



## **Rockies Adventure Sampler**

### **Hiking, Cycling and Whitewater Rafting**

#### **Getting Started**

Welcome to our Rockies Adventure Sampler Inn-to-Inn cycle tour. This trip has been designed to help you get the most enjoyment out of your visit to the Canadian Rockies. The adventure begins right now. A time of anticipation and excitement, planning and preparing for your trip is one of the most important and enjoyable trip elements. To fully enjoy the experience, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the information provided and read about any special topics of interest. We want to be with you every step of the way, so please call if you have any questions or concerns.

#### **Trip Description**

A glimpse into the backcountry wilderness of the Canadian Rockies gives you Mother Nature at her finest. Your local guides lead you on a week of walking, wheeling and whitewater paddling through the most spectacular and scenic parts of the National Parks. This itinerary will immerse participants in a variety of different outdoor activities that will allow them to experience the Rockies in their natural splendour. Unmatched in diversity, the Adventure Sampler is a magnificent showcase of Canada's West through different vehicles of access.

For the first stage of our trip, we will be based in Yoho National Park. This is the smallest of the 4 mountain parks, but still covers 507 square miles (1313 square kilometres) of dramatic scenery. The mountains here seem to rise straight up from the sides of the road. The word "Yoho" is an expression for awe in the Cree language, which amply describes this region. The roadway follows the path of the railroad through the Kickinghorse Pass. The spiral tunnels blasted into the mountains to lessen the grade are an incredible engineering feat. At the bottom of the hill, shrouded by forests and mountains, lies the old railroad town of Field.

Yoho Park is home to one of Canada's highest waterfalls. We will hike Takakkaw Falls and the beautiful Emerald Lake. Nearby on Mt. Stephen is another World Heritage Site, the Burgess Shale. Some of the richest fossil beds containing marine animal life have been found here dating back 530 million years. Hiking in Yoho combined with a river rafting trip on the Kickinghorse River will provide a unique insight into this world class park.

The cycling part of the trip encompasses some spectacular descents and a day of touring the Icefields Parkway. For many cyclists, this is the world's best tour as we cycle the line of the Continental Divide and remnants of the last iceage. Hundreds of glaciers feed cobalt blue lakes and hang from the mountains like massive icicles.

The last part of your adventure involves a terrific and scenic hike into Shadow Lake and the remote backcountry cabins. Travelling over Gibbon's Pass, we will be treated to a 360-degree view over Whistling Pass to Egypt Lake and Pharaoh Creek. Once at the Lodge, we will be able to meander around Shadow Lake or venture further to Ball Pass. You'll be pleasantly surprised to know your cabins are propane heated and have feather duvets and the lodge has a fully licensed dining room. The final hike will be down the Red Earth Creek trail and onwards to Banff.

## Professional Guide Services

All of our leaders are passionate about their work and are delighted to pass on their skills. University graduates with strong backgrounds in natural history, biology, geology, and anthropology, they are knowledgeable in the local region and its folklore. Trained in wilderness first aid and professionally certified, our guides are eager to please and will ensure you have a memorable experience.

## Equipment

A support van ensures comfort and safety throughout your trip. On board are snacks and refreshments, first aid, your baggage, and a driver who is never far away, ready to offer a lift, congratulations or words of encouragement. Our trailer is equipped with on board kitchen where we prepare delicious lunches and a variety of refreshments.

We utilize top quality 27-speed '*Rocky Mountain Bicycles*'. These hybrid bikes (cross between touring and mountain bike) are built in Canada and have a great reputation for performance, comfort and durability. These bikes are some of the lightest hybrid bikes on the market and perform exceptionally well. A carbon fork helps to bring the weight down and adds comfort by it's vibration dampening qualities.

They are equipped with water bottle, a waterproof front handlebar bag, and toe clips or bare pedals. Helmets are available free of charge. And, of course, mechanical support is always provided by our qualified guides.

## Accommodations

Evenings will be spent in the warmth and security of a selection of the areas most luxurious and historic hotels, lodges and cabins. In each case, the properties have been selected because they reflect the tranquility and beauty of the region, they are ideally situated and they have the intimacy of the resident proprietor we have befriended. We will also spend one night at the incredible Shadow Lake backcountry cabins.

