

Canada: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies

Tour-Only Itinerary

Somewhere near the Continental Divide, a marmot greets you with a whistle. This is what wildlife looks like 7,000 feet above sea level in Banff's Sunshine Meadows. Waves of mountains stretch to the horizon, and infinite green meadows blaze with fireweed and purple fleabane. By the cobalt waters of Rock Isle Lake, you pause to absorb it all. Wildlife and breathtaking views are par for the course on this Banff walking tour in the Canadian Rockies. Moose outnumber people some mornings at your Kananaskis lodge, and "traffic jam" just means families of bighorn sheep crossing the road at Lake Minnewanka. North American nature doesn't get any grander.



Highlights

Gaze upon the glassy waters of Lake Minnewanka.

Hike to Stanley Glacier passing new growth trees to a gorgeous view of the glacier and waterfalls on the mountain faces.

Take in magnificent scenery in Banff National Park, pausing to appreciate the enduring beauty of the Canadian Rockies.

Learn about Banff's pioneers and artists on a guided historical tour.

Engage in farm-to-table dining experiences with traditional, fine cuisine.

Explore pristine Spray Valley Provincial Park in Kananaskis, as you hike the scenic Chester Lake Trail for gorgeous alpine lake views.

Stretch out by the warm fireplace with your group members at the end of each fulfilling day.

Spot local wildlife amid sweeping landscapes in what is sure to make a jaw-dropping photograph.

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with an average of 2 to 6 miles per day. The trails feature a combination of hardpack trails and easy terrain, mixed with moderate hills and uneven footpaths. On rainy days the footpaths and trails can be wet and muddy. Our Country Walkers van is available at specific meeting points for those who need assistance. Both morning and afternoon walking options are available most days. Ideal for enthusiastic beginners and experienced walkers. Several of the walks require a transfer from the hotel to the start of the walk. Our guides often use this time in the van for a morning route review so you can enjoy a more leisurely morning at breakfast.

DAY 1

Join your *Alberta: Banff & the Canadian Rockies* tour. Transfer to Banff. Warm-up walk

Lake Minnewanka; 4–6 miles, easy

Your guide(s) meet you at 12:00 p.m. in the lobby of your designated meeting point hotel in Calgary, Hotel Arts (119 – 12th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2R 0G8, Canada, Tel: 403.266.4611). Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking and plan to eat lunch before meeting your group.

If your arrival at the Calgary hotel is scheduled for later than 12:00 p.m. or if you are delayed, you must travel at your own expense to our Banff hotel. Banff Airporter (banffairporter.com) and Brewster Banff Airport Express (brewster.ca/transportation/brewster-banff-airport-express) offer shuttles between Calgary International Airport and Banff. Costs are approximately \$65 CAD per person one-way. Please contact the Moose Hotel and Suites to advise of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your Country Walkers guide(s). Please note that if you miss the Country Walkers' transfer from Calgary, you will miss the first walk in Banff. Once you arrive in Banff, check into your room. Meet your guide(s) as soon as they return from the walk with the rest of the group (around 5:00 p.m.).

Once you arrive in Banff with your guide(s) enjoy a first walk at Lake Minnewanka. As you follow its pathways along the glassy-surfaced lake, marvel at your first up-close views of Banff National Park, a stunning canvas of spruce and fir trees and rugged peaks skirted by pine-green forest.

Tonight, gather for a welcome reception followed by dinner in Banff.

Accommodation: Moose Hotel & Suites, Banff

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

Banff National Park. Banff Historical Tour. Lake Louise

Banff walking tour; 2 miles, easy. Lake Louise; 2.5-4 miles, easy to moderate

Satisfied from a hearty breakfast, head out for a historical walking tour of Banff followed by free time to visit the Whyte Museum and learn about the cultural heritage of the Canadian Rockies or browse the shops in town.

After lunch on your own in Banff, transfer to Lake Louise for a casual stroll along the lake. If time allows, ascend along the trail toward Plain of Six Glaciers. Transfer back to your hotel to relax.

Tonight, your guides will provide recommendations for dinner on your own.

