



Parks and Mountains of Western Canada

Program Details

This exciting journey from Vancouver to Calgary uncovers the natural splendours of Canada's finest national and provincial parks. From the rugged west coast mountains, across the southern reaches of British Columbia and finally to the dramatic heights of the Rocky Mountains, we discover a vast wilderness of countless alpine lakes and pristine forests set beneath a backdrop of high peaks and tumbling glaciers. It is a land of elk, moose, bighorn sheep, black and grizzly bears of which your guide can spin a tale or two. We'll also touch the western edge of Canada's vast prairie and visit one of the most famous native North American buffalo jumps - "Head Smashed In". This site which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site had been used by Blackfoot Indians for hundreds of years. At night we stay in comfortable hotels or mountain lodges and during the day our fully supported walks reveal the diverse landscapes that this area is famous for. Some time in the beautiful Canadian cities of Vancouver and Calgary round off this superb touring and walking adventure.

2010 Dates

June 20 - July 3, July 4 - 17, August 15 - 28, September 5 - 18

Itinerary at a Glance

DAY 1 Arrive Vancouver

DAY 2 Walk the North Shore Mountains of Vancouver.

DAY 3 Sightseeing in Vancouver followed by an afternoon drive eastward to Manning Provincial Park and the Cascade Mountains.

DAY 4 Day hike in the Cascade Mountains.

DAY 5 Drive to Nelson along the historic Crowsnest Highway and the southern Okanagan Valley.

DAY 6 Hiking in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park.

DAY 7 To Fernie in the Rocky Mountains.

DAY 8 To Waterton Lakes National Park with time for an afternoon walk.

DAY 9 Day hike to Carthew Summit in Waterton Lakes National Park.

DAY 10 To Banff via UNESCO World Heritage Site "Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump".

DAY 11 Day hike in Kananaskis Country to Burstall Pass.

DAY 12 Stanley Glacier hike.

DAY 13 Sentinel Pass hike and visit to Lake Louise.

DAY 14 Trip concludes in Banff.

Cost

Per Person Double Occupancy: **\$3715 CDN**

Per Person Single Occupancy: **\$4858 CDN**

Tour cost includes:

Professional hiking/interpretive guide

13 breakfasts, 12 lunches

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13 nights hotels/lodges ranging from 2 to 4 star category
Private transport in mini-van
National park entry fees and sightseeing as indicated

Tour cost does not include:

Personal expenses
Air Fares
Shuttles to or from airport
Travel insurance
Meals not indicated
Sales Tax (GST)*
Tips

Medical Cancellation Insurance is available for an extra \$195/person.

* a 50% rebate of the GST is available to non-residents of Canada.

Arrival and Departure Information

Vancouver: Lonsdale Quay Hotel North Vancouver. A late afternoon transfer to the hotel from Vancouver International Airport will be scheduled and available to you at a cost of \$25 per person. If your schedule does not fit this transfer time, the best way to get to your hotel will be by taxi which will cost approximately \$35.

Banff: A morning departure to Calgary will be scheduled after breakfast and is available to you at a cost of \$35 per person. If you plan on staying longer or don't want to leave Banff in the morning there are scheduled Airporter shuttles that leave every few hours. Cost for a shuttle is approximately \$55 per person.

Program Itinerary in Detail

DAY 1: Arrive Vancouver

Arrive on own in Vancouver with self arranged transfer to hotel. (Transfer to hotel is available through White Mountain Adventures.) In the evening you'll meet your guide and go through a short group briefing where you'll meet other participants and details of the itinerary will be discussed. Overnight Vancouver/Burnaby.

DAY 2: Walking the North Shore Mountains of Vancouver, Cypress Provincial Park

One of the most amazing things about Vancouver is that just beyond the city limits you can very quickly enter a stunning wilderness of old growth forest – of towering Douglas Firs, huge ferns, and hanging mosses. We'll explore part of this today as we make our way up Hollyburn Mountain for an outstanding view of the city, the Strait of Georgia and Vancouver Island. Overnight Vancouver/Burnaby. (BL) Walking: 9 kms, elev. gain: 350m.

DAY 3: Sightseeing Vancouver, and afternoon drive to Manning Park

Vancouver is the most attractive city in Canada – its natural beauty derived from its superb location between the Coast Mountains, Fraser River and the Pacific Ocean. You'll spend the morning sightseeing in Vancouver including Chinatown, old Gastown, Stanley Park, and the Lions Gate Bridge. From Vancouver we drive up the Fraser Valley and into the Cascade Mountains crossing the Allison Pass. Overnight Manning Provincial Park. (BL) Walking: 2-3 kms, elev. gain: minimal

DAY 4: Cascade Mountains, Manning Park

The Skyline loop trail begins at Lightning Lake with a gradual ascent to the ridge. The rewards of this climb come with a spectacular view of the Cascade Mountains whose foothill meadows are

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adorned with an amazing display of wildflowers. From Despair Pass we hike down to Strawberry Flats, to the trailhead and then return to our hotel. Overnight Manning Provincial Park. (BL) Walking: 19 kms, elev gain: 700 m.

