Banff National Park
parkscanada.gc.ca

Winter Trails in the Lake Louise Area

© Banff Lake Louise Tourism / Paul Zizka

National Conservation Plan

Parks Canada / Parcs Canada

Canada

WINTER
THE SEASON TO PLAY IN...

Welcome to winter in Banff National Park, Canada's first national park. Whether you're here for a family adventure or a relaxing getaway, there is no better way to experience the Lake Louise area's pristine mountain landscape than on foot. Lace-up your boots, wax up your skis, strap on a pair of snowshoes and enjoy one of our many winter trails.

© C. Douce

SEASON

Although snow can fall at any time of the year in Banff National Park, optimal skiing and snowshoeing runs from mid-November to early April. Lower elevations in the park may be available for hiking year-round.

CROSS-COUNTRY TRAILS

Cross-country ski trails are groomed regularly, especially after a fresh snowfall. Trails are classified as novice, easy, more difficult or most difficult based on the nature of the terrain and width of the trail. Please look at the map legend for trail difficulty ratings as some trails contain sections of varying levels of difficulty. Actual difficulty can vary day to day depending on snow conditions.

HIKING AND SNOWSHOEING TRAILS

Most of the hiking and snowshoeing trails outlined in this guide follow summer hiking trails. They are not groomed or maintained during the winter season and may be slippery.

Weather can change quickly and dramatically in Banff National Park. Be prepared to adjust your activity based on current conditions. As a general rule, if there is fresh snow, conditions may be better suited for snowshoeing; if the snow is old and well-travelled, it may be better for hiking.

If you're looking for trails not in this guide, consult with Parks Canada visitor centres for more trip planning assistance.

Cross-Country Ski Trails

TRAILS IN LAKE LOUISE (See Map A)

1 1 Moraine Lake Road
15.6 km return, 250 m elevation gain.
Double trackset with skating lane

Climbing steadily, this trail includes both gently rolling and hilly stretches. Tracksetting ends at a viewpoint of Consolation Valley and the Ten Peaks. Beyond the viewpoint, the road crosses large avalanche paths.

2 2 Fairview
4.6 km one way, 60 m elevation gain.
Single trackset

A beautiful trail, the Fairview runs through sections of open clearings and snow-draped woods. It's also possible to make a 7.5 km loop (160 m total elevation gain) using the Fairview trail, the Moraine Lake Road and the Tramline trail: the recommended direction is counter-clockwise.

3 Tramline
4.8 km one way, 195 m elevation gain.
Double trackset

This trail runs from valley bottom to Lake Louise at a steady 3% rise, following the old grade of the tramline that once connected the train station and the Chateau Lake Louise.

4 4 4 Lake Louise Loop
4.1 km loop, 15 m elevation gain.
Double trackset

This loops features a wide open trail across frozen Lake Louise, followed by a fun "up & down" trip back through the woods – just 100 metres uphill from the lakeshore walking path. Use the Fairview – Lake Louise Connector trail to ski directly from the parking lot onto the lake. Tracksetting ends at the back of the lake, as the trail up the valley crosses large avalanche paths.

5 5 5 5 Upper Telemark
1.4 km one way (65 m elevation loss).
Double trackset

This trail has several steep and technically demanding hills. If you find them too imposing, they can be avoided by taking the "Hillside" bypass. Start in front of the Chateau Lake Louise as if going to Lake Agnes, then turn right onto trail #5. Once up and behind the Chateau, ski steeply down to the Great Divide and Lower Telemark trails.

6 6 Great Divide or "Old 1A"
20 km return, 60 m elevation loss.
Double trackset with skating lane

Mostly flat, but trending gently downhill, this trail takes you to the "Great Divide" – the BC / Alberta border at km 7. From here, you can continue into Yoho National Park another 3.5 km (irregular grooming) to the Lake O'Hara parking lot.

7 7 Peyto
2.2 km one way, 45m elevation loss.
Double trackset

The trail starts at the upper Deer Lodge parking lot, and connects skiers to the Great Divide and Lower Telemark trails on a gentler grade than trail #5.

8 Lower Telemark
4.0 km one way (110 m elevation loss).
Double trackset

Park at Great Divide trailhead, ski 700 metres, and turn right at the #8 trail sign. After 4.0 km of twists and turns, exit back onto the Great Divide trail, and turn left to return to your vehicle.

9 9 Bow River Loop
6.6 km or shorter versions of the loop, no elevation gain.
Single trackset

Mostly flat, following the river. To start, park near the Station Restaurant or just past the campground kiosk, or use the connecting trail from the Post Hotel or the Samson Mall. This is a multi-use trail.

