Summer on the Icefields Parkway

Explore!
Winding 232 glorious kilometres through the heart of Jasper and Banff national parks, the Icefields Parkway has been called one of the world’s most scenic drives. Around every corner, the route offers fresh waterfalls, pristine lakes, and broad sweeping valleys to ancient glaciers flowing down from the rugged mountains. Take your time to experience the many scenic stops, picnic spots, and hiking trails along the way.

Looking for a view from the edge?
Check out these roadside attractions:

- **ATHABASCA GLACIER**
  - A magical area that can be seen from the road, explored with a commercial guide or visited on a special bus tour. Do not walk on the glacier; crevasses and other hazards can be deadly.

- **CROWFOOT GLACIER**
  - A magical area that can be seen from the road, explored with a commercial guide or visited on a special bus tour. Do not walk on the glacier; crevasses and other hazards can be deadly.

- **HERBERT LAKE**
  - A photographer’s favourite. The still waters of Herbert Lake provide an ideal place for a picnic stop.

- **ATHABASCA FALLS**
  - A popular area for a picnic stop. Including Mount Temple. The picnic area provides reflection of the stunning Main Range peaks.

- **SUNWAPTA FALLS**
  - A popular area for a picnic stop. Including Mount Temple. The picnic area provides reflection of the stunning Main Range peaks.

- **BOW LAKE AND BOW GLACIER**
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Try one of these short strolls:

- **ATHABASCA FALLS**
  - The falls of the Athabasca River as it thunders into the canyon below. Stay behind railings and on designated trails. The rock bottom is slippery and dangerous.

- **SUNWAPTA FALLS**
  - A former glacier waterfall not far from the highway. Sunwapta Falls is just one of the many waterfalls in Jasper created by hanging valleys.

- **MISTYVA CANYON**
  - Enjoy a short downhill walk and peer down into Mistya Canyon from the bridge. Witness the power of water sculpting the limestone gorge.

- **BOW LAKE AND BOW GLACIER**
  - Bow Lake, the source of the Bow River, is one of the more scenic and accessible lakes for fishing.

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About the Columbia Icefield

With a total area of 200 km², the Columbia Icefield is the largest mass of glacial ice in the Canadian Rockies. It feeds several large glaciers, including the Athabasca, the Columbia, and the Saskatchewan.

**WHAT’S A GLACIER?**

Glaciers form where more snow falls in winter than melts each summer. As the snow gets thicker and heavier, it compacts into dense glacial ice that slowly flows downhill, like a river of taffy.

**GLACIERS AND RIVERS**

Water flows to three different oceans from this area, known as a hydrological apex. On the British Columbia side, meltwater flows into the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. On the Alberta side, the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers feed into the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, respectively. These rivers provide fresh drinking water for millions of people, and are crucial to agriculture and countless ecosystems.

That’s why their source is protected in a national park.

Wildlife

Wildlife sightings are one of many reasons the Icefields Parkway is known as one of the best drives in the world.

- Bears, sheep, wolves, and even elusive caribou can be often spotted on the road – keep your eyes open and drive slowly, especially early morning and evening.

- Never approach or feed wildlife.

More information

Check the road conditions and the weather forecast before you leave town:

**ROAD CONDITIONS**

Jasper Information Centre: 780-852-6175
Lake Louise Visitor Centre: 1-800-661-0333
Banff Visitor Centre: 403-762-2088
parkscanada.gc.ca/icefields

**WEATHER FORECAST**

alberta511.ca
weather.gc.ca

**TRAIL REPORTS**

parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails
parkscanada.gc.ca/jaspertrails

**BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION**

Research and plan overnight trips, including permitted trails and closures, weather conditions, and mandatory backcountry permits.

parkscanada.gc.ca/banff/backcountry
parkscanada.gc.ca/banff-tracks-curity

**SUPPORTING PARKS**

The Icefields Parkway was built by Parks Canada as part of the Trans-Canada Highway to showcase the powerful natural landscape of Jasper and Banff national parks. A valid national parks pass is required to drive the Icefields Parkway. Revenue from pass sales support maintenance, plowing, sanding, and avalanche control.

If you’re a frequent visitor to Canada’s national parks and you plan on purchasing a Parks Canada Discovery Pass for unlimited access to many of Canada’s extraordinary treasures,

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

More information can be obtained at 1-800-661-0333 or online at parkscanada.gc.ca.

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Looking for adventure?

Step into the wild with one of these classic day hikes:

**VALLEY OF THE FIVE LAKES**
Five small, brilliantly blue-green lakes are the highlights of this outing, considered a local family favourite. 4.5 km loop; 66 m elevation gain/loss; 2 hours

**WILCOX PASS**
Rise quickly above treeline to the expansive meadows of this glacier-carved landscape. 2.4 km one way; 100 m gain to the viewpoint. 4.8 km loop return to the pass.

**PARKER RIDGE**
A series of switchbacks will reward you with dramatic views of the Saskatchewan Glacier. 5.4 km loop return; 305 m elevation gain/loss; 3 hours

**HELEN LAKE**
A breathtaking lake in a valley abounding with alpine wildlife and grand vistas. 6.5 km one way; 505 m elevation gain; 3.5 hours

**THE TWINS**
A breathtaking view of glacial peaks, icefields and valleys. 5.2 km loop return; 205 m elevation gain/loss; 2 hours

Time for lunch?

Visit one of our scenic picnic sites:

**COLEMAN CREEK**
Sit next to the edge of the water and listen to the relaxing gurgles of the river. Look for mountain goats on the cliffs.

**BOW LAKE**
Enjoy your lunch at one of the most breathtaking lakes in the rockies. The vibrant blue colour set against a magnificent mountain backdrop is sure to dazzle you.