

Canada: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies

Tour-Only Itinerary

Exceptional alpine scenery and deep valleys filled with ancient forests, moss-draped old-growth cedars or mountain meadows strewn with lichen-covered boulders await in Banff, Yoho and Glacier National Parks. Nestled in the Rocky Mountain foothills west of Calgary, lie native pastures on expansive ranches. Wildlife and breathtaking views are par for the course on this Rockies walking tour. Moose outnumber people some mornings at your Kananaskis lodge, and “traffic jam” just means families of bighorn sheep crossing the road at Lake Minnewanka. Explore the calm waters of the Columbia River in one of the world’s most important wetlands. North American nature doesn’t get any grander.



Highlights

- Discover Alberta’s ranchlands in the foothills of the Rockies.
- Enjoy a tour and tasting at Fallentimber Meadery.
- Join a local guide along Ghost River in an exploration of plant medicine from an Indigenous lens.
- Visit Yamnuska Wolfdog Sanctuary for a one-of-a-kind educational experience.
- Gaze upon the glassy waters of Lake Minnewanka.
- Explore the calm waters of the Columbia Wetlands
- Engage in farm-to-table dining experiences with traditional, fine cuisine.

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 transportation 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 & British Columbia: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies tour. Travel to Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park. Warm-up walk

Badger Bowl, McPherson and Bowbend Trails; 4 miles, easy

Your guides meet you at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby of your designated meeting point hotel in Calgary. They'll be wearing Country Walkers shirts. Please be dressed for walking.

If your arrival at the Calgary hotel is scheduled for later than 9:00 a.m. or if you are delayed, you must travel at your own expense to our hotel in Cochrane. Take a taxi (approximately \$120), Uber or Lyft. Please contact The Crossing at Ghost River to advise of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your Country Walkers guides. Please note that if you miss the Country Walkers' transportation from Calgary, you will miss the first walk in Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park and the Meadery tasting. Once you arrive in Cochrane, check into your room. Meet your guides as soon as they return from the walk with the rest of the group (around 4:00 p.m.).

Once you arrive at Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park with your guides enjoy a first walk on the Badger Bowl, McPherson and Bowbend Trails led by a guide from the park foundation. During your walk you'll learn about the history, wildlife, and flora of this park. Afterwards, drive to Fallentimber Meadery for a tour and tasting.

Tonight, gather for a welcome reception followed by dinner at The Crossing.

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Ghost River Indigenous Medicine Walk. Yamnuska Wolfdog Sanctuary Tour

Ghost River walk; 2 miles, easy. Yamnuska Wolfdog Sanctuary; 1 mile, easy. Optional ridge walk; 1 mile easy

Satisfied from a hearty breakfast, head out for an exploration of plant medicine from an Indigenous lens. Meet our local guide for a walk on the grounds of the 145-acre property. Conclude your walk along the Ghost River and enjoy a picnic lunch prepared by your guides. This afternoon, drive to the nearby Yamnuska Wolfdog Sanctuary for an introductory tour and walk, and learn about wolves and wolfdogs. Travel back to your hotel to relax. Join an optional ridge walk from the hotel.

Tonight, enjoy dinner at The Crossing.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

Lake Minnewanka. Independent exploration of Banff. Emerald Lake. Travel to Heather Mountain Lodge

Lake Minnewanka; 2 miles, easy to moderate; Emerald Lake; 2 miles, easy

Savor another full breakfast at The Crossing. Shuttle (1 hour and 15 minutes driving time) to Lake Minnewanka in Banff National Park.

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.

In Banff, enjoy free time to visit the Whyte Museum and learn about the cultural heritage of the Canadian Rockies and browse the shops in town. After lunch on your own in Banff, travel to Heather Mountain Lodge (1.5 hours driving time), your home for the next two nights. We will stop en route for a walk along the shores of Emerald Lake in Yoho National Park. Upon arrival, check in and unwind before joining your group for dinner at the lodge.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Rogers Pass Discovery Center. Great Glacier. Dinner at the lodge

Hemlock Grove Interpretive Trail; 0.2 miles, easy; Great Glacier Trail; 4 miles, 1,053-ft. elevation gain,

moderate

Awake to the cool mountain air and another full breakfast. Today we drive to Rogers Pass Discovery Center in Glacier National Park. Rogers Pass has been designated a National Historic Site in commemoration of its role as an essential link in the building of the transcontinental railway.

First, walk the interpretive boardwalk through old-growth cedar-hemlock forest.

Next, we begin our hike on the Great Glacier Trail. The Illecillewaet Glacier, which has become known simply as the Great Glacier, is the biggest of 131 named glaciers in the park, and its name is Okanagan for “swift water”. The hike starts on a portion of a rail trail, which is what remains of the great Canadian Pacific Railroad in this area, passing the ruins of the Glacier House, once a 90-room luxury hotel. Flora along this trail include Dwarf Dogwood, Leatherleaf Saxifrage, and Lewis Monkeyflower. The view opens up to Illecillewaet Glacier Falls to the east and Cheops, Ursus Minor and Grizzly Mountains to the north. Pause here for your box lunch and then retrace your way back.

Once you are back at the lodge, unwind in your uncomplicated alpine hideaway. Later, enjoy another gourmet cabin-style dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Columbia Wetlands. Wapta Falls. Dinner at the lodge

Canoe or kayak, easy, 3 hours; Wapta Falls; 3 miles, easy

This morning, after a hearty mountain breakfast, travel (one hour driving time) to the Columbia River, home to the Columbia Wetlands, the largest intact wetlands in North America, and provides the life support system for hundreds of thousands of birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. They sustain the second-largest concentration of great blue heron residents in western Canada, more than 300 pairs. Migrating waterfowl—15,000 each spring and autumn—depend on the wetlands to survive their journeys. Songbirds, shorebirds and birds of prey rely on the Columbia Wetlands, as do Kokanee salmon, Rocky Mountain whitefish, ling cod and several varieties of trout.

You will explore the wetlands, nestled between British Columbia's Rocky and Purcell mountain ranges, in a canoe, kayak, or Cataract. These wetlands are the source of the largest river flowing into the Pacific Ocean in North America—the mighty Columbia. It is here in BC's own wild backyard that everything begins.

These wetlands provide essential winter habitat for hundreds of elk and deer. Moose, wolf, cougar, coyote, beaver, river otter, and grizzly bears are just some of the larger mammals that call this place home.

Conclude your wetlands experience at the Captain's Dock for a filling BBQ lunch. You will be struck by the sheer beauty and peacefulness of this setting.

Next, you will travel (45 minutes driving time) through Yoho National Park, pausing to walk to Wapta Falls, located in the west end of the park. Travel to your lodge in Kananaskis (two hours driving time), your home for the night. Upon arrival, check in and unwind before joining your group for dinner at the lodge. During our special farewell dinner, savor locally sourced food served family-style accompanied by wines from British Columbia.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Your Alberta & British Columbia: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies tour concludes. Departure or begin your Post-Tour Extension

Enjoy an early included breakfast at Pomerpoy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge. Then, shuttle to Calgary International Airport (YYC) at 8:30 a.m. (1.5 hours travel time); you'll arrive by 10:00 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

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| Exceptional mountain accommodations | ✓ |
| 14 on-tour meals: 5 breakfast, 4 lunches, 5 dinners | ✓ |
| 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 Global Assistance | ✓ |
| Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour | ✓ |