

Canada: Banff National Park & the Canadian Rockies

Bike Vacation Only

If you're looking for a Canadian Rockies cycling adventure that takes you deep into unspoiled landscapes, this is the one you've been looking for! Pedal the legendary Bow Valley Parkway—a stunning wilderness corridor near the mountain enclave of Banff. Along the way, your local Canadian trip leaders introduce you to the turquoise shores of Lake Louise—a glacier-fed marvel. As your path winds towards Canmore, you'll delve deep into the Rocky Mountains wilderness—leaving the hustle-bustle far behind. Here, a guided hike near your charming Kananaskis lodge allows you to explore fragile alpine meadows—perhaps catching glimpses of bighorn sheep, Canadian moose, and bald eagles in the distance. Explore Upper Kananaskis Lake—a crystal blue pool reflecting the surrounding mountain peaks, then luxuriate in your hotel's Nordic spa, steam rooms, or sauna.

Cultural Highlights

- Learn about Banff National Park, part of a UNESCO World Heritage site and Canada's first national park.
- Spin downhill along the magnificent Bow Valley Parkway, a stunning wilderness corridor.
- Observe wildlife from the saddle—including elk, deer, bighorn sheep, bald eagles, and even black and grizzly bears.
- Take in panorama after panorama of jaw-dropping alpine splendor as you cycle through Kananaskis Country.
- Hike scenic trails in the Canadian high country, rewarded with epic mountain views.

What to Expect

This tour features easy terrain with occasional hills, along with opportunities for longer rides and moderate climbs. Most routes follow paved park roads shared with vehicular traffic; however, many are designated bike routes or have wide shoulders. Our VBT support vehicle is available throughout the trip.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 10-35 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-6 hours

Group size: 14-20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

June 66°/42°, July 71°/45°, August 71°/44°, September 62°/37°

Average Rainfall (in.)

June 2.7, July 2.7, August 2.4, September 1.5

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Travel to Banff / Warm-Up Ride

Meet your VBT representative and the rest of the group at 12:00 p.m. in the lobby of our pre-tour hotel in Calgary, which varies depending on your departure date. For the July 5 and 12 departures, the meeting will take place at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Calgary Airport In-Terminal. For all other departures, the meeting location is the Calgary Marriott Downtown Hotel.

From here, you'll travel by private shuttle to Banff (approximately 1.5 hours). Please plan to have lunch before the journey and arrive dressed for cycling (bring your own pedals or saddle if applicable), as there will be no opportunity to change clothes before the warm-up ride.

Upon arrival in Banff—nestled in the heart of breathtaking Banff National Park—meet your trip leaders at 2:30 p.m. in the hotel lobby for a safety and bike-fitting session. Then, stretch your legs on a scenic warm-up ride. As you cycle, the grandeur of the Canadian Rockies unfolds around you, with snow-capped peaks and pristine wilderness. The ride follows a loop around the Banff golf course and along the Bow River. Keep an eye out for local wildlife such as moose, elk, deer, and fox.

This evening, shuttle from your hotel to a nearby restaurant for a festive welcome reception and dinner with your fellow travelers.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Banff Warm-Up Ride — 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

Your warm-up spin offers the perfect opportunity to get accustomed to your bike's fit and gearing. Enjoy a scenic ride through town and out to the quiet golf course, where cool alpine breezes and views of snow-capped mountains provide a refreshing backdrop. You may even spot wapiti grazing on the lush grass.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 km (12 miles)

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Travel to Lake Louise / Cycle the Bow Valley Parkway / Return to Banff

After breakfast, enjoy a scenic shuttle to Lake Louise, one of the most iconic and photographed lakes in the world, renowned for its stunning mountain backdrop and vivid turquoise waters. The glacier-fed lake was named for Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria. You'll have time to stroll along the lakeshore and soak in the awe-inspiring views.

Next, shuttle a bit farther down the road to begin an invigorating ride along the magnificent Bow Valley Parkway. This scenic wilderness corridor is celebrated for its role in preserving Banff's natural beauty and heritage. As a favored route for local wildlife, you may spot elk, deer, bald eagles, foxes, or even bears. Before departing, your trip leaders will provide bear awareness training and equip the group with bear spray as a precaution.

As you descend along this peaceful route, take time to stop at interpretive displays to learn about key sites, including Morant's Curve—a favorite among railroad enthusiasts—and Castle Cliffs. Pause midday to enjoy a hearty picnic lunch prepared by your trip leaders. You may also choose to take a short hike at the scenic and popular Johnston Canyon.