## Climate

The winters in the Canadian Rockies are long. But the summers, although short, are spectacular and are blessed with glorious bursts of heat. A typical day in the summer averages in the high 70's (25 C) while evenings cool off considerably to the high 50's (15 C) with occasional frost during the night. Rain showers can occur at any time, but they are generally infrequent and short. In fact, by the time clouds have arrived to the Rocky Mountains, most of their moisture has already been spread over the Coastal Mountains. Needless to say, mountain weather is never boring.

## Wildlife

Many people come to the mountains, and National Parks in particular, to see the abundant wildlife. In Banff and Lake Louise areas, **elk** are the dominant species. Re-introduced to the area in 1917, they thrived and are numbered in the thousands.

Walking or hiking around a marsh or up in the sub-alpine you may catch a glimpse of a **moose**. More common and nowhere near as shy are the **bighorn sheep**. The males with their spectacular curved horns are the photographers' favourite. Ever popular, the bighorns, with their brazen ways, will block your way with indifference if they choose.

Last but definitely not least of the cloven hoofed crew are the **mountain goats**. These graceful animals with long white hair and short black horns are somewhat elusive and spend most of their time in alpine pastures. Specially designed pincer like hoofs allow them to cling to the tiniest rock outcrop and laugh in the face of danger as they rarely find their way into the jaws of cougars or bears.

The **black and grizzly bears** seen in the parks are often on the side of the roads munching on berries. The occasional bear of superior intelligence has been seen lurking in the bushes, waiting for fishermen to land a tasty one, whence it will amble nonchalantly into the open to claim the fish for it's own.

Columbian ground **squirrels**, golden mantled ground squirrels and **chipmunks** abound. More impressively the **marmots** sun themselves on rocks while its counterpart, the pika scurries around in search of food.

A relief to many is that there is little reptilian life with the exception of the odd garter snake. In contrast, the skies hold a myriad of mostly migratory birds. More than 200 species are present but you will especially see golden and bald **eagles**, **magpies**, whiskey jacks, Clark's Nutcracker and in the evenings great horned, great grey or saw whet **owls**.

## **Vegetation**

Between Calgary and the foothills are the grassy prairies so perfect for grazing cattle. The foothills are a mixture of woods and meadows. In the mountains, vegetation is divided into three zones, montane, sub-alpine and alpine.

Starting at the valley bottom and stretching up to almost 6,000 feet (1,800 metres) above sea level is the montane zone. Here there are some grassy meadows with shrubs and berry bushes in abundance. Most of the trees are lodgepole pines interspersed with white spruce. Here and there are stands of trembling aspen known to the natives as "squaws tongues".

Next comes the sub-alpine zone where the living gets harder. As your elevation increases, temperature decreases. When hiking up this high you will see sub-alpine firs and Engelmann spruce as well as shrubby undergrowth.

Lastly and finally there is alpine vegetation. Called meadows, these are not the grassy kind but consist of low growing shrubs and twisted stunted tress known as krummholz.

Many types of wildflowers grow in each of these zones. Along the sides of the road Indian paintbrush and fireweed are usually seen throughout the growing season.

Further west, the vegetation and climate in the Rocky Mountain Trench and Columbia Mountains is vastly different. Warmer temperatures and higher rainfall results in dark, lush-green undergrowth and over 600 species of wildflowers. The forests have a far greater variety of trees, including hemlock, red cedar and Douglas maple.

## **Ecological Sentiment**

*Rocky Mountain Cycle Tours* is a licensed commercial operator for the Banff-, Jasper- and Yoho National Parks. Although Banff Jasper are town sites, these parks are still a true wilderness, as only 3 percent of the encompassed 7,800 square miles (20,000 square km) is utilized by man. We are committed to the preservation of Western Canada's wilderness habitat. Our excursions are designed to promote an understanding of the delicate ecosystems that make our provinces unique while preserving their fundamental integrity.

We believe the survival of the natural environment and the wildlife it supports depends on establishing responsible economic viability beyond resource harvesting. In our clients' enjoyment of the natural endowment, we hope to contribute to this emerging view of the natural world.

## **Safety and Responsibility**

Cycling, like everything else, is a very safe and enjoyable sport if done properly and professionally. Safety is our utmost concern. Our trips are escorted by professional local guides and accompanied by a support vehicle in case of any emergencies. However, it is important that each trip participant realises that there are some inherent risks in cycling, as there are in many outdoor activities. Individuals must be responsible for their own actions and accountable for their own decisions. To acknowledge this assumption of risk, each tour member is required to read, understand and sign a liability release form. We will provide you with all the information you require in order to make your decision about joining us or taking part in any specific activity. We will support any decision made by participants to opt out of any activity that they are concerned about or feel is beyond their capabilities.

