The Canadian Rocky Mountain national parks are home to wildlife, including elk, wolves, cougars, and the remaining grizzly and black bear populations in North America. To successfully raise their young and sustain a healthy population, wildlife need access to as much quality habitat with as few human intrusions as possible.

Be aware of possible encounters with wildlife, even on roads and paved trails.

Tips:
- Carry bear spray with you at all times, ensure it is at hand, and know how to use it. To watch a video about how to use bear spray, visit: parkscanada.gc.ca/bearspray
- Slow down and make noise. Your speed and quietness puts you at risk for sudden wildlife encounters. Slow down through shrubbery areas and when approaching blind corners. Travel in groups, be alert and always look ahead.
- Report bear, cougar, wolf and coyote sightings and encounters to Parks Canada staff at 403-762-1470, when it is safe to do so.

Banff National Park is Canada’s first and most famous national park. The variety of paved roads and trails in the Banff area make biking an excellent way to explore this special place. This guide will help you plan an enjoyable and safe biking experience.

Wildlife and People

These routes are great for beginners, children, and riders seeking a gentle adventure. Mostly paved, these easy rides have minimal elevation changes and offer spectacular views. Bring a picnic or snack and enjoy one of the rest stops along these rides. Always remember to pack out everything you bring in.

Family Friendly Rides

Sundance

3.7 km one way
Starting Point: Cave and Basin National Historic Site
This paved trail is perfect for families with kids and bike trailers as it winds along the Bow River and climbs gently to the Sundance Canyon picnic area where you can explore a lovely creekside hiking trail. To experience the canyon, bring a bike lock.

Tunnel Campground Loop

6.4 km loop
Starting Point: Tunnel Mountain Campground
Perfect for beginners and children, this simple trail forms a large loop around Tunnel Mountain Campground. Water tires are best for this loose gravel trail and there are many places to stop and rest. Be sure to watch out for strolling campers, elk, dear and coyotes.

Banff Legacy Trail

29 km one way
Starting Points: Valleyview, Cascade Ponds, Vermilion Lakes and Fireside day-use areas on end of Banff Avenue
The Banff Legacy Trail offers cyclists, runners, skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts 29 km of paved trails and roadways with breathtaking views, rest stops and picnic areas. The trail connects the Bow Valley Parkway with the Town of Banff, Cascade Ponds, the Banff East Gate and the Town of Canmore. This three-season trail is typically snow-free and rideable from April to October. An absolute must.

Easy Rides

Lakeside Cruising

If your ultimate ride includes reflecting by a lake or river, Vermilion Lakes Drive (5) should be on your list. Several docks and benches along this flat paved road provide opportunities to sightsee, take photographs, or have a lunch break.

Flora and Fauna

Lake Minnewanka Road (6) rolls along through the area’s rich montane habitat. The mix of forest and open grassland is home to bighorn sheep, deer, elk and bears. This 13.1 km loop offers a pleasant ride through varied terrain and a chance to stop at the area’s popular sightseeing locations of Bankhead, Two Jack Lake, Lake Minnewanka and Cascade Ponds.

The Original Highway

One of the most breathtaking road rides in the area, the Bow Valley Parkway (8) offers something for everyone. This classic ride on the original road through Banff National Park gently rises and falls as it meanders past open meadows, dense forests, and soaring mountains. Most often started in Banff, riders can choose one of the many picnic areas located along the parkway as a final destination or choose to embark on full day trip to Lake Louise making for a 115 km day back to Banff. Please ride in single file as this road can be busy with vehicular traffic and be aware of your surroundings as you travel through this bustling wildlife corridor.

Moderate Rides

Lake Minnewanka Road

13.1 km loop
Starting Points: Cascade Ponds and Lake Minnewanka day-use area or the Banff Legacy Trail (3)
Lake Minnewanka Road is popular with cyclists and offers a pleasant ride through varied terrain, with panoramic views and many attractions including Cascade Ponds, Bankhead, Lake Minnewanka and Two Jack Lake. This narrow road can be busy, so ride with caution but be on the lookout for bighorn sheep on the slopes above Two Jack Lake. Connector: Banff Legacy Trail (3).

Tunnel Mountain Drive/Road

10.7 km loop
Starting Point: Central Park parking area, West end of Buffalo Street
Start by heading east on Buffalo Street, rising gently past Surprise Corner with its outstanding view over Bow Falls and the world famous Fairmont Banff Springs. Continue climbing and bending around its lower slopes to join the Tunnel Mountain Road. Turn right (east) and pass the campgrounds for incredible views before you drop back down to the Banff Legacy Trail (3). Go left into town, or towards Lake Minnewanka. Elk and deer are common along this narrow roadway.

Norquay Road

6.1 km one way
Starting Point: Norquay Road, on the North side of the Trans-Canada Highway
This challenging climb up the mountain rewards riders with a spectacular panoramic view of the Banff townsite and surrounding Bow Valley. The Norquay Green Viewpoint opens onto a grassy slope – a great place to stop for a picnic lunch or for photos. From the viewpoint, the road continues up to the Norquay ski area. Watch for bighorn sheep near or on the road and the sharp turns, especially on the way down.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Rules of the Road

Always ride on the right, pass others on their left. If you are riding on a road with a sidewalk, stay on the road. Obey all traffic rules when riding on roads. At intersections, use hand signals to let drivers know which direction you will be traveling.

On highways, ride as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb. For your safety, it is recommended that you ride single file.

Stay within the posted speed limits.

Road closures, speed limits and traffic controls apply to bicyclists too. The Bow Valley Parkway (8) Mandatory Seasonal Travel Restriction applies to all travel, including bicyclists. From March 1st to June 25th, travel is not permitted between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. on the 17-kilometre section of the parkway from Johnston Canyon Campground to the Frideside Picnic Area. This is to ensure the area remains a high quality home for wildlife.

