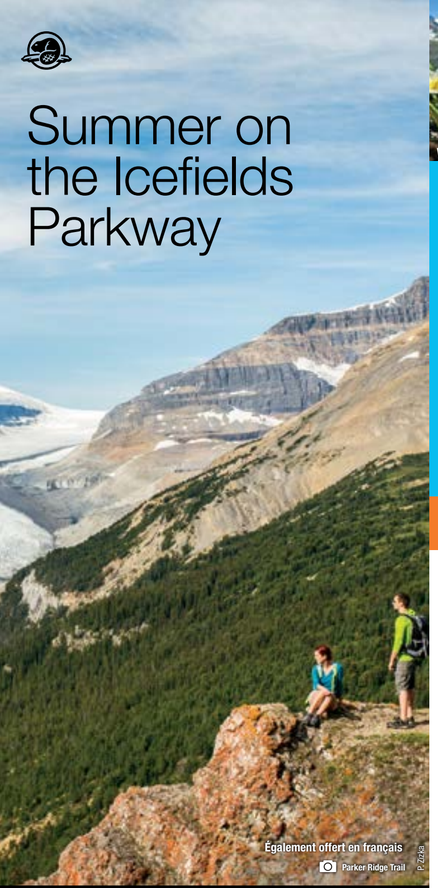
Summer on the Icefields Parkway



Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada

Wilcox Pass A. ZierVogel

Athabasca Falls A. ZierVogel

Bow Lake P. Zizka

Explore!

Winding 232 glorious kilometres through the heart of Jasper and Banff national parks, the Icefields Parkway has been called one of the world's most scenic drives.

Around every corner, the route offers fresh wonders – from waterfalls, pristine lakes, and broad sweeping valleys to ancient glaciers flowing down from the rugged mountains.

Take your time to experience the many scenic stops, picnic spots, and hiking trails along the way.

Looking for a view from the edge?

Check out these roadside attractions:

ATHABASCA GLACIER

A magical area that can be seen from the road, explored with a commercial guide or visited on a special bus tour. **Do not walk on the glacier; crevasses and other hazards can be deadly.**

CROWFOOT GLACIER

When this glacier was named a century ago, it looked like a three-toed crowsfoot. Since then, one toe has melted, and the middle toe is slowly disappearing.

HERBERT LAKE

A photographer's favourite. The still waters of Herbert Lake provide a perfect panoramic reflection of the stunning Main Range peaks, including Mount Temple. The picnic area provides an ideal place for a picnic stop.

Need to stretch your legs?

Try one of these short strolls:

ATHABASCA FALLS

Feel the spray of the Athabasca River as it thunders into the canyon below. Stay behind railings and on designated trails. The rock beyond is slippery and dangerous.

SUNWAPTA FALLS

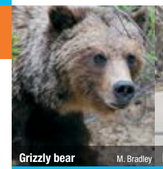
A torrent of plunging water not far from the highway, Sunwapta Falls is just one of the many waterfalls in Jasper created by hanging valleys.

MISTAYA CANYON

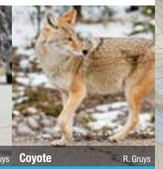
Enjoy a short downhill walk and peer down into Mistaya Canyon from the bridge. Witness the power of water sculpting the limestone gorge.

BOW LAKE AND BOW GLACIER

Bow Lake, the source of the Bow River, is one of the more scenic and accessible lakes for fishing.


Grizzly bear M. Bradley

Bighorn sheep R. Gruys


Coyote R. Gruys

Wildlife

Wildlife sightings are one of many reasons the Icefields Parkway is known as one of the best drives in the world.

Bears, sheep, wolves, and even elusive caribou are often spotted on the roadsides – keep your eyes open and drive slowly, especially early morning and evening.

Never approach or feed wildlife.