Later, stop at the "Flames of Life," an area that showcases the ecological benefits of controlled wildfires, which help regenerate vegetation and sustain native habitats.

Return to Banff—the highest town in Canada—where you'll have time at leisure. Explore the many shops, galleries, and attractions in town, or relax at your hotel. You may also wish to book a scenic float tour along the Bow River. This evening, gather with your group for a casual dinner in town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Lake Louise to Storm Mountain — 23 km (14 miles)

Afternoon: Storm Mountain to Banff — 34 km (21 miles)

What to Expect:

Enjoy a leisurely morning shuttle to picturesque Lake Louise, where you'll stroll along the serene lakeshore. Then continue by shuttle to the village to begin your ride on the Bow Valley Parkway—one of Canada's premier road cycling routes and a vital wildlife corridor. Pause for a picnic lunch near Castle Junction before continuing your mostly downhill ride toward Banff. The route passes scenic Vermilion Lakes and features a few rolling hills, often aided by a tailwind. With a speed limit of 60 kph (37 mph) and some one-way sections, the parkway offers a safe and comfortable ride. Keep your eyes peeled for wildlife—and potential bear jams!

Cumulative Distance Range: 23 — 57 km (14 — 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Cycle to Lake Minnewanka and Tunnel Mountain / Optional Afternoon Activities

This morning, set out on a scenic ride to Lake Minnewanka and Two Jack Lake. Pause along the way to learn about the area's history—and keep an eye out for scuba divers exploring the lake's depths. Before reaching the lake, you'll pass the remnants of Bankhead, a once-thriving coal mining town from the early 20th century. Return to Banff via Tunnel Mountain.

Lunch is on your own today in Banff. Your trip leaders will be happy to recommend their favorite local spots. This afternoon, enjoy free time to explore the area further with optional activities such as the Banff Gondola, the Cave and Basin National Historic Site, or a relaxing soak in the Banff Hot Springs. Scenic horseback trail rides are another excellent way to experience the Rockies. Dinner is also on your own this evening.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Lake Minnewanka & Tunnel Mountain — 33 km (21 miles) | Lake Minnewanka & Tunnel Mountain PLUS — 38 km (24 miles)

What to Expect:

Start the morning ride by cruising through Banff to the outskirts of town, heading toward the scenic loop at Lake Minnewanka. Along the way, you'll pass Cascade Ponds, the ghost town of Bankhead, and Two Jack Lake. Those who wish to add a few miles can extend the ride with an out-and-back to Johnson

Lake. On your return, cycle along the picturesque Tunnel Mountain Drive. Once back in Banff, the rest of the day is yours to enjoy at your leisure.

Cumulative Distance Range: 33 – 38 km (21 – 24 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Cycle the Legacy Trail / Indigenous Medicine Walk / Travel to Kananaskis / Optional Afternoon Activities

After a leisurely breakfast, depart Banff via the Legacy Trail, a paved biking and walking route created in 2010 to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Banff National Park. As you ride, take in spectacular mountain views and seasonal wildflowers such as wild roses and castilleja. Along the way, stop to meet a local guide for an interpretive walk exploring plant medicine from an Indigenous perspective. Banff has been a vital area for Canada's First Nations for thousands of years, with the Stoney Nakoda calling the region *Mîni hrpa*—"Mountain Where the Water Falls"—in reference to nearby Cascade Mountain. As you walk beneath its towering peak, you'll learn about the traditional uses of native plants for both people and wildlife.

Remount your bike and continue along the trail to the mountain town of Canmore. Once a coal-mining center, today it's a vibrant hub filled with shops and cafés. Lunch is on your own—your trip leaders can recommend favorite spots such as Crazyweed Kitchen or the Grizzly Paw Pub. Afterward, explore local favorites like the Rocky Mountain Soap Company, Stonewaters home store, or Art Country Canada gallery. Or perhaps stop by Canmore Brewing Company for a flight of locally crafted beers.

Later, shuttle to the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, your home for the next two nights. This beautiful alpine resort is just steps from the renowned Kananaskis Nordic Spa. This afternoon, you may choose to take a self-guided walk along the lodge's scenic rim trail, play a round of golf, or unwind at the spa in its outdoor pools, steam rooms, and sauna cabins.