10 Campground Loop
2.2 km outer loop, 15 m elevation gain.
Double trackset with skating lane

This trail loops around and through the campground on gentle terrain. For access, park just past the campground kiosk.

11 Townsite
0.7 km one way, no elevation gain.
Double trackset

This short trail provides access to the northwest end of Village Road, near all the village hotels.

20 Pipestone Loop
13.3 km loop, 190m elevation gain.
Single trackset

Watch for the occasional tight corner and be cautious on the hills. The recommended direction for the outer loop is counter-clockwise.

21 Hector
3.0 km one way, 95 m elevation gain.
Single trackset

This trail features good views at both a major fire protection clearing and tranquil Pipestone Pond.

22 Drummond
2.7 km one way, 24 m elevation loss.
Single trackset

If you need a breather, this is the only flat trail in the Pipestone trail system.

23 Merlin
2.3 km one way, 55 m elevation gain.
Single trackset

Watch for the old pioneer log cabins along this leg of the Pipestone.

TRAILS ON THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY (See Map C)

12 Baker Creek to Protection Mountain Campground
3.5 km one way, no elevation gain.
Single trackset

This trail, (labelled "#2" on site), runs parallel to the parkway, and starts across the road from the Baker Creek Chalets.

12a Protection Mountain Campground to Castle Mountain Lookout
6.4 km one way, 15 m elevation gain.
Single trackset.

This new single track set trail links the two existing cross country ski trails on the Bow Valley Parkway. Travel this unique path to discover a new perspective on the original auto-route through Banff National Park.

13 Castle Junction
8.7 km of trails, 31 m elevation gain.
Single trackset

The trail runs from Castle Mountain Lookout to Castle Junction. At the junction, a series of interconnected single track set trails wind through spruce forest.

Hiking and Snowshoeing Trails

TRAILS IN LAKE LOUISE (See Map A)

14 Lake Louise Lakeshore
4 km return, no elevation gain.

Starting in front of the Chateau Lake Louise, this trail features classic views and at lake's end, a 100 m tall frozen waterfall.

15 Fairview Lookout
2 km return, 100 m elevation gain.

This steep trail ends at a viewpoint overlooking historic Chateau Lake Louise. Start by facing the Lake at the World Heritage Site rock. Look left and follow the trail signs for Fairview Lookout. Warning: return via the same path; the loop option is not safe in the winter due to avalanches.

16 Louise Creek
5.6 km return, 195 m elevation gain.

This is the best pedestrian option from the village to the lake. From Samson Mall, walk along Lake Louise Drive to the Bow River bridge. Cross and look for the trailhead on the downstream (south) side of the bridge.

17 "Highline" Trail to Paradise Creek
9 km return, 60 m elevation gain.

An excellent snowshoeing option. The trailhead is the same as Fairview Lookout, but at the Lookout turnoff, continue for another 40 metres on the main trail then turn left when you see the horse trail sign.

Avalanche risk: rated as Simple Class 1 terrain – at km 1, the trail crosses the runout zone of an avalanche path which rarely runs.

18 Mirror Lake, via Lake Agnes hiking trail
5.4 km return, 295 m elevation gain.

From the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, follow the main Lake Agnes trail as it rises through the forest. Sections of this portion of the trail cross avalanche terrain.

Avalanche risk: Beyond Mirror Lake, the trail is rated as Challenging Class 2 terrain for avalanche exposure and travel requires appropriate training and equipment.

19 Taylor Lake (map C)
12.6 km return, 585 m elevation gain.

This challenging trail ends in a scenic hanging valley below Mount Bell. Start at the parking lot 18 km east of Lake Louise or 8 km west of Castle Junction on the Trans-Canada Highway. Warning: Connecting trails to O'Brien Lake or Panorama Ridge take you into avalanche terrain.

26 Laggan's Loop
1 km loop, 50 m elevation gain

Head up the Mirror Lake trail approximately 60m on the right On the sunny side of Lake Louise, gaining elevation along the 'benches' of the Little Beehive, trek through the mature sub-alpine forest and explore the quiet serenity.

TRAILS IN BOW SUMMIT AREA ON ICEFIELDS PARKWAY #93N (See Map B)

24 Peyto Lake viewpoint
1.5 km return, 25 m elevation gain.

From the parking lot there are two loops. Start by following either the unplowed upper road or take the official trail from the north end of the parking lot. From the viewpoint, a second loop runs through gladed forest.

