



Canadian Rockies Explorer With Glacier National Park

One of North America's great unspoiled wildernesses, the Canadian Rockies offer bountiful rewards for outdoor-loving travelers. While staying in unique mountain lodges, we ride in Glacier National Park's famed Red Jammers, visit cerulean Lake Louise, and set foot on Athabasca Glacier. Amid stunning alpine scenery, it's a feast for the eyes – and the spirit.

Itinerary

Created on Feb 29, 2024

Canadian Rockies Explorer

Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart the U.S. for Calgary, Canada

We depart the United States today for our flight to Calgary. Upon arrival, we check in to our centrally located hotel then have time to explore this cosmopolitan Canadian city on our own. Tonight we gather for a briefing on the journey ahead followed by dinner at our hotel.

Accommodations: Hyatt Regency Calgary

Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Calgary/Waterton Lakes National Park/Glacier National Park, Montana, U.S.

We leave Calgary by coach this morning for the scenic drive to Glacier National Park in northern Montana. For lunch, we stop at a local restaurant located on the shores of Waterton Lake, the deepest lake in the Canadian Rockies and where the prairie meets the mountains. After time to take in the splendid lake views here, we cross the 49th parallel and enter the United States. We arrive at our lodge late this afternoon and enjoy dinner there together tonight.

Accommodations: St. Mary Village

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Glacier National Park

Today we get our first look at Glacier National Park, a 1,583-square-mile swath of wilderness in Montana's Rocky Mountains encompassing rugged mountains, thunderous waterfalls, still lakes, and glacial valleys stretching to the Canadian border. We begin with a morning hike along St. Mary Lake, the park's second largest and the clear divide between the Great Plains to the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west. Movie buffs may recognize the lake from the iconic opening shot of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. Then we embark on a cruise for panoramic views of the lake and its surroundings. This afternoon is at leisure amidst the majesty of America's 10th national park before dinner together at our lodge.

Accommodations: St. Mary Village

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Glacier National Park/Whitefish

We enjoy a travel highlight today as we step back in time and board one of Glacier National Park's legendary sightseeing buses: the Red Jammers, in use here since the 1930s. With roll-back canvas convertible tops, these buses take their name from the sound of the early drivers jamming the manual transmission into low gear to negotiate steep roads. Our ride this morning takes us along the fabled Going-to-the-Sun Road, a winding mountain pass that offers breathtaking views and hair-raising turns. After time for lunch on our own, we meet up with our motorcoach and continue southwest across the Continental Divide. After arriving late this afternoon in the resort town of Whitefish, Montana, we dine together tonight.

Accommodations: Grouse Mountain Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5: Whitefish

This morning, we head to the popular ski area of Whitefish Mountain Resort, where we board chairlifts bound for the mountain's summit. After taking time to enjoy the 360-degree views and crisp summit air, we visit the Summit Nature Center to learn more about the mountain and its local environment. We then enjoy lunch on our own before heading to nearby Kalispell for a guided tour of Conrad Mansion, one of the Northwest's most outstanding examples of luxurious pioneer living. We dine tonight on our own. As an authentic mountain town, Whitefish boasts an abundance of restaurants to choose from.

Accommodations: Grouse Mountain Lodge

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Whitefish/Lake Louise, Banff National Park

Today's full day of travel presents some of the most striking scenery of our tour. We begin the day passing through forests, by lakes, and across high plains before crossing from the U.S. back into Canada – this time, into British Columbia. After a stop for lunch and a drive along the western edge of the Canadian Rockies, we enter world-famous Banff National Park and ascend to Lake Louise and our hotel late this afternoon. Before dinner here, we take an easy hike for our first view of the photogenic lake, originally named Emerald Lake for its brilliant hue.

Accommodations: Lake Louise Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Lake Louise/Jasper

This morning we visit the viewing area to see the lake in the early morning light. Then we depart via the Columbia Icefields Parkway for the drive to the 125-square-mile Columbia Icefields in Banff National Park, a UNESCO site. Here we bundle up for a tour highlight as we board the *Ice Explorer* all-terrain vehicle for the ride to Athabasca Glacier, the most visited glacier in North America. Equipped to drive right onto the glacier itself, the massive *Ice Explorer* boasts super-sized tires specially designed for glacier travel. Upon reaching Athabasca, we disembark to explore, take photos, and fill our water bottles with the pure water from the glacier. We descend to the base station for lunch before we begin our drive northward again, arriving at our hotel centrally located in the town of Jasper, which is within Jasper National Park (also a UNESCO site). We enjoy dinner together at our hotel.

Accommodations: Whistler's Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Jasper

The scenery on display today is nothing short of breathtaking. First we view Maligne Canyon, a geological marvel where the limestone bedrock has been eroded by an underground river to a depth of 160 feet. Only six feet wide at some points, the plunging canyon offers a dramatic view from the top. We continue on to cerulean Maligne Lake, the largest glacially formed lake in the Canadian Rockies. Here we board our boat for a morning cruise, taking in the sky-scraping mountain peaks, dark green forests, and three glaciers all visible from the lake. We cruise by Spirit Island, a tiny yet acclaimed islet of a few trees which makes for a wonderful – and uniquely Canadian – photo opportunity. Early this afternoon we return to Jasper, where we have the rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodations: Whistler's Inn

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9: Jasper/Banff

We return today to the Columbia Icefields Parkway for more scenic views and a thrilling expedition. This dramatic road parallels the Continental Divide, running down the spine of both Jasper and Banff national parks. At midday, we enjoy an exhilarating experience as we tiptoe across the Glacier Skywalk, a cliff-edge walkway that leads to a transparent-bottomed observation deck suspended nearly 1,000 feet above the valley floor. Here, the vast glaciers, snowcapped mountain peaks, and thundering waterfalls seem close enough to touch. We enjoy a picnic lunch amidst this jaw-dropping scenery and then continue on to our hotel in lower Banff National Park.

Accommodations: Rimrock Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10: Banff

Our last full day in the Canadian Rockies begins with a ride aboard the Banff Gondola to the top of Sulphur Mountain, so named for the hot springs on its lower flank. This 8,000-foot peak overlooking the town of Banff affords stunning mountain views in every direction; indeed, we can see six mountain ranges during this excursion. Then we travel Tunnel Mountain Road to visit two more natural wonders: the Hoodoos, a collection of eroded limestone spires strung along a wooded hillside; and Bow Falls, a wide waterfall just outside Banff. The afternoon is free to explore Banff before we celebrate our outdoor adventures with a farewell dinner at our hotel.

Accommodations: Rimrock Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11: Banff/Depart for U.S.

We transfer this morning to the Calgary airport for our flights home.

Meals: Breakfast

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