

New Ways to Explore Banff and Lake Louise this summer

- Plan ahead and explore Banff National Park responsibly -



Caption: Cyclists on the Bow Valley Parkway, Banff National Park

June 4, 2020 (BANFF & LAKE LOUISE, ALBERTA) – Since services in Banff National Park began to gradually resume on June 1, visitors have unique opportunities available to them. This summer, people will have more access to cycling in many areas of the park, and more room to explore downtown by foot.

The majority of the Bow Valley Parkway (Highway 1A) will remain closed to vehicle traffic until further notice, giving cyclists and hikers an opportunity of a lifetime to enjoy the traffic-free road. Additionally, once safety measures are in place, one lane of the Lake Minnewanka Loop will be set aside for cyclists. And a portion of Banff Avenue will be closed to traffic, meaning more space for pedestrians to explore, eat and shop safely downtown.

“The health and safety of people is the number one priority. The measures being put in place to protect people will also mean there are some unique opportunities to experience the park this year – in the way of hiking, walking, cycling and so many others,” said Leslie Bruce, CEO, Banff and Lake Louise Tourism. “This is a great chance for Albertans to access the Park in another way than they may be used to.”

The closure of the Bow Valley Parkway to vehicle traffic for the summer will allow adventure seekers to enjoy the windy 50 kilometre roadway that connects Banff and Lake Louise. Running parallel to the Trans-Canada highway, the Bow Valley Parkway offers users spectacular mountain vistas and is renowned for wildlife sightings, particularly in the morning and evening.

Adventure seekers with an appetite for something extra may choose to access a number of [trails and attractions](#) from the Parkway. Johnston Canyon Trail remains open to hikers only, and the trailhead is not accessible by motor vehicles due to the road closure. South of Castle Junction East entrance to Castle Junction of Bow Valley Parkway is open to vehicle traffic.

Spanning 24 kilometres with 178 metres of elevation gain, the Minnewanka Loop is another scenic road ride, which can be accessed from Banff’s Legacy Trail. Cyclists may enjoy some of Canada’s most dramatic mountain vistas along the way, while cycling by Lake Minnewanka



and Two Jack Lake. Once the safety measures are put in place, vehicles will be limited to driving one-way (counter clockwise).

Visitors will be able to more easily explore the town of Banff on foot. To safely welcome visitors, the Town of Banff will close the 100 to 200 blocks of Banff Avenue from June 5 to September 11 to make space for visitors on foot.

“Banff Avenue hasn’t closed to vehicles for more than a day or two since 2008, and that’s only been the case for some annual special events. This is the first time it will be pedestrianized for a long period of time in 12 years. We are excited to welcome people in this way and allow for plenty of space to protect public safety through physical distancing,” said Bruce.

Plan ahead for the best experience

Now, more than ever, it is crucial that Park users plan ahead. Before heading out on your trip to the mountains, know where you’re going to park, how best to get around, how to stay safe and the status of businesses you plan to visit. See the following tips to consider before you leave:

- Now that services have resumed in the Park, visitors require a park pass. Starting on June 4, visitors can [purchase their pass online](#) from Banff & Lake Louise Tourism. The Parks Canada Discovery Pass provides unlimited admission for a full year to Banff National Park and over 80 other Parks Canada places across the country.
- Parking in designated areas in the Park is highly recommended. Visitors can enjoy free full day parking at the Banff Train Station, Fenlands Recreation Centre, Bear Street Parkade, and Central Park, all within minutes of walking to downtown.
- If you’re planning to bike the Bow Valley Parkway or Lake Minnewanka loop, it’s best to park in town at the Banff Train Station or the Fenlands parking Lot.
- Many businesses are open, but may be operating differently. Call ahead or check the business’ website before arriving and consult Alberta Health Services guidelines about travelling.
- Be self-sustainable and bring a COVID-19 kit of hand sanitizer, water and supplies, as fewer services are available than normal.
- While some of the restrictions and closures implemented in the Park to date as a result of COVID-19 have been lifted, others will remain in effect at this time. See what’s open and closed [here](#).

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Planning ahead tips and inspiration for what to do can be found at [Banff & Lake Louise Tourism](#).

High resolution images can be accessed [here](#).

ABOUT BANFF AND LAKE LOUISE

Banff and Lake Louise offers incredible experiences that reconnect people to the natural world. Situated in the stunning Canadian Rocky Mountains in Banff National Park, within a UNESCO World Heritage Site, accessible year-round adventure and wellness is cultivated every day of the year by visitors from across the globe. Home to three ski resorts, countless glacier fed lakes, two vibrant townsites, and authentic Canadian culture and cuisine, this place is unforgettable, and it’s truly Alive.

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