

General Information

A bustling town with its beautiful luxury hotel of Banff Springs, Banff is a year-round resort located in world-renowned Banff National Park. Because it is a National Park, you will need to purchase a park permit if you are planning to explore outside of the city of Banff. Permits are available at any of the park gates (on just outside of Lake Louise at the entrance to Icefields Parkway).

Banff offers plenty of summer outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking or road cycling, which are the best ways to see some of the spectacular scenery in and around Banff National Park.

For road cyclists, the Icefields Parkway is considered one of the most spectacular rides in the world. It runs from Lake Louise all the way up north to Jasper, where the views of glacier fields and mountain peaks are awe-inspiring. In addition to the spectacular ride along the Icefields Parkway, Banff offers a few lesser rides within its vicinity. For instance, on the Lake Minnewanka ride, you can spot elk, deer and big horn sheep, and occasionally, a black bear or even a grizzly. As matter of fact, in addition to enjoying the views of spectacular snow-covered peaks and emerald lakes, the likelihood of spotting wildlife on any of the rides around Banff is very high.

Total # of Rides Listed: 4

Family Rides: 0

Road Rides: 4

MTB Trails: 0

Bike Path Rides: 0

 Loop Rides: 2

 Out & Back Rides: 2



When to Visit

The best time to visit Banff is during the summer months (June – August) when the temperatures are comfortable for cycling. If you want to avoid the high tourist season, then late May through mid June is a good time to come to Banff.

Climate and Weather

Because of its low humidity, temperatures always seem comfortable during the high season between June and early September. July is the warmest, with average highs of 22°C in the town of Banff. January is the coldest month with average lows of -15°C, though the mercury can drop into the minus thirties.

The weather can change dramatically throughout the day. The dryness of the air causes temperatures to vary considerably from night to day. The temperature on a summer night can drop to a few degrees above freezing, even if daytime temperatures climbed into the upper twenties/eighties (Celsius/Fahrenheit).

Of course it can rain every few days, so keep that in mind. Another weather related factor to consider is head winds; if the wind is blowing, it can slow you to a crawl.

The length of the day in Banff varies greatly throughout the year. Daylight can last as little as eight hours in December. However, at the end of June, the sun rises at 5:30 am and sets at 10:00 pm.

How to Get There

Banff National Park is located in the Canadian Rocky Mountains on the Alberta side of the Continental Divide. It is situated about 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of Calgary, and 400 kilometers (250 miles) southwest of Edmonton.

If you are traveling by air, you will most likely arrive at Calgary International Airport. From the airport, your best transportation option is a rental car, taxi, or the bus. The buses to Banff and Lake Louise run year round.

If you are driving into the park, the Trans-Canada Highway (#1) runs west from Calgary into the park and through Banff and Lake Louise, then continues west towards Vancouver.

Tour buses operate within the Four Mountain Parks (Banff National Park is bordered by Yoho, Kootenay and Jasper National Parks). There are also several car rental agencies in Banff.

Accommodations

Banff is a world-class resort and as such it offers plenty of world class accommodations, ranging from fancy (and really fancy) hotels and B&Bs to small, functional establishments. However, it is recommended you make reservations ahead, especially if you are traveling during high season (Mid June – August).

The Roads

The quality of roads is quite good. The occasional hazard you are likely to encounter will be in form of a wildlife rather than road

damage, although there will be few rough spots on the road as a result of the harsh winter weather.

What You Need To Know

Cycling in Banff, Alberta can be demanding on your body, especially if you are not used to cycling in altitude. If you are unaccustomed to altitude, it is recommended that you acclimate for few days before attempting some of the more demanding rides.

Keep in mind that mountain weather can change rapidly. A warm and sunny morning can quickly change into torrential thunderstorm or even a snowstorm. Beware of lightning (best if you set out to ride early in the morning as most thunderstorms in the mountains occur in early afternoon). Additionally, it is always wise to check the weather forecast before setting out on a long ride. With frequent afternoon mountain thunderstorms and sudden temperature drops, hypothermia can become a critical issue very fast.

Wear proper UV protection for skin, lips, and eyes. Due to its altitude and plenty of glaciers to reflect the Sun's rays, Banff has a high UV index.

Road Rides (1-4 of 4)

Road Rides

[Banff National Park: Chateau Lake Louise](#)
34 mi/54 km (*Out & Back* Total: 68 mi/108 km)



[Banff National Park: Lake Minnewanka](#)
18 mi/29 km (*Loop*)



[Banff National Park: Icefields Parkway](#)
23 mi/37 km (*Out & Back* Total: 46 mi/74 km)



[Banff National Park: Chateau Banff](#)
17 mi/27 km (*Loop*)