Be visible when riding at dusk, dawn, or night. Always have a white front light and red rear side reflectors and consider wearing reflective clothing.

Be bear aware. Cyclists are particularly susceptible to sudden, dangerous bear encounters because of the speed and silence of their travel. Be alert, make noise, slow down, carry bear spray, and look ahead.

Leave no trace. Be sure to pack out what you pack in – this includes all food and garbage. Leave natural and cultural objects undisturbed for others to discover.

Do the right thing – protect wildlife. Littering, feeding animals or harassing wildlife is illegal and violators may be charged under the Canada National Parks Act.

Share the Roads and Pathways

The bike trails in Banff National Park are all shared-use trails—expect to encounter other vehicles and horseback riders. Ride in control and be ready to stop at any time.

If you are passing other bikers, walkers or runners, please be courteous. Use your voice or use a bell to let them know you will be passing on their left so they have a chance to move over.

Safety

You are responsible for your own safety. Be prepared for a breakdown or accident. Know how to repair your bike and carry the necessary tools and parts.

- Select a trip which best suits your group’s abilities, experience, interests, equipment and the time you have available. Be conservative—start with easier, shorter routes.
- Park Canada staff or bike shop employees can help you select a suitable route.
- Wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.
- Bring extra food, water and clothing. Surface water may be contaminated and unsafe for drinking. Mountain weather changes quickly and it can snow any month of the year.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.
- Travel with others and keep your group together.
- Avoid wearing earbuds. Be alert at all times.
- Ask for advice at the Banff visitor centre about route conditions, descriptions and weather.

Difficult Rides

Norquay Road

6.1 km one way
Starting Point: Norquay Road, on the South side of the Trans-Canada Highway
This route is a gradual, but continuous climb ending at the Banff Upper Hot Springs, with an elevation gain of 1,400 m. This road provides riders with exceptional views of the Bow Valley and the rugged profile of Mount Rundle. Mountain Avenue offers ample width for edgers, however, vehicular traffic can be heavier during the summer.

Mountain Avenue

3.4 km one way
Starting Point: Mountain Avenue, on the South side of the Banff Avenue Bridge
This route is a gradual, but continuous climb ending at the Banff Upper Hot Springs. With an elevation gain of 1,400 m, this road provides riders with exceptional views of the Bow Valley and the rugged profile of Mount Rundle. Mountain Avenue offers ample width for edgers, however, vehicular traffic can be heavier during the summer.

Sunshine Road

8.2 km one way
Starting Point: Sunshine Ski Area Road, 7 km West of Banff on the Trans-Canada Highway
The Sunshine Road begins its steady rise almost immediately, and offers a few steep ramps along the way to its termination at the ski area parking at the base of the Sunshine gondola. Vehicular traffic is moderate in the summer months, but be aware as the road is narrow throughout its length. Watch for wildlife along this twisty mountain road.

More Information

Banff Visitor Centres:
224 Banff Avenue and 327 Railway Avenue
403-762-1550
parkscanada.gc.ca/banff

Trail Conditions Report:
parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails

Environment Canada Weather Forecast:
403-762-2088
weather.gc.ca

For bike rentals, Banff area maps and guidebooks, visit a local retail bike shop.

Take Roam public transit with your bike.

In case of EMERGENCY, call 911 or satellite phone: 403-762-4506.
Cell phone coverage is not reliable throughout the national parks.

Également offert en français
Family Friendly Rides

- Vermilion Lakes Drive
  - 3.7 km one way
  - Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m

Easy Rides

- Tunnel Campground Loop
  - 6.4 km loop
  - Elevation gain 70 m

- Banff Legacy Trail (Banff to Canmore)
  - 3 km one way
  - Elevation gain 24 m, elevation loss 113 m

Moderate Rides

- Sundance
  - 3.7 km loop
  - Elevation gain 160 m, elevation loss 160 m

- Tunnel Mountain Drive/Road
  - 10.7 km loop
  - Elevation gain 180 m, elevation loss 180 m

- Norquay Road
  - 6.1 km one way
  - Elevation gain 327 m, elevation loss 12 m

- Mountain Avenue
  - 3.4 km one way
  - Elevation gain 214 m, elevation loss 32 m

- Sunshine Road (Trans-Canada Highway to Sunshine Village parking lot)
  - 8.2 km one way
  - Elevation gain 271 m, no elevation loss

Difficult Rides

- Bow Valley Parkway (Banff to Lake Louise)
  - 57.5 km one way
  - Elevation gain 340 m, elevation loss 177 m

- Bow Valley Parkway
  - 10.7 km loop
  - Elevation gain 160 m, elevation loss 160 m

- Lake Minnewanka Road
  - 13.1 km loop
  - Elevation gain 160 m, elevation loss 160 m

- Bow Valley Parkway
  - 6.1 km loop
  - Elevation gain 180 m, elevation loss 180 m

- Lake Minnewanka Road
  - 13.1 km loop
  - Elevation gain 180 m, elevation loss 180 m

- Tunnel Mountain Road
  - 8.2 km one way
  - Elevation gain 271 m, no elevation loss

All elevations are an approximate to give riders an idea of what to expect on each route. Elevations are calculated as the total amount of elevation gained and the total amount of elevation lost (all the ups and downs) over the entire distance of an out-and-back trail or a loop.

Looking to ramp up your adventure? Pick up the Mountain Biking Trails Guide at a Parks Canada visitor centre or view online at pc.gc.ca/banff-brochures

DONE WITH THIS BROCHURE? Please return to a park facility or share it with others.

HOW WAS YOUR TRIP? Please send your comments to banff.vrc@pc.gc.ca

For fares and schedules, visit roamtransit.com