

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

Meet at Kamloops Airport, Introductions and Welcome Dinner

Our trip begins at the Kamloops airport at 2 p.m. on Sunday or at 5 p.m. at our lodging in Clearwater, British Columbia. After introducing ourselves and starting (or continuing) to get to know each other, we'll go out for a welcome dinner. (D)

DAY 2

Paddle on Clearwater lake, visit Helmcken Falls

Today we'll go for a paddle on Clearwater Lake, one of the most pristine bodies of water in the world. We'll start with some instructions in paddling and then set off for a paddle. We'll stop for lunch and if you're so inclined, you can dip your drinking water directly from the lake. We'll for sure see a wide variety of birds and, with the abundance of wildlife around the lake, maybe even deer and moose! This is a huge lake and our paddle will give you a taste of what wilderness paddling is all about. On the way back to our lodging, we'll visit Helmcken Falls, the largest and probably the most photographed waterfall in the park. That night after dinner we'll review the plans for the trip and make a final clothing check, tossing everything that might be nice to have but that you will be happy you left behind after the first two hours of hiking. (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Hike to Trophy Mountain Chalet, Optional Hike in area after lunch

After breakfast we'll load up the van for the hour or so drive to the trailhead and the trekking adventure begins! Along the way we'll learn about the ecology of the area. Stepping off the road and onto the track, we leave civilization behind as we hike through mature forests and lush meadows while gaining 1,700 feet elevation. Although the mileage appears low on this hike, it is fairly continuous, at times steep, uphill hiking. But we take our time, stopping to gaze at the view, pick blueberries and huckleberries, or relax in the sun. Our destination today is Trophy Mountain Chalet at 7,000 feet, and it will take 2.5 to 3.5 hours to get there. After having lunch and settling-in to the hut we may have time for another shorter (and optional) hike to see more of the area. About 7 p.m. we'll enjoy the first of many delicious and hearty dinners, complete with a glass of wine if you choose! That night we can go outside and see a sky more filled with stars than many of us have ever seen. The stillness of the night is broken only by occasional night sounds and the peacefulness of the mountain night gradually soaks in.

Hiking: 3 miles to cabin, 1.5-2 miles optional after reaching cabin. Elevation gain: 1,700 feet (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Layover day, Hike to Local Lakes and Ridges

Today is a layover day, meaning no packing up and carrying only what we need for the day in our packs. After a hearty breakfast we will set out on a longer day hike, possibly climbing two or three peaks, walking along open ridges, and, for the brave and the foolish, maybe even taking a refreshing dip in the numerous alpine lakes. We return to our hut for another relaxing evening of laughing, talking, eating, and hot drinks and popcorn.

Hiking: 6 miles. Elevation gain: 1,200 feet (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Hike to Valley of the Lakes and up Eagle Pass to Discovery Cabin

Leaving the hut after breakfast, we hike about 7 miles through alpine meadows, dropping down to the Valley of the Lakes for a lunch break and perhaps another a refreshing dip in a crystal-clear lake, before crossing Eagle Pass at 6,700 feet. The 6 to 8-hour hike includes crossing a field of boulders and some steep up and downhill trail. While 7 miles doesn't sound far, the terrain is guaranteed to make it seem farther. But our destination, Discovery Cabin, makes all the effort worth it. Set in a remote and wild valley surrounded by mountains, there is even a greater feeling of being in the middle of nowhere.

Hiking: 8 miles. Elevation gain: 2000 feet (B,L,D)

DAY 6

Layover Day, Hike to Table Mountain

We are delighted to have our second layover day; a leisurely breakfast being much appreciated after the length of yesterday's hike. Our option today is hiking into remote lakes and to the top of Table Mountain. Or you might choose just to stay at the cabin and relax, it is such a beautiful setting and a lovely place to hang out. And after all, this is your vacation! More exercise, more rest - whichever you need more, you can choose it.

Hiking: 5 miles. Elevation gain: 1,000 feet (B,L,D)

DAY 7

Hike down Table Mountain and back to van, Return to Clearwater

Our final hiking day includes travel off-trail down a ridge of Table Mountain, with spectacular views of Moul Lake and the Phillip Lakes. We descend into the forest and follow a steep downhill trail for our final 3-hour hike back to the van. The entire hike will take anywhere from 6 to 8 hours and although largely downhill, will leave everyone feeling accomplished. In late afternoon we return to our lodging in Clearwater and revel in the feeling of hot showers. With clean bodies and clothes, we rejoin the group for our farewell dinner.

Hiking: 6 miles. Elevation gain: 1,500 feet (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Return to Kamloops for Flights Home

It's hard to leave this quiet place and return to the land of cell phones and noise, but at least we are relaxed, refreshed, and, hopefully, recharged. If you drove on your own, you are welcome to leave anytime this morning. If you flew into Kamloops, we'll have you back to the airport by 10:00 a.m. (B)