Camping in the Banff Area

2019

Également offert en français
Welcome to Banff National Park

Banff National Park offers diverse camping experiences, from cozy and authentic lakeside campsites to scenic sites located within close proximity to amenities in the Town of Banff. Seven campgrounds in the Banff area provide convenient access to the park’s most famous attractions. Each campground varies in size, location and services. Check site availability at reservation.pc.gc.ca.

The information in this brochure is important to know for your enjoyment and safety. Should you have any questions, staff are available at most campgrounds and are also ready to assist you at a Parks Canada visitor centre.

While in the Park ...

For information on things to do while in the park, view these guides online at parkscanada.gc.ca/banff-brochures or pick up a copy at a Parks Canada visitor centre.

Year-round Camping

Looking for a new experience? Tunnel Mountain Village II is open year-round for camping. Bring an RV, or pack a tent and enjoy the park under a layer of fresh, glistening snow. For an easy-to-access experience, the neighbouring campground, Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court, becomes a winter activity hub for cross-country skiing, fat-biking, snowshoeing and winter walking. Throughout the park, favourite summer trails become a winter wonderland of snow-covered pines and white-capped mountains waiting to be explored.

Look in the Getting Around Banff guide and visit parkscanada.gc.ca/banff-winter for more information on winter activities in Banff National Park.

Campsite Reservations

Reservations are highly recommended for Banff area campgrounds. During the summer months, campgrounds may be fully booked. To ensure a site, make reservations at reservation.pc.gc.ca or dial toll free 1-877-737-3783 (1-877-RESERVE).

For backcountry campers, visit parkscanada.gc.ca/banff-backcountry for more information and to book a site.

Numerous hike-in campgrounds are available throughout Banff National Park and all require a backcountry permit and a national park entry pass.

Dates of Operation

Dates of operation vary from campground to campground and are available at parkscanada.gc.ca/banffcamping and on page 4 of this guide. Summer camping begins in early May, with all campgrounds open by mid to late June. Demand is heaviest from June through September, with July and August being the busiest months.

Your Pass to Camping

Campers must acquire the following permits to camp in Banff National Park:

• National Park Entry Permit – the Parks Canada Discovery Pass is available at the Banff East Gate, a Parks Canada visitor centre, or at campground kiosks. Available online at banfflakelouise.com
• Camping Permit – available online (reservation.pc.gc.ca), over the phone (1-877-RESERVE) or at the campground kiosk. Upon arrival, check-in at the campground kiosk.
• Fire Permit (if you would like to have a fire) – available at the time of reservation or at a campground kiosk.

More Camping Opportunities

Parks Canada operates a total of 14 campgrounds in Banff National Park, with 2,467 sites available during peak season. In addition to the seven campgrounds in this brochure, the Lake Louise area offers additional options for camping, including campgrounds in close proximity to the village of Lake Louise and along the scenic Icefields Parkway.
Where to Camp

**Johnston Canyon Campground**

This campground is a good option for a more rustic and authentic camping experience. Sites are available for tents and small RVs (up to 27 feet). Its central location, along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A) only 25 km from the town of Banff, provides access to a number of unique attractions, including Johnston Canyon and the Ink Pots. Roam public transit is available to the town of Banff during summer.

**Construction Closure:**
Due to ongoing construction to replace and upgrade underground services, Johnston Canyon Campground is not expected to open in 2019. Please visit parkscanada.gc.ca/banffcamping for the most up-to-date information.

**Travel Restriction:**
From March 1 to June 25, travel is permitted along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A) between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. only. After 8:00 p.m., the campground can be accessed from the Trans-Canada Highway at Castle Junction.

**Castle Mountain Campground**

This campground is small and intimate and offers rustic, no-service camping in a beautiful wooded area along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A). Just 32 km from the town of Banff, the campground is suitable for tents or small RVs (up to 24 feet), and is close to nearby attractions, such as Silvertone Falls and Johnston Canyon. Sites are available on a first come, first serve basis only. Self-register as you enter Castle Mountain Campground. Pay by leaving your credit card information or bring exact cash.

