

Banff National Park
parks.canada.gc.ca

Day Hiking Lake Louise, Castle Junction and Icefields Parkway Areas

Green forested valleys provide a vital food source for grizzly bears and other species. This is the Lake Louise and Icefields area of Banff National Park, a landscape of wonder which has been dubbed the “hiking capital of Canada”. Use the trail descriptions to choose a hike suitable for everyone in your party.



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LAKE LOUISE AREA

UPPER LAKE LOUISE AREA

Trailhead: Upper Lake Louise parking area, 4 km from the village of Lake Louise.
Because of the number of options from this trailhead, you have the opportunity to “mix and match” many of the trails in the Upper Lake Louise area to suit your abilities and interests.

22 Lake Louise Lakeshore

2 km one way; no elevation gain; 1 hour round trip
This accessible stroll allows visitors of all abilities to explore Lake Louise. At the end of the lake you'll discover the milky creek that gives the lake its magical colour.

23 Fairview Lookout

1 km one way; 100 m elevation gain; 45 minute round trip
Leaving from the boathouse on Lake Louise, this short, uphill hike offers you a unique look at both the lake and the historic Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise.

24 Lake Agnes

3.4 km one way; 385 m elevation gain; 2.5 to 3 hour round trip
Framed by a quaint European-style tea house (seasonal), the Lake Agnes hike is the most “civilized” way to see the Rockies. To get there, hike up the well maintained trail and enjoy a beautiful tarn tucked underneath towering peaks.

CASTLE JUNCTION AREA

1 Castle Lookout

3.7 km one way; 520 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: 5 km west of Castle Junction on the Bow Valley Parkway (Highway 1A).

In the mid-20th century, Banff erected numerous fire towers where spotters could detect flames from afar. The Castle Lookout tower has long since been removed, but the expansive views of the middle Bow Valley remain.

2 Boom Lake

5.1 km one way; 175 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: 7 km southwest of Castle Junction on Highway 93 South.

Travel on a heavily forested trail featuring some of the largest subalpine trees in Banff National Park. Your ultimate destination is a pristine lake backed by an impressive mountain rampart.

3 Stanley Glacier

4.2 km one way; 395 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: in Kootenay National Park, 13 km southwest of Castle Junction on Highway 93 South.

The hike to Stanley Glacier features fire and ice in equal measures. The lower trail, which burned in 1968 and 2003, is re-growing with lodgepole pines, willows, and colourful wildflowers. Along the upper trail, you'll get clear views of Stanley Glacier, and its numerous meltwater falls.

4 Arnica Lake

5.1 km one way; 120 m elevation loss; 580 m elevation gain; 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Vista Lake Viewpoint on Highway 93 South, 8 km southwest of Castle Junction, on the east side of the road.

Lose elevation before you gain it en route to Arnica Lake; the views and variety make this destination worth the ups and downs.

5 Twin Lakes

Via Arnica / Vista Lake trailhead: 8.0 km one way; 120 m elevation loss; 715 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Vista Lake Viewpoint on Highway 93 South, 8 km southwest of Castle Junction.

Hike under a canopy of larch trees while the continental divide guides you to Arnica and Twin Lakes.

6 Taylor Lake

6.3 km; 585 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Taylor Creek day use area 8 km west of Castle Junction, or 17 km east of Lake Louise, on the south side of the Trans-Canada highway.

Thick forest gives way to subalpine meadows as you climb steadily to this classic glacial lake. This trail holds its snow through the early part of the hiking season, so it's best from July on.

Side trip to O'Brien Lake: 2.1 km one way; 55 m elevation gain from Taylor Lake.

Extend your Taylor Lake hike by visiting this charming tarn.

Done with this Brochure?
Please return for re-use to a park facility or share it with others.

ICEFIELDS PARKWAY AREA

7 Bow Summit Lookout

2.9 km one way; 245 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 40 km north of the Lake Louise junction, at the Peyto Lake parking lot.

From the highest point on the Icefields Parkway (2070 m), hike beyond the Peyto Lake Viewpoint on the upper self-guided nature trail, then follow an old fire road to the lookout. Watch for pikas, marmots and ptarmigan.