About the Columbia Icefield

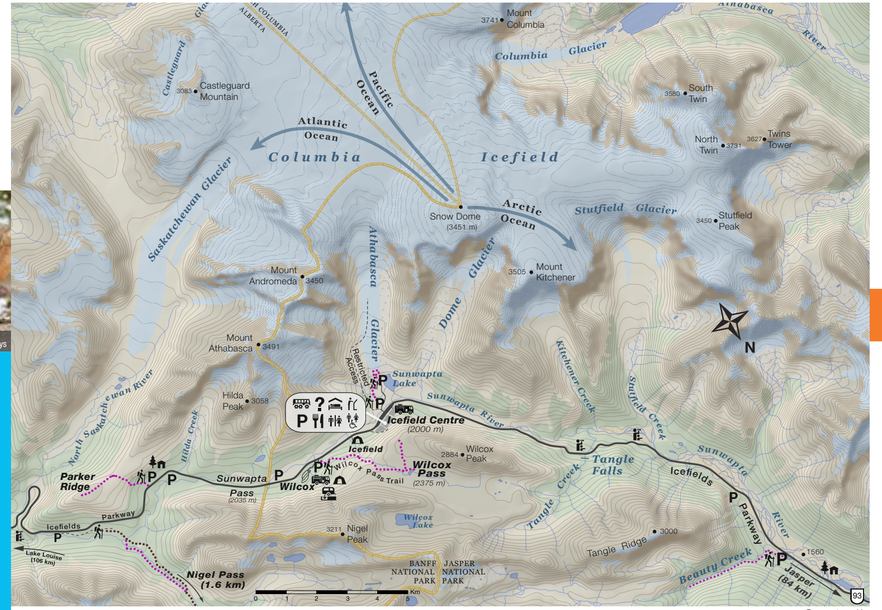
With a total area of 200 km², the Columbia Icefield is the largest mass of glacial ice in the Canadian Rockies. It feeds several large glaciers, including the Athabasca, the Columbia, and the Saskatchewan.

WHAT'S A GLACIER?

Glaciers form where more snow falls in winter than melts each summer. As the snow gets thicker and heavier, it compacts into dense glacial ice that slowly flows downhill, like a river of taffy.

GLACIERS AND RIVERS

Water flows to three different oceans from this area, known as a *hydrological apex*. On the British Columbia side, meltwater flows into the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. On the Alberta side, the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers feed into the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, respectively. These rivers provide fresh drinking water for millions of people, and are crucial to agriculture and countless ecosystems. That's why their source is protected in a national park.



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More information

Check the road conditions and the weather forecast before you leave town:

ROAD CONDITIONS
Call 511
alberta511.ca

WEATHER FORECAST
Banff National Park: 403-762-2088
Jasper National Park: 780-852-3185
weather.gc.ca
Visit an information centre

Jasper Information Centre: **780-852-6176**
Lake Louise Visitor Centre: **403-522-3833**
Banff Visitor Centre: **403-762-1550**
parkscanada.gc.ca/jasper
parkscanada.gc.ca/banff

BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION

Research and plan overnight trips, including potential trail restrictions and closures, avalanche conditions, and mandatory backcountry permits.
parkscanada.gc.ca/jasperbackcountry
parkscanada.gc.ca/banff-backcountry

TRAIL REPORTS

parkscanada.gc.ca/jaspertrails
parkscanada.gc.ca/banfftrails

Supporting parks

The Icefields Parkway was built by Parks Canada as a scenic drive to showcase the powerful natural landscape of Jasper and Banff national parks. A valid national parks pass is required to drive the Icefields Parkway. Revenues from pass sales support maintenance, plowing, sanding, and avalanche control.

If you're a frequent visitor to Canada's national parks and historic sites, consider purchasing a Parks Canada Discovery Pass for unlimited access to many of Canada's extraordinary treasures.

You are welcome to take this brochure home as a souvenir but if you are finished with it, please drop it off at any park information centre where it can be used again.

