel Pass [7.5 miles roundtrip; 2,400 feet of elevation gain, then loss]

Day 2. Hiking to Helen Lake, Num-Ti-Jah Lodge (private baths)

Helen Lake is situated near Dolomite Pass, a region so named for its resemblance to the limestone crags of the Italian Dolomites. This vast alpine environment promises a wonderful day of hiking. You ascend through mountain meadows that, come midsummer, are ablaze with such colorful wildflowers as fleabane, paintbrush and ragwort. You continue hiking through forests and avalanche slopes until you reach the alpine region above treeline. Your destination, Helen Lake, is nestled in a spectacular natural amphitheater -- the perfect setting in which to take a break and enjoy a well-deserved lunch.

This area is prime hoary marmot habitat, so keep an ear out for their telltale whistles. Energetic hikers may want to try the longer route up to the unnamed ridge

above the lake for a panoramic view of the surrounding Banff wilderness--perhaps you'll come up with a suitable name along the way!

- Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint up to Helen Lake then back down Helen Creek [7.5 miles, 1400' elevation gain / loss]

Day 3. Hiking Jasper National Park's Wilcox Pass, Num-Ti-Jah Lodge

Today's hike yields panoramic vistas of the Columbia Icefield, one of the largest sheets of glacial ice in the interior of North America. Join a local historian/naturalist as we experience everything from gardens of alpine wildflowers to 400-year-old spruce forests. Mountain heather and tiny forget-me-nots carpet the alpine tundra beneath our feet as we watch for bighorn sheep, mountain goats and golden eagles.

Incredible views greet us from our rooms this evening at the Num-Ti-Jah Lodge. After dinner, relax and enjoy the peaceful mountain scenery. If you stay up late enough (it doesn't get dark until after 11 p.m.), you may even catch a glimpse of the northern lights dancing in the sky above.

- Wilcox Pass [7.5 miles; 1,100 feet of elevation gain / loss; maximum elevation 7,830 feet]

Day 4. Hiking Bow Glacier Falls, Emerald Lake Lodge (private baths)

Today we stretch our legs and explore Bow Glacier Falls. Our trail meanders along the Bow River and then out onto the Bow Glacier moraine. We set our sites on glacial fed Bow Glacier Falls, the headwaters of the mighty Bow River.

After this great hike we journey south to Emerald Lake Lodge, our home for the rest of the trip. This awesome lodge is set on the shores of Emerald Lake. Explore around the lake this evening and size up the pass in the distance for tomorrow's adventure.

- Bow Glacier Falls [6 miles roundtrip; 500 feet of elevation gain/loss]
- Option--explore Emerald Lake Trail; up to 2 miles

Day 5. Hiking Emerald Glacier and Yoho Pass, Emerald Lake Lodge

The word “Yoho” is a Cree expression of awe and wonder, sentiments that will be affirmed on our hike through Yoho’s spectacular glaciated landscape. After breakfast we drive up to see and hear Takakkaw Falls, the fourth highest waterfall in Canada, as it thunders more than 1,000 feet down into the Yoho Valley. We hike through forests of subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce along the remarkable Iceline Trail. One of the Canadian Rockies’ classic routes, this aptly named trail takes us up into high alpine country, where we gain some views of the Emerald Glacier and look across the valley at Takakkaw Falls and the Daly Glacier that feeds it. After returning to Yoho Lake for lunch we hike over Yoho Pass and return to the shores of Emerald Lake and our home for one more night.

We spend another evening in Emerald Lake Lodge. Bask in the glory of beautiful Mt. Burgess as you enjoy your gourmet dinner and unwind from the day's adventure.

- Emerald Glacier and Yoho Pass [9.25 miles; 1,640 feet of elevation gain, then 2,132 feet of loss]
- Shorter option [7.5 miles; 1640 feet of gain/loss]

Day 6. Whitewater Rafting on the Kicking Horse River

After breakfast, we head out for a whitewater rafting adventure on the Kicking Horse River, which got its name for a good reason. Paddles in hand, we shoot a series of rapids with colorful names like Man-Eater Hole, The Rollercoaster and the mile-long Portage Shotgun. After lunch, we will return to Banff for our trip’s conclusion.

- Kicking Horse River [Rapids: class III, IV+]

Tour Details

Trip Type: Inn

Trip Length: 6 days/5 nights

2008 Departure Dates: July 13-18, July 27-August 1, August 10-15

2008 Cost: \$2698

2008 Single Supplement: \$850

Trip Rating: Moderate

Activities: hike (5 days), raft (1/2 day)

Gateway City: Calgary, Canada

Gateway City Transfer: Public Transportation is available from the Calgary International Airport to Banff for \$40.00 (Canadian) one way or \$75.00 (Canadian) round-trip through the Banff Airporter (888-449-2901). The Banff Airporter typically departs every 1-2 hours (both to and from the airport), and services Banff’s major hotels. Please call 888-449-2901 or visit www.banffairporter.com for pricing and schedule details, and to make a reservation. Brewster Tours (800-661-1152) also offers airport transfer between Banff and Calgary for \$42.00 (Canadian) one way or \$80.00 (Canadian) round-trip. There are only two scheduled departures per day from Calgary International Airport to Banff’s major hotels and three scheduled departures for the return trip.

Meeting Time & Place: 8:00 a.m., Banff International Hotel, 333 Banff Avenue, Banff, Alberta.

Please have breakfast prior to our meeting and come prepared for a hike following our orientation. We recommend you wear comfortable hiking boots with ankle support and wool socks coupled with a thin liner sock and have a jacket accessible, as the weather can be extremely variable in the Rockies.

Trip Conclusion: 4:00 p.m., Banff International Hotel. It is important that airline departures be scheduled no earlier than 8:30 p.m.

Trip Fees Include: Whitewater raft trip, all meals (lunch Day 1-lunch Day 6), all accommodations (double occupancy), T-shirt, water bottle, support vehicle, and professional guides.

Trip Fees Exclude: Airfare, personal insurance, miscellaneous hotel expenses (phone, fax, laundry, etc.), additional optional tours, services not specified in the tour itinerary, and guide gratuities (An appropriate gratuity to *each* trip leader is \$75-\$100 per guest).
