

# CANADASCOPE

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## Bewitching Banff

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Main Event

National Historic Sites

Pay Tribute to  
Saskatchewan Pioneers

Québec Maritime

Newfoundland & Labrador: Celebrating Bartlett 2009



# Spring 2009

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Banff Avenue Summer  
Photo courtesy of Doug Leighton/ Travel Alberta  
Banff Lake Louise Tourism

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Photo courtesy of Martha's Hill Hikes

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Photo courtesy of Tourism Saskatchewan

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Photo courtesy of Le Québec maritime / Marc Laislé

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Here's one way to see the beauty of the park.

# *Bewitching Banff*

*By Beatrice Ang*

What's in a park? Lots if it's the iconic Banff National Park.



Photo courtesy of Icefield Helicopter Tours

On November 28, 2010, Banff National Park will be turning 125. Parks Canada is in the midst of planning the celebrations to commemorate this major milestone.

**B**anff National Park was initially christened Hot Springs Reserve in 1885. At the same time, a Parliament Act deemed it the birthplace of Canada's national park system.

As part of the foursome comprising Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay, or the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks as they are known collectively, Banff became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1984.

#### Oldie But Goodie

Banff is Canada's first national park. It all started in 1883 when construction crew from the Canadian Pacific Railway chanced upon a cave containing hot springs on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains.

As the third largest park in the world covering 6,641 sq. km., Banff National Park is made up of mountains, glaciers, icefields, deep canyons, hoodoos, forests, alpine meadows, mineral hot springs, rivers and lakes.

How often does a park celebrate its birthday? On November 28, 2010, Banff National Park will be turning 125. Parks Canada is in the midst of planning the celebrations to commemorate this major milestone. Special event dates will be January 20; July 1, Canada Day; July 18, Parks Day and the actual anniversary on November 28.

The festivities start right at the beginning of the year. On January 20, the torch relay for the 2010 Winter Olympics will make its way through the park where a two-hour celebration will follow. On Parks Day, the program includes performances by local interpretive theatre troupe, Mountain Wit, and dancing and drumming by Siksika (Blackfoot) artists.



Hiking through Banff National Park.



Photos courtesy of Martha's Heli Hikes



### Alternative Activities

To capitalize on the park's serene surroundings, two Alberta-based companies Martha's Heli-Hikes and Icefield Helicopter Tours have jointly introduced a heli-yoga program for the summer. Clients hop onboard a helicopter for an 8-10 minute ride to Mt. Cline, outside the boundary of Banff National Park – choppers are not allowed inside the park. Then it's a short walk into the park to a flat plain for a Hatha

yoga session (with a qualified instructor) topped with spectacular mountain scenery and fresh air.

Starting this year, the two companies are also offering 3-day hiking cum yoga retreats where accommodations involve tents. There are also other heli-adventures to the mountains offered by several companies throughout the year. These include heli-hiking and heli-picnicking

from May to October, and in the winter, heli-snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and alpine heli-ski touring.

### Lovely Lake Louise

The village of Lake Louise lies within the Banff National Park. Here, there are many outdoor activities to indulge in like hiking, fishing, taking an interpreta-



Peyto Lake.

Photo courtesy of Parks Canada

tive/nature walk on the shores of the lake, or simply gazing in awe at the beautiful turquoise waters of the lake.

In the summer, when Bow Lake thaws, waterfalls, the result of melting snow-capped peaks, reappear. The woods near this glacial blue lake is home to bluebirds, robins and hummingbirds while in the valley, it is common to see moose and mountain goats. Bow Lake is home to many varieties of Lake Trout.

Bow Pass (a.k.a. Bow Summit) is the highest road pass in the four mountain parks at 2,088 m. above sea level. The Peyto Lake Viewpoint, access via a short uphill walk from the parking area, provides a view of the glacier-fed, turquoise Peyto Lake.

Mountain WIT performers will entertain on Parks Day.





Hiking in the Rockies.



Lake Louise and Victoria Glacier.

Another attraction to check out is Johnston Canyon. There are paved trails along the canyon walls, where it is 27 km. to the Upper Falls and 1.1 km to the Lower Falls. A viewing platform built over the creek provides for the best possible view of the 40 m. cascade of water of the Upper Falls.

The famous Columbia Icefield is a remnant of the thick ice mass that once covered most of Western Canada's mountains. As the largest icefield in the Canadian Rockies, it gets about seven m. of snow yearly. Snow here accumulates and becomes ice which then flows out through gaps in the mountains surrounding the icefield, creating glaciers. Visitors can get to walk on the glacier during an excursion with one of the ice explorer vehicles. The Athabasca Glacier is the most visited glacier in the Icefields.

### Source and Information

[www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)

[www.banfflakelouise.com](http://www.banfflakelouise.com)