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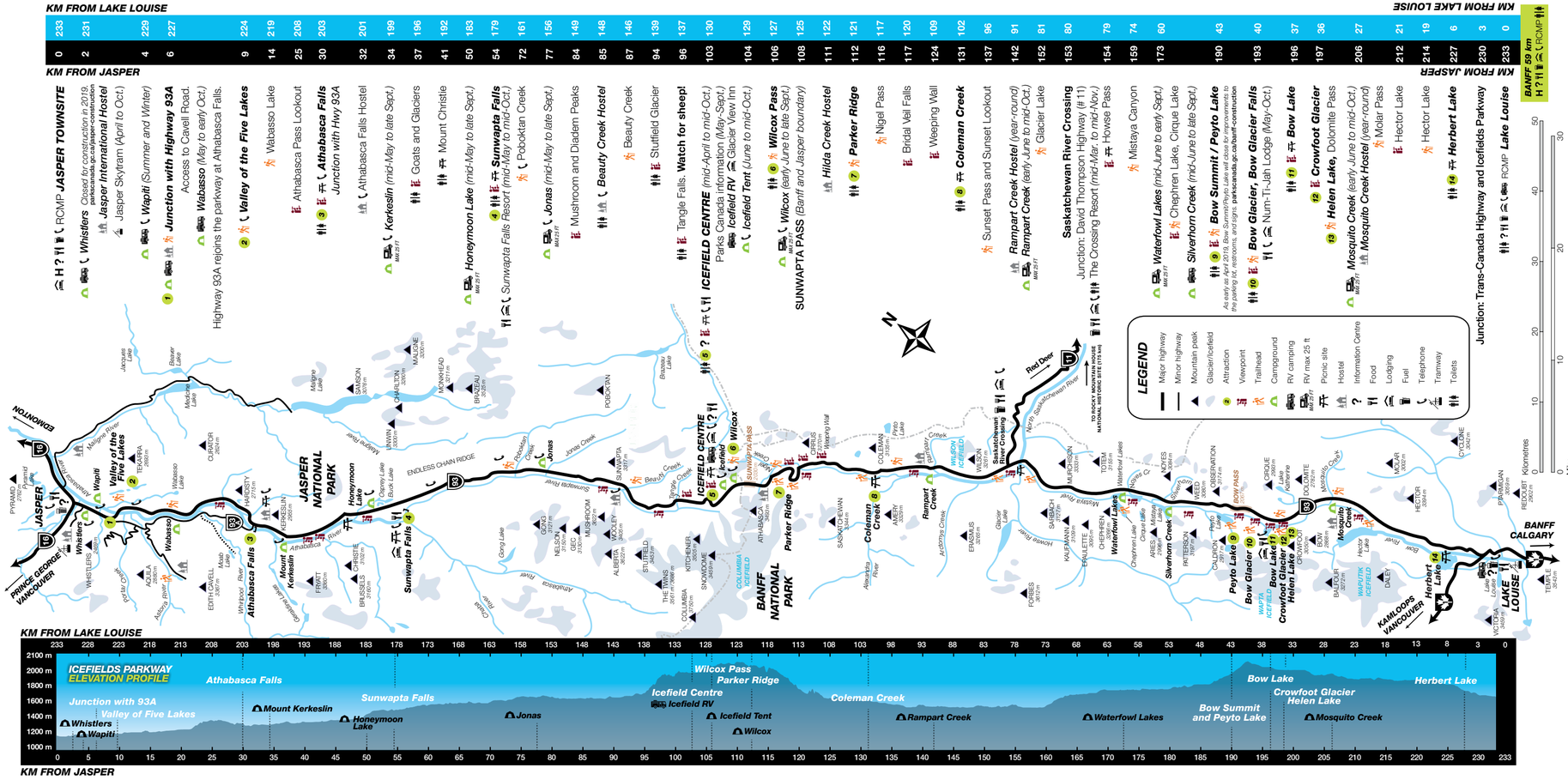
THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY *DRIVING GUIDE*



Looking for adventure?

Step into the wild with one of these classic day hikes:

VALLEY OF THE FIVE LAKES

Five small, brilliantly blue-green lakes are the highlights of this outing, considered a local family favourite.

4.5 km loop; 66 m elevation gain/loss; 2 hours
Trailhead: 9 km south from Jasper on Highway 93

WILCOX PASS

Rise quickly above treeline to the expansive meadows of this glacier-carved landscape.

2.4 km (1 hr) return to first viewpoint, 8 km (2-3 hrs) return to the pass
Trailhead: 3 km south of Icefield Centre at Wilcox Campground

PARKER RIDGE

After a series of switchbacks you'll be rewarded with dramatic views of the Saskatchewan Glacier.

5.4 km return; 250 m elevation gain/loss; 3 hr round trip
Trailhead: 9 km south of the Icefield Centre

HELEN LAKE

A breathtaking lake in a valley abounding with alpine wildlife and grand vistas.

6.0 km one way; 455 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hr round trip
Trailhead: across from Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint

Time for lunch?

Visit one of our scenic picnic sites:

COLEMAN CREEK

Sit next to the edge of the water and listen to the relaxing gurgle of the river. Look for mountain goats on the cliffs.

BOW LAKE

Enjoy your lunch at one of the most breathtaking lakes in the rockies. The vibrant blue colour set against a magnificent mountain backdrop is sure to dazzle you.