8 Parker Ridge

2.7 km one way; 250 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 41 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing or 9 km south of the Icefield Centre.

After a series of switchbacks you'll be rewarded with dramatic views of the Saskatchewan Glacier – headwaters of the Saskatchewan River. Help maintain this fragile alpine ecosystem by staying on the trail.

9 Bow Glacier Falls

4.6 km one way; 155 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 36 km north of the Lake Louise junction, 400 m down the Num-ti-jah Lodge access road.

At the base of Bow Glacier Falls, amid the spray and roar, you can witness the birth of a river. The Bow River, part of western Canada's largest watershed, begins as meltwater tumbling down from the Waapta Icefield.

10 Helen Lake

6.0 km one way; 455 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 33 km north of the Lake Louise junction across from the Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint.

Tucked well into the Main Ranges of the Canadian Rockies is a breathtaking lake in a valley abounding with alpine wildlife and grand vistas.

11 Cirque Lake

4.2 km one way; 150 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Same as Chephren Lake.

This path is thickly forested, but offers mountain and glacier views at the shore of the lake. Note that the trail is often muddy.

12 Chephren Lake

3.5 km one way; 80 m elevation gain; 3 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 57.5 km north of the Lake Louise junction in the Waterfowl Lakes Campground.

Chephren Lake lies underneath the brooding walls of Howse Peak and Mount Chephren. This trail is often very muddy.

13 Sunset Lookout

4.5 km one way; 390 m elevation gain; 3 to 4 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 16.5 km north of the Saskatchewan Crossing.

There is no question that old fire tower locations offer up great views. A 1.6 km branch off the Sunset Pass trail allows you to enjoy an almost vertical view down to the confluence of the Alexandra and North Saskatchewan Rivers.

27 Fairview Mountain

5.1 km to summit; 1013 m elevation gain; 5 to 6 hour round trip

In a region that was explored by Swiss Mountain Guides in the early 20th century, it makes sense to challenge your inner mountaineer with a steep hike up a famous peak. And the “fair” view at the top? It's downright spectacular!

28 Sheol/Paradise Connector

4.1 km (connector only); 500 m elevation gain / loss (depending on direction); 1 to 2 hour one way
Trailheads: Upper Lake Louise parking or follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to the Paradise Valley parking lot on the right hand side.

Connect the Saddleback and Paradise Valley trails by using the Sheol/Paradise connector. A car shuttle may be needed depending on your route choice.

VILLAGE OF LAKE LOUISE AND BOULDER PASS AREA

29 Bow River Loop

7.1 km round trip; no elevation gain; 2 hour round trip
Trailhead: Parking lot opposite the Lake Louise train station (restaurant).

Travel on a pleasant interpretive trail in the rich riparian zone of the Bow River. These waters travel across the prairies to their ultimate destination in Hudson Bay, over 2500 kilometres downstream of Lake Louise.

14 Wilcox Pass

4 km one way; 335 m elevation gain; 3 to 3.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 47 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing, or 3 km south of the Icefield Centre at the entrance to the Wilcox Creek campground in Jasper National Park.

Rise quickly above treeline to the expansive meadows of this glacier-carved landscape. Bighorn sheep are sometimes seen in this area.

15 Nigel Pass

7.2 km one way; 365 m elevation gain; 4.5 to 5.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 37 km north of Saskatchewan Crossing or 13 km south of the Icefield Centre.

A consistent and gentle grade ensures that it doesn't take long to reach treeline as you head towards the wide-open scenery of the Banff / Jasper boundary.

16 Molar Pass

10.5 km one way; 330 m elevation gain; 7 to 8 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 24 km north of Lake Louise.

Travel into Banff National Park's wilderness as you rise well above treeline to an expansive alpine meadow.

17 North Molar Pass

11.9 km one way; 760 m elevation gain; 8 to 9 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 24 km north of Lake Louise.

At the Molar Pass trail junction you have the option of travelling to the alpine meadows of Molar Pass or heading left to this higher pass, a rugged and stark landscape of rocky meadows.

18 Dolomite Pass

9.0 km one way; 550 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 33 km north of the Lake Louise junction across from the Crowfoot Glacier Viewpoint.