**Human food kills wildlife.**

**Do not litter.**
Located 15 minutes from the town of Banff and close to Lake Minnewanka, this rustic, no-service campground is beautifully situated on the shores of Two Jack Lake. It is perfect for tents or small RVs (up to 27 feet) and offers lakeside sites, 10 oTENTik sites, mountain views and access to the lake for non-motorized boating.

This campground offers a more secluded and authentic camping experience. Located just minutes from Lake Minnewanka and nearby attractions, and 15 minutes from the town of Banff, this rustic, no-service campground has scenic sites available for tents or RVs up to 24 feet, as well as Equipped Campsites.

Looking for a scenic lake experience?

Two Jack Lake Day-use Area
Take Roam public transit route 6 on Lake Minnewanka Road to the Two Jack Lake Day-use Area.

Take your flip flops and picnic blanket and enjoy spectacular views from the edge of Two Jack Lake. On sunny days, dip your toes into the fresh mountain waters, and enjoy the views from the small peninsula at this popular spot.

Visit a Parks Canada visitor centre or parkscanada.gc.ca/banff for more ideas on what to do in Banff National Park.

Take Public Transit.
Public transit is available to many top destinations and is free from most campgrounds. Leave your car or RV at your site and come explore.
Transit info: pc.gc.ca/banff-transit
Town of Banff parking: banffparking.ca
Shuttles and more: explorethepark.ca
Real-time Parks Canada info: pc.gc.ca/BanffNow
Maps: A Parks Canada visitor centre or the Roam transit office

Two Jack Lakeside Campground
74 sites

Legend
- Kiosk
- Tents
- RVs
- Trailers
- Trail

Discover a nearby canyon

Stewart Canyon – Easy Hike
3 km round trip; minimal elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
Stewart Canyon is located at the Lake Minnewanka reservoir, 3 km north of the campground on Lake Minnewanka road. This area is popular and the parking lot often fills up. Consider taking Roam public transit route 6.

From the Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, this low-elevation trail follows the shoreline to a bridge spanning the walls of Stewart Canyon. Watch the Cascade River as it flows into the lake.

Visit a Parks Canada visitor centre or parkscanada.gc.ca/banff for more ideas on what to do in Banff National Park.

Two Jack Main Campground
380 sites

Put garbage in its proper place.
Evening Theatre Programs

Join park interpreters as they share stories and interesting facts about Banff National Park’s natural and cultural heritage. All programs are free and for adults and kids alike! These programs are included in your national park entry fee.

Where: Wolf’s Den Theatre at Tunnel Mountain Village II Campground (indoor theatre)

When: 7 nights per week; 7:30 p.m., June 22 – September 1

Evening theatre programs are approximately 40 minutes.

Give us space. Do not approach wildlife.
Tunnel Mountain Village I Campground

Located within close proximity to the town of Banff, this campground offers a more traditional camping experience with mountain views, fire pits for cooking, and access to hiking and biking trails. This campground has options to suit many camping preferences and has a limited number of large campsites available.

Due to ongoing construction to replace and upgrade underground services, Tunnel Mountain Village I Campground may be closed in 2019. Please visit parksCanada.gc.ca/banffcamping for the most up-to-date information.

Evening Theatre Program

Where: Raven’s Nest Theatre at Tunnel Mountain Village I Campground (outdoor theatre)
When: 7 nights per week; 7:30 p.m., June 22 – September 1

Evening theatre programs are approximately 40 minutes.

Legend

- Kiosk
- Trailers
- Washrooms
- Shower
- Food Locker
- Dish Washing Station
- Recycling/Waste Disposal
- Theatre
- Accessible Parking
- Room Public Transit Stop

Tunnel Mountain Village I Campground

618 sites

Take Public Transit

Transit info: pc.gc.ca/banff-transit
Town of Banff parking, banffparking.ca
Shuttle and more: explorethepark.ca
Real-time Parks Canada info: pc.gc.ca/banffnow
Maps: A Parks Canada visitor centre or the Roam transit office

Wildlife Need Your Help

#WildlifeRules in Banff National Park

Banff National Park is a gateway to nature, adventure and discovery. The chance to observe wildlife as they go about their natural lives is a fascinating experience that draws millions of people to the park each year.

