



## ***Family Hiking in the Canadian Rockies*** **July 25 - August 2, 2009**

This major excursion will visit Canada's premier national outdoors escape: Alberta's Banff National Park, where we'll visit Banff Township and Lake Louise. Awe-inspiring mountains, abundant accessible glaciers, and copiously diverse flora and fauna make this a backcountry paradise. This trip aims to provide an ideal family excursion to the spectacular views of the Canadian Rockies, while teaching your children about the grandeur of Mother Nature.

### **Basic Itinerary and Trail Descriptions**

Our itinerary begins with four nights in Banff Township and ends with four nights in Lake Louise. We'll explore Banff and Yoho National Parks and take a scenic drive along the Icefields Parkway, to the border of Jasper National Park. A combination of dayhiking and half-dayhiking will accompany exploration of cultural and family-friendly activities. Longer hikes will be offered when a family member/parent has the ability to leave their little one(s) with another family member/parent. And, some of the half-day hikes may start with the entire family and continue with an extended hike for those seeking greater adventure. Each day, we will offer two different itineraries, and perhaps have some free time.

Below are descriptions of hikes and cultural/family-oriented activities we might undertake. Day hikes are moderate to strenuous with at least 1,200 feet of elevation gain. Half-day hikes are at an easy to moderate pace, covering a shorter distance with less elevation gain (one even has a gondola ride). None of the hikes requires extensive driving and, with many hours of daylight, we will not have to wake up at the crack of dawn.

A more detailed day-by-day itinerary with each hike/activity option will be sent to you several weeks in advance of the trip. As with any hiking adventure, routes and distances may be altered because of poor weather conditions. Your flexibility will be appreciated.

## **HALF-DAY HIKES**

### **SULPHUR MOUNTAIN (7,486 feet) (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~3.4 miles to summit ridge

**Elevation change:** 2,300 feet

For those who do not want to take the gondola up. There are 28 switchback turns to provide a reasonable grade up to the summit ridge. One way gondola tickets are available for purchase on top. Once on top, walk along the south east ridge ½ mile to the true summit or a ¼ mile walk on an interpretive boardwalk path to Norman Sanson's weather station.

### **SUNDANCE CANYON & MARSH LOOP (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~4.5 miles

**Elevation change:** 500 feet

This is one of the wildest places to visit in Banff which takes you through an impressive over hanging canyon filled with large boulders and a couple waterfalls. Add in a loop around the marsh on a series of boardwalks that allow you to explore the thermal springs.

### **SUNSHINE MEADOWS (7,544 feet) (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~5.0 miles round trip

**Elevation change:** 350 feet gain & 260 feet loss

This area has attracted artist and photographers for decades. Take the shuttle bus up to Sunshine Meadows and hike to the Rock Isle Lake, Grizzly Lake, and Larix Lake through woods and meadows filled with wildflowers. There are other trails that can be explored while in the meadows if we are up for more scenery and mileage. You even cross the Continental Divide.

### **TUNNEL MOUNTAIN (5,550 feet) (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~2.8 miles round trip

**Elevation change:** 980 feet

Just out our door, this hike is one of the oldest trails in the Park. It climbs steadily to an unobstructed view of the entire town of Banff, golf course, Vermilion Lake and surrounding peaks. Deer are frequently seen.



### **MORRAINE LAKE (6,183 feet) (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~3.8 miles round trip

**Elevation change:** 335 feet

Morraine Lake, arguably more stunning than Lake Louise, is 8-miles south of Lake Louise and offers a variety of hikes. Highlights include the Consolation Lake Trail or the Rockpile Trail all of which start at the parking lot.

### **LAKE AGNUS TRAIL & TEAHOUSE (7,003 feet) (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~4.6 miles round trip

**Elevation change:** 1,310 feet

This classic trail takes you to a rustic teahouse nestled beside Lake Agnus and offering fabulous views down to Lake Louise and the Chateau. Perhaps we can also climb to Devils Thumb (8,062 feet) on our way back.