DAY 5: To Nelson via the Crowsnest Highway and Okanagan Valley

We leave the Cascade Mountains and enter the northern tip of the American Great Basin Desert, which extends as far south as Mexico. The hot and dry climate is perfect for growing apple, apricots, peaches, grapes and cherries. We'll enjoy lunch on the patio of a vineyard and afterwards stop at an amazing overlook and cast our eyes down at Osoyoos Lake and its surrounding "pocket desert". Later in the afternoon we make a short stop in the historic mining town of Greenwood for coffee and cake at an old style bakery. The day ends at the picturesque town of Nelson on the west arm of Kootenay Lake. Overnight Nelson. (BL)

DAY 6: Kokanee Glacier Park

Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park is an undeveloped wilderness area with over 30 high altitude lakes and an extensive network of trails. The Park covers a variety of climatic zones, with vegetation ranging from dense forest to alpine grassland. It is rugged and hauntingly beautiful. Overnight Nelson (BL) Walking: 16 kms, elev. gain: 650 m.

DAY 7: To Fernie in the Rocky Mountains

After breakfast there is an optional visit to Ainsworth Hotsprings on the outskirts of Nelson after which our journey continues on to Kootenay Lake with a 45 minute ferry ride. Crossing the water reveals astounding views of the Selkirk and Purcell Mountains as well as Kootenay Lake. We approach Fernie in the Rocky Mountains, where the visual outlook just keeps getting better. Overnight Fernie (BL)

DAY 8: Waterton Lakes National Park

Crossing the Crowsnest Pass we enter the Province of Alberta, where hugging the border with the U.S. and rising out of the gentle prairie grassland lies one of the Rockies' finest jewels: Waterton Lakes National Park. Here several different ecological regions meet and interact in a landscape shaped by wind, fire, flood, and abundant plants and wildlife. In the early afternoon we have a choice of walking options all beginning right from town. Likely choices will include the "Bear's Hump with its superb view of Waterton Lake or Bertha Falls for its cool cascading waters. Overnight Waterton (BL) Walking: 4-6 kms, elev. gain: 150 m.

DAY 9: Carthew Summit hike

Waterton Lakes has its own special scenery including red rock canyons, deep blue lakes, and white fields of beargrass (vegetation found nowhere else in the Rockies.) Added to this mix is the most abundant wildlife in the Rockies and sightings of bighorn sheep, mule and black bears are quite common. Today's walk begins at Cameron Lake, located in the very corner of Alberta and touching British Columbia and Montana, where we ascend a forested hillside to Summit Lake and then on to Carthew Pass. From here we can either return the way we came or continue all the way to Waterton townsite via Carthew Lakes and Alderson Lake. Overnight Waterton (BL) Walking: 19 kms, elev. gain: 900 m.

DAY 10: To Banff via Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump, UNESCO World Heritage

En route to Banff we pause to visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump - a museum dedicated to the First Nations People. The site preserves North America's oldest and largest Buffalo Jump, used for thousands of years by Blackfoot Indians to run bison. Enjoying the sweeping prairies we drive back along the foothills and into the Rockies passing the town of Canmore, site of the Nordic events for the 1988 Winter Olympics. Overnight Banff (BL)

DAY 11: Burstall Pass and Kananaskis Country

Today's hike takes us for a visit through Kananaskis Country, a rugged mountainous park, little known outside of Alberta, but very popular with Albertans for its excellent variety of hiking trails. The trail climbs gently at first but then becomes steeper as it ascends a hanging valley into the higher reaches of the valley. At the top, the trail plateaus out into expansive views of the western Rockies, and an eagle's-eye view of the valley of Burstall Creek. Mt. Assiniboine, highest peak in Banff National Park, however steals the limelight with its great ridges and sheer faces that have earned it the name "Canada's Matterhorn". Overnight Banff (BL) Walking: 16 kms, elev. gain: 750 m.

DAY 12: Stanley Glacier Trail and Kootenay National Park

Today we'll cross back into British Columbia for one last visit to this exceptional province. Just west of Banff National Park lies Kootenay National Park and the Stanley Glacier Trail, our walking choice for today. The route takes us quickly into a hanging valley and through the remnants of two forest fires, one occurring in 1968, the other more recently, in 2003. It is aptly known as the "Fire and Ice" trail because once through the burnt forest sections we suddenly see looming above us Stanley Glacier. The trail continues for some time and finally ends at an alpine plateau just a few hundred metres below the hanging ice. Overnight Banff. (BL) Walking: 12 kms, elev. gain: 400 m.

DAY 13: Sentinel Pass Walk and Lake Louise

Our climax walk of the trip takes place in the vicinity of Lake Louise, where many of the best hiking trails in the Rockies can be found. We start our walk at Moraine Lake and walk up the Larch Valley for an incredible view over Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks as well as Sentinel Pass. We walk beneath the ramparts of Mount Temple; at 3543 metres it is the third highest peak in Banff National Park, and down the beautiful Paradise Valley along Paradise Creek. We'll leave time at the end of the day for a stop at Lake Louise itself. Overnight Banff. (BL) Walking: 19 kms, elev. gain 800 m.