25 Bow Lake Meadows
8 km return, 80 m elevation gain.

Park near NumTiJah Lodge. From the lot, snowshoe past the lodge for about 150 metres and then turn north on the old horse trail into the meadows. This trail is difficult to find once it's snow covered, so expect to find your own route and break trail.

Lake Louise

© Banff Lake Louise Tourism/Paul Zizka

Trail Classification

Novice
- Suitable for any type of visitor.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

Easy
- Suitable for any type of visitor.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

More Difficult
- Suitable for most visitors with some experience and at least an average level of fitness.
- May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections.

Most Difficult
- Suitable for experienced visitors with above average level of fitness.
- May experience major elevation gain with long steep sections.

*Note: Easy and moderate trails can become difficult trails due to weather change, icy conditions and poor visibility.

You Are In A Special Place

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards involved with outdoor recreational activities, especially during the winter. Be prepared. Even short trips around the village of Lake Louise can have serious consequences. Minimize your risk by planning ahead.

- Ask for advice at the Lake Louise Visitor Centre regarding current trail conditions, weather and trail classifications.
- Check the trail reports online **pc.gc.ca/trails**. The trail report is updated as conditions change, rates their overall condition as well as lists warnings and closures; cross country ski trails include a grooming report.
- Study trail descriptions and maps before starting out and always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Tell somebody where you're going, when you will be back and who to call if you don't return.
- Be prepared for emergencies and unexpected changes in weather.

AVALANCHES:

You don't need to venture far to be in avalanche terrain. Avalanche hazard begins in November and persists through May. Designated winter trails follow portions of summer hiking trails but not all sign-posted destinations are safe for winter travel. If you are planning to travel in areas beyond the trails described in this publication, you may be in avalanche terrain. Make sure you have the appropriate knowledge, skills and rescue equipment when travelling in backcountry terrain.

For information about a trail you're considering, contact a Parks Canada Visitor Centre and visit **pc.gc.ca/avalanche** and **avalanche.ca** for ratings, maps, and forecasting tools.

TRAIL ETIQUETTE:

- Do not walk or snowshoe on ski tracks, travel beside them
- When climbing, please yield the right of way to descending skiers
- Keep to the right when meeting oncoming skiers
- When taking a break or if you fall, move off the trail as quickly as possible
- When passing say "track please" and pass on left side
- Leave no trace. Pack out all garbage.

DOGS:

If you are planning to take your dog out on the trail, please respect the following:

- Dogs must be kept on leash and under control at all times. Dogs can add stress to wildlife; just the sight of a dog can remind some animals of predators like wolves and coyotes.
- Pick up after your dog and use the waste bins provided.
- Dogs must stay on the far outer edge of track set and groomed trails.
- Dogs are not allowed on the following groomed ski trails: (1) Moraine Lake Road, (2) Fairview, (3) Tramline, (5) Upper Telemark (6) Great Divide, (7) Peyto and (8) Lower Telemark.

More things to do in Lake Louise…

LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE

Spend time learning about the history of Lake Louise. The Lake Louise Visitor Centre has exhibits focusing on the geology of the Canadian Rockies. View an interactive video featuring Dr. G.O. Morph, and discover gems on the history, wildlife, and avalanches in the area. The Visitor Centre also has maps, brochures, permits, backcountry reservations, up-to-date weather, trail, avalanche and road reports, and event information.

XPLORER'S PROGRAM

After a day of trail blazing, kids and their families can continue their exploration of Banff National Park through a learning challenge to become a Parks Canada Xplorer. Pick up an Xplorer's booklet filled with fun activities like quizzes, crossword puzzles, and scavenger hunts to discover cool facts about Banff National Park. Once 6 out of 16 activities are completed, children aged 6 to 11 are eligible to become an Xplorer's member by participating in a formal or informal ceremony to receive a certificate and special souvenir. Those interested in sleuthing their way through the park can visit the Parks Canada Visitor Centre in Lake Louise to pick up their booklet.

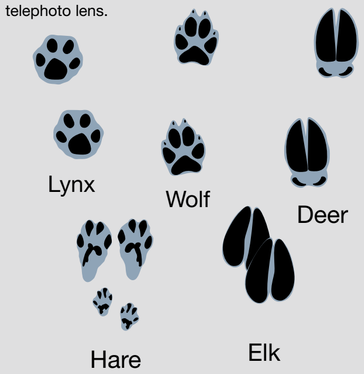
Bow Summit

© Banff Lake Louise Tourism

Wildlife

Winter offers a unique glimpse at wildlife because prints in the snow reveal the story of their movements. Learn how to identify a few tracks and find out whose habitat you're sharing.