After you've made it to Helen Lake, you can extend your hike and get a geology lesson at the same time: at the pass you'll have great views of Dolomite Peak, a picture perfect layer-cake mountain, as well the wine-coloured folds below the summit of Cirque Peak.

19 Sarbach Lookout

5.2 km one way; 590 m elevation gain; 4 to 5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 71 km north of the Lake Louise junction, or 6 km south of Saskatchewan Crossing, at the Mistaya Canyon parking lot.

This trail is a good physical workout, but since the fire lookout closed in 1971, forest growth has increasingly blocked the views.

20 Glacier Lake

8.9 km one way; 210 m elevation gain; elevation loss 220 m; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 1 km north of the Saskatchewan Crossing.

Snow-free early in the season, this rolling wooded trail takes you to a picturesque lake set below the peaks seen by early European explorers.

21 Sunset Pass

8.2 km one way; 725 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Highway 93 North, 16.5 km north of the Saskatchewan Crossing.

Climb steadily through a thick forest to reach an expansive meadow atop Sunset Pass. Look west for a panorama of the largest peaks in the parks, or east into the remote White Goat Wilderness Area.

30 Louise Creek

2.8 km one way; 195 m elevation gain; 1.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: From the Samson Mall parking lot, walk along Lake Louise Drive to a bridge crossing the Bow River. Cross the bridge and then look for the trailhead on the downstream side of the bridge.

Hike through a thick subalpine forest, following the entire length of Louise Creek as it rushes from Lake Louise to the Bow River.

31 Tramline

4.5 km one way; 195 m elevation gain; 2.5 hour round trip
Trailhead: Parking lot opposite the Lake Louise train station (restaurant).

Follow in the footsteps – or trolley wheels – of travellers who, a century ago, were dropped off at the railway station and then ferried, by tram, on this 3% railway grade to the Chateau Lake Louise.

32 Boulder Pass

8.6 km to pass; 640 m elevation gain; 6 to 7 hour round trip
Trailhead: Fish Creek parking area, off Whitehorn Road, 3 km north of Lake Louise.

After 4 km on a wide access road, you will reach a world dotted with lakes and inviting alpine meadows. From the pass, you get a spectacular view into a remote corner of Banff National Park.

Side trip to Baker Lake: 3.4 km; 130 m elevation loss from Boulder Pass
Visit the stunning shores of Baker Lake in the valley below Deception Pass.

Side trip to Deception Pass: 2.4 km; 145 m elevation gain from Boulder Pass
Hike over to this windswept pass if you have energy to spare.

LAKE LOUISE AREA

MORAINÉ LAKE AREA

Trailheads: drive 14 km from Lake Louise along the Moraine Lake Road.
Consolation Lake Trailhead: start at the bridge near the Rockpile at Moraine Lake.
All other trails: begin just beyond the Moraine Lake Lodge

33 Moraine Lake Lakeshore

1.5 km one way; no elevation gain; 45 minute round trip

This stroll allows visitors of all abilities to explore Moraine Lake. Along the trail you will gain a magnificent view of Mount Fay and the Fay Glacier.

34 Consolation Lakes

2.9 km one way; elevation gain 65 m; 2 hour round trip

Hiking to Consolation Lakes requires much less effort than most of the Moraine Lake trails, but rewards the hiker with views of high alpine meadows, enormous talus slopes and the Quadra Glacier.

35 Eiffel Lake

5.6 km one way; elevation gain 370 m; 4.5 hour round trip

The trail to Eiffel Lake splits off from the Larch Valley trail and takes you high along the side of the valley to panoramic views overlooking Eiffel Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks.

36 Larch Valley/Minnestimma Lakes

4.3 km one way; 535 m elevation gain; 3.5 to 4 hour round trip

Hike into a unique larch forest high above Moraine Lake. Views of the Ten Peaks are breathtaking.

37 Sentinel Pass

5.8 km one way; elevation gain 725 m; 4.5 to 5.5 hour round trip

Steep switchbacks lead to two famous valleys: Larch Valley and Paradise Valley.