## **FULL DAY HIKES**

### **ALPINE CIRCUIT, LAKE O'HARA (Yoho National Park)**

**Distance:** ~7.3 miles

**Elevation change:** 1,673 feet

Numerous alpine lakes, wildflower-covered meadows and jagged peaks surround beautiful Lake O'Hara. The whole area is crisscrossed with short trails, giving many options for spectacular half or full-day loops and making it possibly the finest area for one-day hiking in the whole of the Canadian Rockies. This spectacular hike combines three alpine routes to make a dramatic high level circuit: Huber Ledges from Wiwaxy Gap to Lake Oesa, Yukness Ledge to Opabin Plateau, and All Soul's Alpine Route to Schäffer Lake.

### **ICELINE (Yoho National Park)**

**Distance:** ~8.5 miles one way; 12 mile loop

**Elevation gain:** 2,378 feet

The Iceline is a dramatic, alpine trail that traverses limestone and talus beside Emerald Glacier. To reach this stark land of rock and ice entails a stiff climb from the floor of Yoho Valley, but you are rewarded along the way with expansive views over the valley to spectacular 380-meter (1,250 foot) Takakkaw Falls.

### **CORY PASS VIA EDITH PASS (Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~8.4 miles - loop

**Elevation change:** 3,200 feet

Cory Pass is a strenuous trip through craggy peaks, highlighted by awesome views of the nearby vertical slabs of Mt. Louis. Mountain sheep frequent the pass. The trip also goes through Edith Pass and can be done as a loop.



**PARADISE VALLEY  
(Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~12 miles - loop  
**Elevation change:** 1,263 feet

Paradise Valley is an unforgettable hike that has it all: forest, meadows, mountains, a stunning glacial lake, creek and cascade. It also boasts some of the finest views in the Canadian Rockies - not what you would expect from a valley trail.

**LAKE AGNES, BEEHIVES, PLAIN OF SIX GLACIERS  
(Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~12 miles - loop  
**Elevation change:** 2,000 feet

Climb to superb views of the mountains and glaciers flanking sublime Lake Louise. Then leave behind lush slopes and emerald waters for the desolate beauty of an imposing cirque of rock and ice.

**MORAINE LAKE AND SENTINEL PASS  
(Banff National Park)**

**Distance:** ~11 miles  
**Elevation change:** 2,385 feet

Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks is one of Canada's most recognizable landmarks. Hike through spectacular Rockies scenery, dominated by the Ten Peaks, to a high pass overlooking Paradise Valley.



**CULTURAL & FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES**

**BANFF PARK MUSEUM  
(Banff National Park)**

This museum specializes in natural history with a large collection of stuffed birds and mammals found in the park. There is a hands-on discovery room for kids and a log cabin to explore.

**CANADA PLACE & CASCADE GARDENS  
(Banff National Park)**

Family-friendly exhibits about Canada and its people surrounded by historic Cascade Gardens. The Siksika Nation puts up a teepee and interpretive display about native culture past and present.

**CAVE & BASIN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE (\$)\*\*\*  
(Banff National Park)**

This site commemorates the birthplace of Canada's National Park System. You can walk into a cave, smell the Sulphur, peer into cave holes, and imagine discovering tourist gold. There is a 30-minute film and a one-hour guided tour daily at 11AM.

**BANFF GONDOLA AT SULPHUR MOUNTAIN (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

Sit back and relax in a 4-passenger, glass enclosed gondola. Marvel at the unsurpassed views of Banff and Bow Valley in an 8-minute breathtaking journey to the top of Sulphur Mountain.

**LAKE LOUISE SITESEEING GONDOLA (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

Sit back and relax in a 4-passenger, glass enclosed gondola or an open chair. A 14-minute ride to 6,850, where you can enjoy free interpretive programs or walks on marked trails.