DAY 14: Conclude Banff

After breakfast our trip concludes in Banff. (B)

How difficult is it? How fit and experienced need you be?

This trip is a combination of hiking days alternated with touring days. The day hikes themselves alternate between easy days and strenuous days and can involve walking for up to 6-7 hours per day, distances up to 20 km, and elevation gains of up to 900m. You will need to carry a day pack containing spare clothing, your camera, lunch and something to drink each day.

This program is designed for walkers who are in good physical condition. The trails on this trip are some of the best trails in the Rockies and on certain days you will have a good amount of elevation gain. Any training you can do before you arrive will enhance your experience. No previous mountain hiking experience required.

Guides and Group Size

Yamnuska Mountain Adventure guides are certified through the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides. Our professional guides have extensive experience in Western Canada and the Canadian Rockies. Guides also have advanced wilderness first aid training and heritage interpretation accreditation. Guides carry emergency equipment including a first aid kit, bear spray and radio.

There will be a maximum of twelve guests and a minimum of six.

Meals

There is a variety of different accommodation on this tour. With the exception of Vancouver, our accommodations are all in small towns or villages and so, are dependant on what is available. At

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each location we select the best combination of quality and value that we can find. All properties are between 2 and 4 star properties.

Each day during the tour, breakfast will be included. Picnic lunches will be provided daily. These are a fast and fun way to eat in one of the many fantastic places we visit along the way. The lunches include bread, spreads, cheese, cold cuts, fruits and vegetables which you assemble yourself into sandwiches or salad plates. We have not included any dinners. This is because there are usually lots of options to choose from. Dinner prices range C\$15 to C\$40 or more . You can therefore elect to eat according to your personal budget.

Climate

This trip operates during the main months of summer, though snow can linger at high elevations until well into the season. Weather is unpredictable at any time of year, but is generally quite warm in July and August. Daytime highs range from 15-25 C and nighttime temperatures can drop to 5-10 C. Temperatures in June and September can be cooler with nighttime temperatures occasionally dropping below freezing. As with alpine environments throughout the globe, the higher you go, the lower the temperature becomes. Ensuring that you have the correct clothing for an alpine environment is crucial. Please see below for information on clothing and equipment requirements.

Clothing and Equipment

We supply all group equipment plus a full emergency and first-aid kit. You will need to bring personal equipment (day pack, camera, etc.) and clothing.

Your guide will be carrying a full emergency and first-aid kit. You will need to bring your own daypack and personal clothing. Cotton clothing is NOT recommended as an insulating layer as it causes rapid heat loss when wet.

- HIKING BOOTS/SHOES: These should be 'broken-in' and have good ankle support and tread. Your boots will make or break your holiday so some time spent getting used to them is time well spent.
- DAYPACK: Large enough to carry extra clothing (rain jacket & pants, sweater, gloves, hat), lunch and snack food, water bottle and camera plus accessories (rental available).
- SUNGLASSES
- WATER BOTTLE (1 Litre)
- SMALL BLISTER & FIRST AID KIT
- SUN BLOCK & LIP BALM
- INSECT REPELLENT
- Wool or fleece HAT
- SUNHAT
- 3 TO 4 WARM LAYERED TOPS (1.Light weight polypro top. 2. medium or expedition weight polypropylene top. 3. fleece jacket or sweater
- T-SHIRT for warm, dry sunny days
- RAIN JACKET with HOOD (sufficient to withstand a day of rain or snow)
- Light GLOVES or MITTS
- SOCKS, several changes. We suggest a wool blend for comfort.
- SHORT PANTS can be very comfortable for hiking; they should be quick drying, and preferably not cotton.
- HIKING PANTS (comfortable and quick drying, not cotton)
- RAIN PANTS (sufficient to withstand a day of rain or snow) (Rentals available)
- RUNNING SHOES OR OTHER LIGHT WEIGHT FOOTWEAR (backup in case you get blisters).

Optional Gear

- TREKKING POLES

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- ❑ CAMERA
- ❑ BINOCULARS

Contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Insurance

Please ensure that your health plan will cover you in case of illness or accident whilst here. Obtain extra travel insurance if necessary.

To Book

Please book as early as practical to avoid disappointment. Up to 8 weeks before the trip, we require a C\$400 per person deposit, after that, full payment is required. Should Yamnuska Mountain Adventures cancel a program your entire payment will be refunded. Should you cancel your booking for any reason the following penalties apply:

- If cancelling up to 8 weeks before the program start, \$200 per person will be withheld. Between 8 and 6 weeks before program start deposit is forfeited.
- Cancellation less than 6 weeks before program start or during program will result in loss of entire amount paid.
- Cancellations must be received in writing (letter, fax or email). Cancellations are only effective once your notification is received by Yamnuska Mountain Adventures.
- Cancellation coverage is available. This, taken at extra cost when you first book, will allow for a full refund should you be forced to cancel for health or medical reasons affecting yourself or members of your immediate family. We strongly recommend you take this coverage for an extra \$195/person.

For detailed Booking Instructions and Conditions, visit our website.

Please note that you will be required to sign our waiver before commencing the trip.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need to know anything else about this tour.