Along with this opportunity, however, comes the responsibility to treat wildlife with the respect they deserve. Follow these #WildlifeRules to protect wildlife and keep Banff National Park a special place. Learn more at parksCanada.gc.ca/WildlifeRules and throughout this guide.

Wildlife Rule #1: Help keep animals away from human food.

Human food kills wildlife.

Wildlife that eat human food or garbage become aggressive with people. This puts both people and wildlife at risk of being hurt or killed.

Properly store all food and scented items.

A clean campsite or picnic area does not have anything that will attract wildlife (food, garbage, food-related or scented items). Never leave these items unattended:

- Coolers – full or empty
- Food – wrapped, unwrapped or in containers
- Garbage/wrappers
- Dishes/pots/cutlery – clean or dirty
- Beverage containers – full or empty
- Pet food/bowls – full or empty
- Bottles/cans – open or unopened
- Scented products – such as shampoo, toothpaste, candles, citronella, dish soap, sunscreen, lip balm, dish towels
- Barbecues – clean or dirty
- Any other items used for food preparation or that have a smell or scent

Never leave food or scented items unattended or in a tent for even a minute.

ALL food-related and scented items MUST be stored away in a vehicle, a hard-sided trailer or RV, or in a campground food storage locker.
Always keep your campsite and picnic area clean.

When you are done cooking or eating at your picnic table, all food, food-related and scented items MUST be stored:
• In a hard-sided vehicle, trailer or motor home, NOT in tents or tent trailers
• In campground food storage lockers
Non-food items such as lawn chairs, tables or lanterns may be left outside. Items such as coolers, cook stoves, dish towels and toothpaste must be properly stored.
Dump dish water down outdoor sinks or at the sani-dump in campgrounds.

Wildlife Rule #2: Put garbage in the wildlife-proof garbage bins.

Wildlife will feed on garbage: littering means feeding wildlife. Ensure all garbage and recycling are disposed in wildlife-proof bins immediately.
• If you see garbage or recycling left outside in the town of Banff, please inform Bylaw Services at 403-762-1218 (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week).
• After hours, please call Parks Canada Banff Dispatch at 403-762-1470.

How to use the wildlife-proof garbage bins.

Place your hand inside the handle and push it to the very back to release the latch.
Raise your arm to open the lid. Dispose of garbage.
Lower the lid. Ensure the lid is closed tight before leaving.

Wildlife Rule #3: Give wildlife the space they need.

For photos, do not surround, crowd or follow an animal. Use zoom or show the animal in its natural surroundings and crop the image later.

Do not startle wildlife. If you make them move, you are too close. Give us space.

Dogs stress wildlife.

Dogs cause stress for wildlife. Dogs, like wolves and coyotes, may be seen as a threat. Off-leash dogs can trigger aggressive behaviour from wildlife such as grizzly bears and elk. To prevent unsafe situations, it is your responsibility to:

Ensure your dog is on a leash and under control at all times.
Pick up and dispose of your pet’s waste in a garbage bin.

Dogs are not allowed on some trails: parkscanda.gc.ca/banfftrails
Consider leaving your dog at home if you plan to camp, hike or go into the backcountry.

Wildlife Rule #4: Slow down. Obey speed limits.

If you see wildlife by the road, slow down, stay in your vehicle and move on.
• Be aware of the traffic around you.
• Pull over where safe to do so.
• Turn on hazard lights.
• Stay in your vehicle.
• Watch for a few moments, take a quick photo, and then move on.
• If a traffic jam develops, move on. It is unsafe for people and wildlife.

Keeping Your Children Safe.

• Bears, cougars, wolves and coyotes may be curious about children and can attack them.
• Keep children in immediate sight and within close reach at all times.
• Children should avoid playing in or near areas with tall grass or dense bushes.
• Never allow children to pet, feed or pose with wildlife.
Rules and Regulations

General

In addition to keeping a clean campsite, a number of regulations are in effect to ensure campers have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Campgrounds and campsite sizes have been designed to reduce our impact on the ecosystem. Exceeding the maximum occupancy of a campsite places stress on the campgrounds and the natural environment.