**FAIRMONT BANFF SPRINGS HOTEL (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

Few hotels can rival the majesty, opulence, and seclusion of Banff Springs Hotel. Daily short tours of the hotel are offered. Walk the grounds and behind the hotel is thirty-three foot tall Bow Falls.

**THE BANFF CENTRE (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

An art center with a glass enclosed swimming and tot pools with views of Sulphur Mountain.

**LAKE MINNEWANKA BOAT TOURS (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

A magnificent cruise in the heart of the Canadian Rockies on Banff's largest lake consists of a 1 ½ hour interpretive tour of history, native folklore, and geology. The over forty foot long boats are comfortable and enclosed in glass.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAFT TOURS (\$)   
(Banff National Park)**

A 4.2 mile gentle raft float between Tunnel Mountain and Mount Rundle, past the hoodoos is a perfect way to encounter this natural mountain beauty.

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\* A dollar sign (\$) next to an activity indicates additional cost.

## Accommodations and Meals

We will stay at the 4-star Banff and Lake Louise Hostels, which, quite frankly, are nicer than some hotels! We will have private bunkrooms with private and shared bathrooms based on double occupancy. There is a single supplement available for those wanting more privacy, at an additional cost. Both hostels have delicious on-site cafes, with common areas, fireplaces, laundry facilities, lockers and self-catering kitchens. Linens, blankets and pillows are provided. If you want to check the hostels out in advance, go to <http://www.hostellingintl.ca/Alberta/Hostels/> and click on the respective hostel. We will have group breakfasts and dinners at the hostels or in local restaurants. People will be responsible for buying and preparing their own lunches, but both hostels have large refrigerators and kitchen facilities. Sandwiches and snacks can also be purchased in town.

## Transportation

We will fly into Calgary International Airport. Everyone must arrive by 2pm on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> and depart no earlier than noon on Sunday, August 2nd. Our last day requires us to depart from Lake Louise, a two-hour drive from the airport. If you would like to consult with us prior to making your plane reservations and confirm that your itinerary meets the required specifications, we will be glad to assist. Airfare for adults ranges from \$550-800.

While in Canada we will be renting five 7-passenger minivans. We may need extra drivers, so please indicate whether you would be willing to be an extra driver on your application form. Car seat rental information will be provided prior to departure.

## Estimated costs and Cancellation

The estimated cost of this trip is \$1565 per person, double occupancy (single supplement \$440), children ages five to 15 \$975, and children under five \$415, plus airfare. This includes all lodging, park permits, breakfasts and dinners, rental vehicles, van insurance, gas, and evacuation insurance. Airfare is not included but will cost approximately \$750-\$850 per person. Plan to bring about \$200 per person for additional lunches and personal spending money.

The approximate costs for the excursion are based on estimates for trip expenses. The final cost of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best arrangements the leaders can make. Any savings they achieve, as well as any cost increase, will be returned or passed on to you.

Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing a portion of the leader's expenses, but not all of them. In accordance with AMC

rules, the leaders may not realize a profit from this excursion. Any unspent funds resulting from negotiating better rates for lodging, local transportation, etc. must be refunded to all the participants. The trip fee also includes an AMC overhead cost to cover the administrative expenses of offering Major Excursions, including the trip's publication in the *Outdoors* and liability insurance.

A registration deposit of \$300 is due with the application. You must also submit the registration form, the Confidential Medical form, and the signed Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form for the AMC. The rest of the payment will be due on May 26, 2009 which is 60 days in advance of departure. Please make check payable to the *Appalachian Mountain Club*.

