

Backcountry Trip Planning Checklist

Banff National Park of Canada

The number of opportunities to explore the backcountry of Banff National Park may seem overwhelming at first. This checklist is a guide to help make organizing and booking your trip a little easier.

Where to start?

Outlined here are some important questions to consider when researching and planning your trip. Additional resources are listed on the other side of this checklist.

- **How much experience do you and the members of your group have?** Hiking in the Rockies and travelling in a National Park are things that can make your backcountry trip different from past experiences. Consider starting with shorter trips or day hikes to acclimatize and become familiar with the area.
- **Do you want to set up a base camp for several nights and do day hikes? OR hike to a new camp each day?** If this is your first trip of the season, you are new to the area, or you are planning your first ever backcountry trip, a base camp is an excellent way to build up strength and familiarize yourself with the area.
- **How many kilometres would your group be comfortable hiking each day?** Base your trip on the abilities of the least experienced member of the group. Steep terrain, weather, elevation, and group members' abilities should determine the length, duration and destination of your trip.
- **How many nights do you want to go for?**
- **What do you want to do?** Make sure your desired activities are possible. For example, horses and bicycles are only allowed on designated trails and fishing may be prohibited in some areas.
- **Do you have a good understanding of the hazards you may encounter?** You should have knowledge of natural hazards, experience in avoiding them and a plan to deal with them successfully when required. Stream crossings, lightning, illness & injury, avalanches, and wildlife are just some of the hazards you may encounter.
- **Does anyone know where you are going?** Leave a detailed itinerary with a friend or fill out and sign a Voluntary Safety Registration at a Parks Canada Information Centre.
- **Do you know which permits you need?** You will require a Wilderness Pass for overnight backcountry trips, a Park Pass for entry into the park, a National Park Fishing License for angling, and a Grazing Permit for horse travel
- **How will you get to and from the trailhead(s)?** Most trailheads are difficult to access without a vehicle, and public transportation is limited beyond the Banff Townsite and the Village of Lake Louise. Information Centre staff can assist you with options for getting to and from trailheads.
- **Will your trip continue beyond the boundary of Banff National Park?** For information on how to contact adjacent national and provincial parks, see the Backcountry Visitors' Guide to Banff National Park.

Have you got it?

This is a list of suggested equipment, which you can adjust to suit your personal preferences. Mountain weather is unpredictable; be prepared for winter conditions at any time of the year. Snow may persist in high mountain regions into the summer and avalanche danger may be in any season. This equipment list does **not** account for the special knowledge and equipment required to travel in avalanche terrain.

Clothing

- Long underwear
- Wool sweater, down vest, or fleece jacket
- Raingear – pants and jacket, gaiters
- Hat and gloves / mittens
- Shorts, pants and shirt
- Extra socks
- Boots - with ankle support and good soles
- Sandals / runners - for fording streams and at camp

Shelter

- Tent with waterproof fly
- Backpack
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Stove, fuel, pot, dishes, eating and cooking utensils
- Food – including enough for an extra day
- Water filter, purification tablets or extra fuel for boiling your water

Other essentials

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Pass | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic map | <input type="checkbox"/> Signaling device (whistle/mirror) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil & paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compass | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency blanket | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof matches &/or lighter | <input type="checkbox"/> Repair kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Rope – 8 m. approx. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candle | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses, sunhat | <input type="checkbox"/> Knife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight and extra batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen & lip balm | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle |

Optional

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera & film | <input type="checkbox"/> Trowel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altimeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear spray | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notebook / sketchpad | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> Field guide(s) |

Have you checked the latest reports?

Check the following reports before booking your trip, and again before you leave. These reports are available at Parks Canada Information Centres, on our website (see Resources and Directory below), **Park Radio 101.1FM**, and over the phone.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Report (403) 760-1305 | <input type="checkbox"/> Road Report (winter) (403) 762-1450 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weather Forecast (403) 762-2088 | <input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche Report (winter) (403) 762-1460 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warnings and Closures (403) 762-1550 | |

Before starting on the trail, check the trailhead kiosk for recently posted Warning and Closure Notices.

Did you also know?

Regulations

- ◆ A valid Wilderness Pass is required and must be kept with you at all times.
- ◆ Bicycles are only allowed on designated trails.
- ◆ Fires are permitted only in campgrounds with metal fire rings or in random camping areas.
- ◆ All food and toiletries must be properly stored (on bear cables or strung up between trees).
- ◆ Pack out **all** garbage (including tampons, sanitary napkins, diapers, food waste and foil).
- ◆ Do not disturb or remove any natural or cultural objects.
- ◆ Pets must be kept on a leash **at all times**. Consider leaving them at home.
- ◆ Do not feed, touch or harass wildlife.

How you can help protect the park. Leave No Trace: <http://www.LNT.org/>

- ◆ Plan ahead and prepare.
- ◆ Dispose of waste properly.
- ◆ Minimize campfire impacts.
- ◆ Leave what you find.
- ◆ Respect wildlife.
- ◆ Be considerate of other visitors.
- ◆ Travel and camp on durable surfaces.

Trip Details

Trip Leader Name: _____		Phone # _____	
Address: _____			
# Adults: _____	# Children (16 yrs & under): _____	# Tents: _____	
1 st Vehicle Lic. Plate: _____		2 nd Vehicle Lic. Plate: _____	
Trip Itinerary 1st Choice: _____			
Starting Trailhead: _____			
Day 1 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 2 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 3 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 4 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 5 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Exiting Trailhead: _____			
Trip Itinerary 2nd Choice: _____			
Starting Trailhead: _____			
Day 1 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 2 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 3 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 4 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Day 5 Date: _____	Route: _____	# kms _____	Campground: _____
Exiting Trailhead: _____			

Now you are ready to book your trip!

Contact a Parks Canada Information Centre to purchase your Park Passes and Permits (see Resources and Directory). For a nominal fee you can reserve your backcountry campsites up to 3 months in advance of your trip.

Resources and Directory

Maps and Recommended Reading

Topographic maps and guide books are available for purchase from the Friends of Banff National Park: <http://www.friendsofbanff.com> (403) 762 – 8918.

Publications: Available at Parks Canada Information Centres

- ◆ Backcountry Visitors' Guide to Banff National Park
- ◆ National Park Fishing Regulations
- ◆ Bears & People: A guide to safety and conservation on the trail

Banff Information Centre
224 Banff Avenue, Banff, AB
(403) 762 – 1550
Banff.trails@pc.gc.ca

Lake Louise Visitor Centre
Samson Mall, Lake Louise, AB
(403) 522 – 3833
LL.Info@pc.gc.ca

Parks Canada Service Centre
Calgary, AB
(403) 292 – 4401

Banff National Park Website <http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/banff>
Banff National Park Warden Service (403) 762-1470