## Personal Preparation

No previous experience is required. Your guides will teach you the basics and give you an orientation to safe cycling practices on the first day. Over the period of the trip, you will refine your technique and begin to feel like a seasoned cyclist.

If you are already an accomplished cyclist, the delight of the breathtaking scenery and returning each night to a beautiful inn and deliciously prepared meals is something you do not want to miss.

Regular exercise before any outdoor experience is recommended and will add to your enjoyment. Most importantly, however, a spirit of adventure is essential.

## Registration

Due to the nature of our trips and small group size, space on our programs can be limited. To avoid disappointment, we encourage participants to book as early as possible. In order to confirm your space on any of these trips, we only require a \$500 CAN deposit. Upon receipt of deposit, we will send you pre-departure information, equipment list, medical questionnaire and liability release. The latter two should be returned to our office with the balance due 60 days prior to departure.

## Trip Price

Trip Cost	\$2,395 CAD
Single supplement	\$575 CAD
Bike rental	included

*(Prices are subject to 5% GST)*

## Services Included

- 5 nights accommodation in historic lodges and cosy backcountry cabins
- All meals (5 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 3 dinners, refreshments) except two dinners
- Professional guide services
- Support vehicle and luggage transport
- Bicycle rental
- White-water rafting on the Kickinghorse River
- All National Park fees and permits

## 2011 Departure Dates

July 3-8

August 7-12

*Trips start and finish in Banff, Alberta*

## How to Get to Banff

Calgary is accessible by a number of Canadian and international airlines with same day service from anywhere in North America and many places in the world. We would be pleased to assist you or your local travel agent if you have any questions about flights. Once in Calgary, there are a number of transportation options available to you

## Accommodations in Banff

If you require accommodations in Banff the night before your departure, we would be delighted to recommend or book a hotel for you.

**Reservations:** 1-800-661-BIKE (2453) / e-mail: [res@rockymountaincycle.com](mailto:res@rockymountaincycle.com)

# Rockies Adventure Sampler Itinerary

## Day One (Sunday)

We will meet at the Banff train station at 9:00 a.m. From here we will shuttle to the spectacular Moraine Lake. After a short walk and orientation, you will hop on your bikes and coast down the Continental Divide and into British Columbia. This afternoon we'll continue down Kicking Horse Pass to one of the truly amazing lodges in the Rockies, Emerald Lake Lodge, our home for two nights. There will be an optional side trip to the Natural Bridge and a walk around Emerald Lake this afternoon. Today you will have cycled 27 or 40 miles (44 or 64 km).

## Day Two

After a delicious breakfast we will lace up the hiking boots for a fantastic day of discovery. A full day of hiking in Yoho National Park will take us to Takakkaw Falls, the Iceline Trail and Emerald Lake. More energetic hikers can visit the famous fossil beds at Burgess Shale. Hiking distances will range from 9 to 12 miles (15 or 19km).

## Day Three

Today is a fun filled day of adventure while rafting the Kickinghorse River. You will be treated to a breathtaking roller coaster ride of waves and excitement. All the safety equipment and wetsuits will be provided. Depending on the time of year and run off, the Kickinghorse River has lots of class 3-4 rapids. After your day on the river, you will be transported to Lake Louise for a free evening for dining and sightseeing.

## Day Four

After a good night's sleep and another delicious breakfast, you start the morning with sunrise on the glaciers of Mount Victoria. A van shuttle to Bow Summit and Peyto Lake promises a great day for cycling on the famous Icefields Parkway. Descending gradually, we'll view the lakes, glaciers and mountain peaks whose legendary beauty must be seen to be believed. This afternoon we will cycle the incredible Bow Valley Parkway arriving at the summit of Vermilion Pass. No day would be complete without a fantastic meal and evening walk. Cycling distance up to 49 miles (79km).

## Day Five

Today we will hike 9 miles (14km) into the alpine, past crystal clear lakes and towering rock faces. Once over Gibbons Pass we will have reached Shadow Lakes remote backcountry cabins. This wonderful setting will be a fitting place to spend our last night together.

## Day Six (Friday)

A leisurely hike back on Red Earth Creek trail will allow time to reflect the experiences of this unsurpassed week of adventure. A quick shuttle will take us back to Banff, where we will say our good-byes.

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