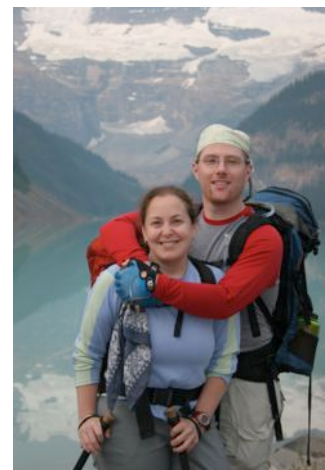
Our cancellation policy is based on the precept that your cancellation shall not raise the cost to any of the other participants or the leaders. Therefore, if you cancel, we will refund any money you have paid, less any expenses already incurred, or future expenses that will be incurred, that have been the result of your registration and that cannot be avoided. Refunded money will also be less a \$50 cancellation fee. However, if you cancel and the trip still realizes full participation, then any and all fees you have paid will be refunded to you, in full, minus the cancellation fee. If you cancel after your airline tickets have been purchased, you still own the ticket and will be subject to the airline's cancellation policy.

When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses and phone numbers of those going on the trip. We will be using email as our primary source of communication. If you prefer snail mail and/or telephone communication, please note that on your registration form.

If you have any questions, please call us so that we can discuss them. Our numbers are: Steve & Heather DePaola at [Heather@UnpackingSolutions.com](mailto:Heather@UnpackingSolutions.com) or 508-785-1977. Stacia Zukroff at [szukroff@yahoo.com](mailto:szukroff@yahoo.com) and Wyatt Biel at [wyattbiel@excite.com](mailto:wyattbiel@excite.com) or 781-648-5503.

## About the Leaders

**Wyatt Biel** holds membership with the Boston Chapter of AMC and leads locally and with Major Excursions. Wyatt's AMC travels have led his participants throughout New England, the American Southwest, the Canadian Rockies, Yosemite National Park, and Istanbul and coastal Turkey. Wyatt is a family nurse practitioner, employed at Arlington Family Practice, in Arlington, Massachusetts, and works part-time at Babson College in their Health Services Department.



**Stacia Biel** leads about 2-3 trips per year, some of which have included hiking and backpacking trips to the Canadian Rockies, a backpacking and kayaking trip to New Zealand and Alaska, a trekking trip to Nepal and Tanzania (Mt. Kilimanjaro). Her most recent trips have been to Turkey, and Hawaii and Yosemite National Park. She is the chair of the Major Excursions Committee and a member of the Boston Chapter. She is Advanced Wilderness First Aid certified. Stacia is employed by CAPA International Education, an organization that develops academic programs overseas for colleges and universities.

**Steve and Heather DePaola** have been hiking together for over 10 years. They joined the AMC to learn more about safety, gear, and hiking in general and took the Spring Hiking and Backpacking introductory course. After climbing the 48 4,000-footers in NH, they then trained to become AMC leaders in the Boston Chapter. Next they hiked the 4,000-footers in Maine and Vermont in training for their first Major Excursion to Tanzania in 2005 to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro and safari in the Serengeti, which was led by Stacia. They were quickly hooked on major excursions and in June 2006 and joined Stacia on her backpacking trip to Alaska's North Slope and the Arctic Ocean. Nine months later their daughter Mckinlee was born and she now joins them on all their fun adventures. Heather and Steve have also led local family hikes and camping weekends for toddlers and younger children with their parents. They are both Wilderness First Aid and CPR certified. Heather owns her own company and Steve is a business consultant.



## Experience and Risks

### **Physical & Mental Preparation**

Taking the family on an adventure travel is an exciting way to strengthen family bonds. People wishing to participate in this trip must have previous hiking experience to at least the intermediate level. Although we will hike at a moderate pace, this trip is not for people who have not hiked for several years. You should be in moderate to excellent physical condition at the time we depart. Children should either be small enough to be carried or capable of keeping up with the hikes as described. If they are to be carried, you must be in shape to carry them and have experience in doing so.

When you participate in this activity you should be both physically and mentally prepared and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should

always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. We are not responsible for your safety: you are. Please expect us to request a hiking reference for you, and if you have any questions about your potential success on this trip, please ask before filling out the application.

