

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive Calgary, Introductions and Welcome dinner

Arrive in Calgary, in time to meet at our hotel at 5 p.m. We will gather in the lobby of our hotel for introductions and then go out together for a welcome dinner where we will continue getting to know each other and talk about our upcoming hiking adventure.

Overnight: Calgary Airport Hotel (D)

DAY 2

Wilderness Hostel + Hike Stanley Glacier

After arriving at the Hostel, we will eat a quick lunch and get used to our new, gorgeous settings. When we feel ready, weâ€™ll drive to the nearby trailhead of Stanley Glacier to get our legs warmed up for the hiking days ahead. Upon the end of the trail, there will be sweeping views of the glacier and the valley; a photo-op moment! When we return back to the trailhead, weâ€™ll smile all the way back to the hostel. Once arriving, weâ€™ll join together for a group introduction to the hostel and dinner.

Hiking: 5.5 miles round-trip, 1,246-foot elevation gain and loss. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Hike the Plain of Six Glaciers in Banff National Park

The Plain of Six Glaciers is an accurate name! From the forefront of the Lower Victoria glacier, six glaciers are visible. Passing through some of the most interesting glaciated scenery in Banff National Park, our trail rises from Lake Louise to a spectacular viewpoint at the base of Mount Victoria. The teahouse at the end of the trail was built in 1924 by Swiss guides who were employed by the railway to bring tourism to the area. The baked goods served there provide an extra reward for our hiking endeavors. Make sure to bring along some Canadian dollars to purchase delicious goods from the teahouse!

Hiking: 9 miles round-trip, 1,680-foot elevation gain. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Hike Iceline Trail with Views of Takkakaw Falls and the Yoho Valley

Today will be more challenging, but waterfalls & vistas await us that are well worth the additional miles and potential river crossings we may encounter. In the morning we head for Takkakaw Falls, one of the most beautiful and dramatic falls in the Canadian Rockies as it plunges 850 feet over a rocky cliff. "Takakkaw" is loosely translated from Cree, meaning "it is magnificent." The Iceline trail is magnificent too! Our hike for the day on the Iceline trail offers simply spectacular vistas of the Yoho Valley. Scratched from glacial rubble, the trail follows a sensational line, contouring the edge of Emerald Glacier for 2 miles. Panoramic vistas of the Yoho valley (Yoho is from a Cree expression meaning awe and wonder) are our reward for venturing into this rocky domain.

Hiking: 11.2 miles, 2,525-foot elevation gain. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel (B, L, D)

DAY 5

DAY 5

Guided Glacier Walk on Athabasca Glacier Near Jasper National Park

Today we'll see the Rockies from atop a glacier, one of the geologic forms that is responsible for carving out these majestic mountains. On our guided walk on the Athabasca Glacier in the Jasper area, we'll learn how to use crampons, which make walking on ice safe and enjoyable. We'll stop often to learn about the intricacies; how glaciers are made, what moulins (glacier mills) are, what a crevasse is, how moraines are made, and much more. After our full day trip to the glacier we'll relax back at our hostel.

Hiking: 3 miles, 650-foot elevation gain. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Visit Emerald Lake for a Day of Options or Relax at the Hostel

Today is full of options! We will visit Emerald Lake where you can enjoy a peaceful hike around the sparkling blue-green water. If you want a longer hike, we will pick one of the many that leave from Emerald Lake. You may be interested in learning more about the Burgess Shale, famous well-preserved fossils over five hundred million years old, and attending a geology talk at the visitor center. Of course, relaxing at the hostel and exploring is also an excellent option.

Hiking: Emerald Basin â€” 3-6 mile options, 854-1,200-foot gain. Yoho Pass â€” 10 miles round-trip, 1,935-foot gain. Lake Loop â€” 3.2 miles, 120-foot elevation gain. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Hike Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass/Paradise Valley Loop

Of the major trails in the mountain parks, Sentinel Pass at 8,566 feet is the highest, making today's trek the most challenging of our trip. Sandwiched between two peaks, this barren pass offers us a glimpse into the world of mountaineers. Starting in the Valley of the Ten Peaks we walk above Moraine Lake to the beautiful Larch Valley and onto Sentinel Pass. After a picnic lunch at the pass with its outstanding vistas in all directions, we descend to Paradise Valley for a gradual walk out to the road. This hike feels long by the end but is so absolutely stunning that it is well worth tired feet. There is also the option of hiking Sentinel Pass out and back if you would prefer not doing the whole loop.

Hiking: 11 miles loop, 2,700-foot elevation gain or 9 miles out and back, 2,500 elevation gain. Overnight: Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Hike Johnson Lake, Free Time in Banff, Return to Calgary

After a leisurely morning, we will drive back to the city of Banff. Along the way we will stop to hike the Johnson Lake Loop, a lovely 2-mile hike with fantastic views of the iconic Mount Rundle. Once in town there are a number of possible things to do, including a visit to the famous Cave and Basin hot springs, a ride up the Sulphur mountain gondola, or a visit to the Whyte Museum. There will also be time to shop for last minute souvenirs. We will head back to Calgary for dinner and our final farewells.

Hiking: 2-mile loop, 175-foot elevation gain. Overnight: Calgary Airport Hotel (B, D)

DAY 9

Depart Calgary Anytime

We will be staying at an airport hotel, so you are free to depart at any time. Calgary is a thriving metropolis, and you might want to spend time touring the city before heading home.