

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 wilderness lodge, and “traffic jam” just means families of bighorn sheep crossing the road. 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.
- Gaze upon the striking green-blue waters of Emerald Lake.
- Explore the calm waters of the Columbia Wetlands.

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. All walks and destinations in this tour are considered high altitude, ranging from 2,500 to 5,600 feet. The trails feature a combination of hardpack trails and easy terrain, mixed with moderate hills and uneven footpaths. This tour includes both walks on flat, paved or gravel trails and classic hikes through forests with elevation gain and loss. A few of the hikes have ascents and descents of up to 1,200 feet, which are mostly gradual but some portions are steep. On rainy days the footpaths and trails can be wet and muddy. This tour covers a large area and therefore involves a few long shuttles which are broken up with walks and cultural visits.

DAY 1

Join your Alberta & British Columbia: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies tour

Badger Bowl, McPherson and Bowbend Trails; 3-4 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.

Once you arrive at Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park 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. After an abundant picnic prepared by your guides, 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

Alberta Foothills

Mount Yamnuska; 2-4 miles, easy to moderate, 1,200-ft. elevation gain/loss. Ghost River Indigenous Medicine Walk; 2 miles, easy

Satisfied from a hearty breakfast, set out on a hike to Mount Yamnuska. Translating to "wall of stone" in Stoney Nakoda, Mount Yamnuska towers at 7,349 feet above the Alberta prairie. At the request of the Stoney Nakoda First Nation, in 1961 the mountain was officially renamed to Mount John Laurie in honor of John Lee Laurie, a political activist and founder of the Indian Association of Alberta. While hiking towards the summit through birch forests and wildflower meadows, keep your eyes out for mountain goats, which can sometimes be seen scampering on the rocky mountain face. Along the way, stop to enjoy a packed picnic lunch in this picturesque Canadian wilderness.

This afternoon, head back to Ghost River and meet a local guide for an exploration of plant medicine from

an Indigenous lens. After, sit back and relax at the hotel, or take a stroll with your guides down to the river for a late afternoon dip before enjoying another dinner at The Crossing. Either way, you'll be basking in the peace and serenity of the Alberta Foothills.

Tonight, enjoy dinner at The Crossing.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

Kananaskis. Independent exploration of Canmore. Emerald Lake

Grassi Lakes Trail; 2 miles, easy to moderate. Emerald Lake; 3 miles, easy

Savor another full breakfast at The Crossing. Shuttle through Kananaskis Country to your first hike of the day at the scenic Grassi Lakes before continue on towards the quaint village of Canmore.

In Canmore, enjoy free time to visit the Canmore Museum and learn about the cultural heritage of the Canadian Rockies and browse the shops in town. After lunch on your own, travel to Heather Mountain Lodge (three 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

Glacier National Park

Great Glacier Trail; 4 miles, moderate, 1,053-ft. elevation gain.

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.

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 exposes Illecillewaet Glacier Falls to the east and Cheops, Ursus Minor and Grizzly Mountains to the north. Pause here for your box lunch before retracing 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. Banff Orientation Tour

Canoe or kayak; easy, 3 hours. Banff; 0.5-1 mile, easy

This morning, after a hearty mountain breakfast, travel (1 hour driving time) to the Columbia River, home to the Columbia Wetlands, the largest intact wetlands in North America. These wetlands provide 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 float and enjoy a filling BBQ lunch at the Big Red Barn. You will be struck by the sheer beauty and peacefulness of this setting.

Next, you will travel (two hours driving time) through Yoho National Park to the charming town of Banff, pausing halfway to stretch your legs at the Yoho National Park Visitor Centre. Upon arrival in Banff, check in and unwind before joining your group for a city tour and a special farewell dinner out in town.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Your Alberta & British Columbia: Banff, Yoho & the Canadian Rockies tour concludes

After a plentiful breakfast, you are free to continue your exploration of Banff or depart for your next destination.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
14 on-tour meals: 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