Accommodation: Moose Hotel & Suites, Banff

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3

Stanley Glacier. Transfer to Kananaskis Lodge

Stanley Glacier Trail; 3 miles, easy to moderate OR 6.8 miles, easy to moderate

Awake to the cool mountain air and another full breakfast. Shuttle 30 minutes to Stanley Glacier, located in Kootenay National Park, where this half-day outing runs from the Vermillion River to a rockbound hanging valley containing Stanley Glacier. First, you will ascend along switchbacks to new growth forest, admiring sweeping views. Next, the slope flattens, past scree sections and boulders, to the waterfalls and a plateau overlooking the valley. During your walk, look for fossils by the big rock and learn how a 2003 forest fire has created a renewed ecosystem. The hike also traverses a thin portion of the Burgess Shale, which is a 505-million-year-old seabed preserved on the western slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Enjoy a boxed lunch in the Stanley Basin, with stunning views of the glacier, before retracing your way back down.

Transfer to your lodge in Kananaskis (1.5 hours driving time), your home for the next three nights. Upon arrival, check in and unwind before joining your group for dinner at the lodge.

Please note: For guests on our late September departures, you will hike to Stanley Glacier instead of Sunshine Meadows as the gondola and shuttle bus service to Sunshine Meadows does not operate from mid-September. Located in Kootenay National Park, this easy half-day outing runs from the Vermillion River to a rockbound hanging valley containing Stanley Glacier.

Accommodation: Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, Kananaskis Country

Alternate Accommodation: Crosswaters Resort, Kananaskis Country for the September 12-17, 2021 tour

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

Chester Lake. Afternoon tea and dinner at the lodge

Chester Lake; 6 miles, 1,391-ft. elevation gain, easy with some moderate sections or Karst Spring; 6 miles, 990-ft. elevation gain, easy with some moderate sections

After breakfast and a one-hour shuttle, you hike the Chester Lake Trail, one of the most scenic hikes in Spray Valley Provincial Park, in Kananaskis Country. The wide and easy-to-follow trail meanders through forests and stunning alpine meadows surrounded by towering peaks.

While it's a bit steep at points and there are a few switchbacks, the trail eventually opens into a scenic mountain valley. Enjoy a boxed lunch on the trail before returning to the lodge for an afternoon tea. Note: Because of Covid restrictions only massages are currently available at the spa. Maybe catch a nap before rejoining your group for another relaxing dinner at the lodge.

Accommodation: Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, Kananaskis Country

Alternate Accommodation: Crosswaters Resort, Kananaskis Country for the September 12-17 2021 tour

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Ptarmigan Cirque. Coal Mine Trail. Optional horseback riding. Dinner at the lodge

Ptarmigan Cirque; 3 miles, moderate, 760-ft. elevation gain. Coal Mine Trail; 3 miles, easy. 839-ft. elevation gain.

This morning, you journey to Elbow Sheep Wildland, the north end of Kananaskis Country and the start of the Ptarmigan Cirque, a high mountain bowl between Mount Arethusa and Mount Rae.

You begin climbing up the Highwood Pass through a forest of alpine larch, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. Along the way, the wooded path opens and levels out into a breathtaking circular alpine meadow filled with wildflowers, complete with a glacial stream. As you bask in the grand views of the meadow and surrounding mountain peaks, you enjoy a trailside snack by the waterfall while keeping an eye out for bighorn sheep. This loop trail is rated moderate due to a short section of steep switchbacks in the beginning. Aside from the switchbacks, the hike takes little effort.

Next, shuttle to the Coal Mine Trail. The coal mine operated from 1947 to 1952. This hike has a steady incline on a wide trail through the forest and then narrows and opens up to great views. Pause here to enjoy your bag lunch while the wind blows through the grass, and perhaps you will be inspired to make an Inuksuk before heading back down. Alternatively, you may prefer an optional afternoon horseback riding at Boundary Ranch. Your guides will provide more information on tour.

Tonight, you dine at the lodge. During our special farewell dinner, savor locally sourced food served family-style accompanied by wines from British Columbia.

Accommodation: Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, Kananaskis Country

Alternate Accommodation: Crosswaters Resort, Kananaskis Country for the September 12-17, 2021 tour

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Your *Alberta: Banff & the Canadian Rockies* tour concludes. Depart for home

Enjoy an early breakfast and bid farewell to your hosts. Then, shuttle to Calgary International Airport (YYC) at 8:15 a.m. (1 ½ hours travel time); you'll arrive by 9:45 a.m. for your return flight. We recommend a flight out of Calgary no earlier than 12:00 p.m.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional mountain accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 2 lunches and 1 dinner	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour (two guides for groups of 8 or more)	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