38 Wenkchemna Pass

9.7 km one way; elevation gain 720 m; 7.5 to 8 hour round trip

Travel the entire length of the Valley of the Ten Peaks, wandering steadily into a high alpine environment to reach this spectacular pass on the Continental Divide.



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PARADISE VALLEY AREA

39 Lake Annette

5.7 km one way; elevation gain 245 m; 4 hour round trip.
Trailhead: Follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to a parking lot on the right hand side.

The steady hike through the subalpine forest is a perfect prelude for the wonderful sensory experience that will greet you at Lake Annette.

40 Paradise Valley and Giant Steps

10.3 or 10.9 km one way; elevation gain 385 m; 7 to 8 hour round trip.
Trailhead: Follow the Moraine Lake Road for 2.5 km to a parking lot on the right hand side.

Here's a chance to enjoy great views of Mount Temple, identify midsummer wildflowers and witness dramatic surroundings at the Giant Steps Waterfall.

41 Sentinel Pass Connector

2.3 km one way (connector only); elevation gain / loss 505 m (depending on direction); 1 to 2 hour one way.
Trailheads: Same as Paradise Valley area trails or Moraine Lake area trails.

Connect the Sentinel Pass and Paradise Valley Trails by using the Sentinel Pass Connector. A vehicle shuttle is required. Route finding may be required on the rocky slopes on the north side of Sentinel Pass. Check with the Lake Louise Visitor Centre for more details.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

Remember, you are responsible for your own safety.

- Get advice from a Parks Canada Visitor Centre.
- Study trail descriptions and maps before starting.
- Check the weather forecast and current trail conditions.
- Choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Pack adequate food, water, clothing, maps and gear.
- Carry a first aid kit and bear spray.
- Tell somebody where you're going, when you'll be back and who to call if you don't return. (See SAFETY section)
- Travel with a friend or group.
- Be prepared for emergencies and changes in weather.
- Check for possible warnings or closures.

STAY ON MAINTAINED TRAILS

To prevent trail damage stay on the trail and avoid shortcuts.

Leave What You Find, and Take What You Bring

- Pack out all garbage, including diapers and food waste.
- Dispose of human waste at least 100m from any water source. Bury solid human waste in a hole 15 cm deep. Pack out your toilet paper.
- Natural and cultural resources such as rocks, fossils, artifacts, horns, antlers, wildflowers and nests are protected by law and must be left undisturbed for others to discover and enjoy.

KEEP WILDLIFE WILD, AND YOURSELF SAFER

- Travel in groups and make noise to avoid surprise encounters.
- Do not feed, touch, or approach wildlife. Stay at least 30 to 50 metres away from most animals, and 100 metres away from bears.
- Carry bear spray and know how to use it.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times.

BACKCOUNTRY

A backcountry camping permit is required for any overnight trip. Reservations can be made up to three months in advance by calling 403-522-1264.

RANDOM CAMPING

Non-designated or random camping may be permitted. Ask Parks Canada Visitor Centre staff for details.

CYCLING

Mountain biking is only allowed on trails designated for cycling. Pick up a cycling guide at a Parks Canada Visitor Centre.

FISHING

A National Park fishing licence is required. Available at Parks Canada Visitor Centres.

SAFETY

Emergency
Call 911 or, if using a satellite phone, call the park dispatch office 403-762-4506. Cell phone reception is unreliable.

Avalanches
The right combination of snow cover and slope angle can produce avalanches. Be careful when crossing snow slopes or when exposed to avalanche paths.

MORE INFORMATION

- Lake Louise Visitor Centre: 403-522-3833
- Website: www.pc.gc.ca/banff
- Banff Trail Conditions Report: www.pc.gc.ca/banfftrails
- Weather: www.weatheroffice.gc.ca
- Avalanche Reports, Information and Training: www.avalanche.ca
- Maps and Guide Books: visit a local retail store in Lake Louise or Banff.