It's a challenge for wildlife to survive through a Rocky Mountain winter, but you can help make it easier. Give wildlife lots of space and resist the urge to approach. Observe animals from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens.



Contact Information

PARKS CANADA LAKE LOUISE VISITOR CENTRE

201 Village Road, Samson Mall, Lake Louise Village
Winter hours: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursday to Sunday
403-522-3833
pc.gc.ca/banff

Environment Canada Weather Forecast: 403-762-2088

Alberta Transportation Road Report: 511 (in Alberta) or Out-of-Alberta 1-855-391-9743

BC Road Report: 1.800.550.4997

Avalanche Bulletin: avalanche.ca

Attractions: Banff Lake Louise Tourism, 403-762-8421
banfflakelouise.com

EMERGENCY

In case of emergency, call **911** or
Banff Dispatch **403-762-4506**

Cell and satellite phones are not always reliable throughout the park.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada
Winter Trails in the Lake Louise Area.
Catalogue No: R64-372/2015E
ISBN: 978-1-100-25744-0

Également offert en français

Cross-Country Ski Trails

TRAILS IN LAKE LOUISE

1 **Moraine Lake Road** (map A)
15.6 km return, 250 m elevation gain. Double trackset with skating lane.

2 **Fairview** (map A)
4.6 km one way, 60 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

3 **Tramline** (map A)
4.8 km one way, 195 m elevation gain. Double trackset.

4 **Lake Louise Loop** (map A)
4.1 km loop, 15 m elevation gain. Double trackset.

5 **Upper Telemark** (map A)
1.4 km one way, 65 m elevation loss. Double trackset.

6 **Great Divide or "Old 1A"** (map A)
20 km return, 60 m elevation loss. Double trackset with skating lane.

7 **Peyto** (map A)
2.2 km one way, 45 m elevation loss. Double trackset.

8 **Lower Telemark** (map A)
4.0 km one way, 110 m elevation loss. Double trackset.

9 **Bow River Loop** (map A)
6.6 km or shorter versions of the loop, no elevation gain. Single trackset.

10 **Campground Loop** (map A)
2.2 km outer loop, 15 m elevation gain. Double trackset with skating lane.

11 **Townsite** (map A)
0.7 km one way, no elevation gain. Double trackset.

20 **Pipestone Loop** (map A)
13.3 km loop, 190 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

21 **Hector** (map A)
3.0 km one way, 95 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

22 **Drummond** (map A)
2.7 km one way, 24 m elevation loss. Single trackset.

23 **Merlin** (map A)
2.3 km one way, 55 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

TRAILS ON THE BOW VALLEY PARKWAY

12 **Baker Creek to Protection Mountain Campground** (map C)
3.5 km one way, no elevation gain. Single trackset.

12a **Protection Mountain Campground to Castle Mountain Lookout** (map C)
6.4 km one way, 15 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

13 **Castle Junction** (map C)
8.7 km of trails, 31 m elevation gain. Single trackset.

Hiking and Snowshoeing Trails

TRAILS NEAR LAKE LOUISE

14 **Lake Louise Lakeshore** (map A)
4 km return, no elevation gain.

15 **Fairview Lookout** (map A)
2 km return, 100 m elevation gain.

16 **Louise Creek** (map A)
5.6 km return, 195 m elevation gain.

17 **"Highline" Trail to Paradise Creek** (map A)
9 km return, 60 m elevation gain.

18 **Mirror Lake, via Lake Agnes hiking trail** (map A) *5.4 km return, 295 m elevation gain.*

19 **Taylor Lake** (map C)
12.6 km return, 585 m elevation gain.

26 **Laggan's Loop** (small inset)
1 km loop, 50 m elevation gain.

TRAILS IN BOW SUMMIT AREA ON ICEFIELDS PARKWAY #93N

24 **Peyto Lake viewpoint** (map B)
1.5 km return, 25 m elevation gain.

25 **Bow Lake Meadows** (map B)
8 km return, 80 m elevation gain.

Legend

Ski Trails
- Novice
- Novice Track & Skating
- Easy
- Easy Track & Skating
- More Difficult
- Most Difficult

Hiking/Snowshoe Trails

- Parks Canada Visitor Centre
- Warden Office
- Viewpoint
- Pedestrian Overpass
- Downhill Ski Area
- RV Campground
- Parking
- Washroom/Privy
- No Dogs

Share the trails
Partageons les sentiers

Save paper and share this guide with others.