Tonight, dine at your leisure in the village. Be sure to stop by the fire pit for s'mores and stargazing under the mountain sky.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Banff to Canmore – 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect:

Depart downtown Banff and ride the Legacy Trail, a mostly downhill paved bike path with a few short, gentle hills stretching from Banff to Canmore. The trail is shared with pedestrians and horseback riders, so please keep right, and there is a picnic area with outhouses about halfway. Along the way, stop at Cascade Ponds for a short, guided Indigenous medicine walk—an easy tour with a relaxed pace, flat terrain, and frequent stops. After lunch on your own in Canmore, rejoin your group for a 40-minute shuttle to your hotel in Kananaskis Village. This afternoon, enjoy a leisurely 1.5 km (1 mile) self-guided walk along the flat, paved Rim Trail, which circles the property and features five scenic viewpoints—watch for bears that are sometimes visible from the overlooks. Today may also offer an additional independent ride for experienced cyclists; ask your trip leader for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 km (16 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Country Hike / Cycle Through the Kananaskis Valley

After breakfast, shuttle to Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, a stunning expanse of high-country wilderness carved by glaciers and rich with wildlife. The sharp hooves of bighorn sheep and mountain goats, and the heavy pads of grizzlies, have all traversed this rugged terrain before you. Set out on a few short hikes to experience the area's alpine splendor firsthand. Pause at scenic Upper Kananaskis Lake for a picnic lunch prepared by your trip leaders. Then, take in the majestic views of the Kananaskis Valley as you enjoy a rewarding bike ride back to your hotel.

This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a festive farewell dinner at the hotel, raising a glass to your unforgettable journey through the Canadian wilderness.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Upper Kananaskis Lake to Opal Day Use Area — 30 km (19 miles) | Opal Day Use Area to Kananaskis — 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect:

Shuttle to Peter Lougheed Provincial Park and begin your morning with two short hikes, selected by your

leaders based on weather and trail conditions. Combined, these easy-to-moderate hikes cover less than two miles with minimal elevation change, and hiking poles will be available for your use. Afterward, enjoy a picnic lunch before setting out on your bike toward your hotel. Along the way, pause at the Peter Lougheed Provincial Park Visitor Centre and enjoy a rest stop at the Opal Day Use Area with your leaders. Most of today's ride follows designated bike paths, with approximately 13 miles on the scenic Highway 40, which features a wide shoulder for safe cycling.

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 – 48 km (11 – 30 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: Bill Milne Bike Path / Travel to Calgary / Your VBT Vacation Ends

Start your day with an optional guided hike. Later this morning, cycle one final time along the scenic bike path from Kananaskis Village to the Opal Day Use Area, taking in the region's striking mountain vistas. After a light snack, shuttle approximately one hour to Calgary.

Your tour concludes at the Calgary Marriott Downtown Hotel (or Delta Hotels by Marriott Calgary Airport In-Terminal for the June 28 and July 5 departures) at approximately 2:00 p.m. From here, you are free to make your own onward travel arrangements. We provide detailed city information to help you make the most of your time should you choose to extend your stay.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Optional Hike — 4-6 km (2.5-4 miles) | Kananaskis Village to Opal Day Use Area — 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

For this morning's hike, your leader will select a nearby trail based on weather conditions and group ability; hiking poles will be available. Today's ride follows the reverse of yesterday's afternoon route. Departing from the resort along the Bill Milne bike path, you'll begin with a short descent before the path levels out, then continues with a gentle, steady incline to Opal Day Use Area. It's an easy, leisurely ride. Afterward, shuttle to our Calgary hotel, arriving in time for a late lunch on your own.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 km (12 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Juniper Hotel (Days 1-3)

Surrounded by the beauty of nature and a leader in environmentally conscious tourism, the Juniper Hotel does not disappoint. This boutique hotel features inspired rooms with panoramic views of the Rockies, a highly rated restaurant, a convenient downtown shuttle, a nature-positive experience including complimentary E-bike and adventure gear rentals, plus WiFi and air conditioning throughout.

Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge (Days 4-5)

Surrounded by 360 degrees of stunning mountain views, the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge offers the luxuries of an authentic and comfortable retreat. The newly renovated rooms offer serenity surrounded by the natural beauty of Kananaskis country, providing a feeling of well-being and relaxation. Guests can choose from five unique food and beverage outlets with inspired farm-to-table options, and take advantage of the Kananaskis Nordic Spa. The hotel is air conditioned and offers WiFi throughout.