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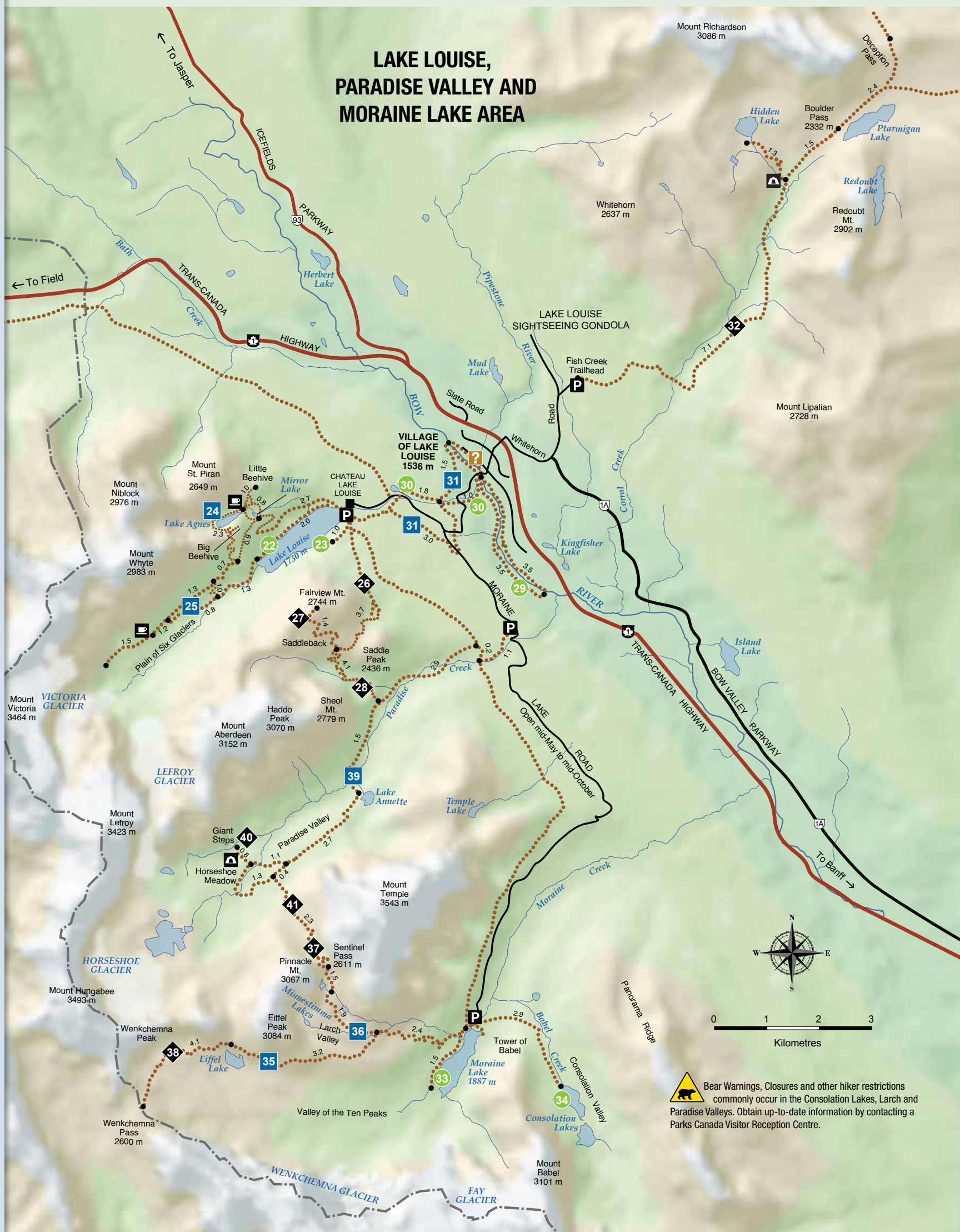
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Bear Warnings, Closures and other hiker restrictions commonly occur in the Consolation Lakes, Larch and Paradise Valleys. Obtain up-to-date information by contacting a Parks Canada Visitor Reception Centre.



How was your trip?

Please send us your comments at ll.info@pc.gc.ca and report trail problems to park staff.

- Beginner
- Moderate
- ◆ Difficult

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- Hiking Trail
- Highway
- Road
- Park Boundary
- A Backcountry Campground
- T Tea House
- ? Visitor Centre