### **Being a Flexible Team Player**

We will be more than just a group, we will be a team. Even though we may offer two different hiking or cultural activities daily, you should enjoy being part of the group and will be expected to participate in most or all planned group activities. There may be some free time, but for the most part we will be together in one or two groups.

This is a family oriented trip, and everyone is expected to understand that all families travel differently and have unique needs; therefore, flexibility and patience are essential. Every parent is expected to take complete responsibility for their children at all times. Children must be able safely complete the hikes they and their parents attempt. Parents must assume a supervisory role at all times for their children. The leaders and other participants will not serve to baby-sit, though we certainly encourage members of the group to share responsibilities when appropriate. If you're currently experiencing difficulty in parenting or your children have behavioral challenges, particularly when socializing with others in similar age groups or following adults' instructions, this trip is unfortunately inappropriate for your family. **Please give careful consideration to these concerns.** Your flexibility is encouraged and appreciated!

To facilitate our team development prior to the trip, we plan to schedule a couple pre-trip hikes to get to know each other. Although not required, this will be a great way to meet the leaders and other participants in the group.

### **Wildlife (and bears)**

There are a variety of large wildlife species in the Canadian Rockies! Elk, moose and various breeds of bear roam freely. To prevent bear encounters and for the safety of you and your family, some of our hikes will require a minimum of five people. Many of us take bears for granted since we hike in bear country all the time in NH and Maine; however, we CANNOT ignore this risk in Canada. We will discuss techniques recommended by bear experts to avoid bear encounters and review actions necessary should one occur. Remember, prevention is the number one technique!



## Weather and Daylight

The weather in the Canadian Rockies can be very unpredictable, and we may experience extreme temperature differences from morning to night. Temperatures will climb into the 70s and 80s during the day; nighttime temperatures can drop as low as the 30s. Snow is not uncommon. Prepare expecting all weather conditions and you will not be disappointed. We will also experience long hours of daylight, where the sun will not completely set until after 10pm. This will give us plenty of time to enjoy our hikes and not have to rush back on longer days.

## Equipment and Gear

We will be driving minivans. We will not have a tremendous amount of luggage storage in the back, so please be conservative in your packing. A medium size duffel and a daypack is all you will need since you do not have to bring a sleeping bag or tent. There are laundry facilities in both hostels, so you will have a chance to wash your clothes.

With strict luggage requirements and fees, one might consider renting baby/toddler equipment. This option could make your traveling easier and perhaps even save some money. This Baby Equipment Rental outfit is recommended by the hostels and seems to have just about everything you could need for rent: Baby on the Move, [www.babyonthemove.ca](http://www.babyonthemove.ca).

### Required Personal Gear

- daypack
- 1 medium duffel
- 1 small daypack / lumbar pack for day hiking
- 2 32-oz bottles / Camelbak bladder
- High energy snacks

### Required Personal Clothing

- hiking boots (broken-in, preferably waterproof)
- waterproof wind and rain gear (top and bottom)
- one insulating layer of top and bottom wool, synthetic fleece jacket and pants
- hat (liner and warm fleece)
- baseball cap or similar brimmed hat
- gloves or mittens
- a few sets of synthetic top and bottom—hiking shorts and/or nylon pants, short sleeve and long sleeve tops
- min. 2-3 pairs hiking socks w/ liners
- bathing suit for hot springs

### Required Accessories

- 1 flashlight or headlamp w/ extra batteries
- toiletries
- sunglasses

- ❑ whistle
- ❑ personal first aid kit
- ❑ sunscreen and bug repellent
- ❑ ziplock bags for trash
- ❑ pack cover
- ❑ towel - hostel provides one but you may want another for the hot springs

**Optional Gear**

- ❑ gaiters
- ❑ bandana
- ❑ hiking poles (highly recommended)
- ❑ pocket knife
- ❑ compass
- ❑ casual clothing (for in town)
- ❑ camera and film/ binoculars
- ❑ playing cards, book, journal
- ❑ ear plugs