• A maximum of two vehicles, two standard-size tents, and six people (including children) are permitted on each site.
• Check out or re-register by – 11 a.m.
• Maximum stay – 14 nights
• Camping is only permitted in a designated campground and site.
• Vehicles and tents must be within your designated site and on the gravel pad, not on vegetation.
• Do not tie anything to the trees (this includes tarps). Tarps should be secured using poles.

Respect Your Neighbours

People love to camp because of the opportunity it provides to escape the noise of the city and enter the peace and quiet of nature. Even quiet conversations can carry through a forested area. Excessive noise is not permitted at any time. Any disturbance should be reported immediately to campground staff or a Park warden.

Quiet Hours – Are in effect from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily. During quiet hours, music, campfires, alcohol and cannabis are prohibited.

Alcohol and cannabis – Open alcohol and cannabis are not permitted between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. daily. During summer long weekends, a complete ban on the possession of alcohol and cannabis is in effect at all campgrounds. See page 15.

Generator Use – Only permitted between the hours of 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. daily.

Visitors – Only site occupants are permitted on a campsite after 11 p.m.

Campfires

Having a campfire is one of the most enjoyable things to do when camping. In order to keep your campfire safe for you and for the environment, adhere to the following regulations:

Permit – Each registered party wanting to have a campfire must purchase a fire permit. Permits are available when reserving your site, at the campground or a self-registration kiosk.

Fire Size – Fires must be contained within the metal fire ring provided. It is illegal to have a fire outside of a designated ring. To reduce the negative impact of campfires on the environment, keep your fires to a reasonable size—stack the firewood no higher than the top of the ring.

Wood – Only burn wood obtained from the campground woodlot. Do not burn food or garbage or collect deadfall from the surrounding forest for burning. Use an axe to make your own kindling from the firewood provided.

Times – Campfires are permitted from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. Fires must be attended at all times. Refer to the Alcohol, Cannabis and Fire Bans section on page 15 for more information.

Fishing

A national park fishing permit is required. Permits are available at Parks Canada visitor centres, the Lake Minnewanka boat dock or various retail outlets in the area. Pick up a copy of the Fishing Regulations Summary to learn about special rules related to fishing in a national park.

Failure to Comply

Parks Canada staff are here to help and may enter your site to remind you of these regulations. Campers who fail to comply with keeping a clean campsite and other regulations may have their camping permit revoked without a refund. Campers may be charged under the Canada National Parks Act and National Parks Campground Regulations, be required to appear in court, and could pay fines up to $25 000. The permit holder is responsible for ensuring the campsite is maintained in a satisfactory condition.

Alcohol, Cannabis and Fire Bans

From May to September, a number of policies are in place to ensure visitors get a good night's sleep. An alcohol and cannabis consumption ban and a fire ban are in effect daily at campgrounds during quiet hours from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. During summer long weekends, a complete ban on the possession of alcohol and cannabis is in effect at all campgrounds.

Please note: there is a difference between a ban on the consumption of alcohol/cannabis and a ban on possession.

Ban on consumption: alcohol and cannabis are permitted at registered campsites but may not be open or consumed during quiet hours.

Ban on possession: alcohol and cannabis are not permitted at any time.

Slow down, my cubs live here.

Obey speed limits.

Wardens

Park wardens are the primary peace officers in the national park campgrounds and are responsible for protecting Banff National Park and ensuring you have a safe and enjoyable experience. Campers are legally required to comply with requests by park wardens. Your cooperation is appreciated.
Respect Your Neighbours and Wildlife

Quiet hours
11 p.m.—7 a.m.

Generator use
9 a.m.—10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.—7 p.m.

No campfires
11 p.m.—7 a.m.

No alcohol and no cannabis consumption*
11 p.m.—7 a.m.

No littering and keep a clean campsite at all times.

Do not feed any wildlife.

Do not approach wildlife. Give them space.

Pets must be on a leash and under control at all times.

Violators will be charged, be required to appear in court, and could pay fines up to $25 000.

* During summer long weekends, a complete ban on the possession of alcohol and cannabis is in effect at all campgrounds. See page 15.