

Rockies Trail

11 Day Guided Tour – 3-4V

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

• Rocky Mountains • Banff National Park • Lake Louise • Jasper National Park • Athabasca Glacier • Victoria & Butchart Gardens •

ITINERARY

Day 1: UK – Calgary

Fly from the UK to Calgary. Arrive at Calgary International Airport. Individual transfer to your centrally-located hotel. After a check-in the remainder of the day is free. The tour director will contact you in the late afternoon to give details on joining the tour. Explore the Old West at the Glenbow Museum or Fort Calgary on your own, browse through the Eau Claire Market, ride up the Calgary Tower for a great view and savour the great restaurants and dynamic nightlife. **Accommodation stay – 1 Night in Calgary.**

Day 2: Calgary – Banff National Park

We begin the day with a city tour of Calgary. Leaving the city, we travel west on the Trans-Canada Highway into the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The majestic peaks of the Canadian Rockies soon fill the horizon as we approach Banff National Park, our first of several in the Canadian national parks system. We soon arrive in the charming resort town of Banff. **Accommodation stay – 2 Nights in Banff. Continental Breakfast included.**

Day 3: Banff National Park

Today we will enjoy a tour of the region around Banff. The area became Canada's first national park in 1885 to protect its natural hot springs. An **optional* Helicopter Sightseeing Tour will give you the chance to see the eastern ranges of the Rocky Mountains. Alternatively you can take an **optional* gondola ride to spectacular Sulphur Mountain. Bring your camera! The rest of the day is at leisure to explore the surroundings of Banff, stroll along Banff Avenue, or relax and enjoy the scenery. **Overnight in Banff. Canadian Breakfast Included.**

Day 4: Banff National Park – Jasper National Park

Today's journey through Banff and Jasper national parks promises to be a highlight of our Rockies Trail programme. Shortly after leaving Banff we visit the famous scenery of Lake Louise, one of the most photographed lakes in Canada. Afterwards, we travel north on the famed Icefields Parkway through a rugged wilderness flanked by dramatic mountain ranges. At the Columbia Icefield we board a specially constructed Ice Explorer to ride on the surface of the ancient Athabasca Glacier. Close to Jasper, you have the chance to go on an **optional* raft trip on the Athabasca River. Your experienced guide will point out the natural and human history as you raft through short rapids and stretches of calm waters. **Accommodation Stay – 1 Night in Jasper. Canadian Breakfast included.**

Day 5: Jasper National Park – Sun Peaks

Before leaving Jasper National Park this morning, you can take part in an **optional* Spirit Island Cruise on Maligne Lake, the most picturesque and largest glacier-fed lake in the park. You may alternately take an **optional* motorcycle tour of Jasper, riding in the comfortable sidecar with an unmatched view of the forests and mountains. Then, we travel west along the Yellowhead Highway and into the heartland of British Columbia. Breathtaking, unspoiled vistas await visitors in every season of the year. The route takes us along the Thompson River through the picturesque Shuswap Highlands. **Accommodation Stay – 1 Night in Kamloops. Canadian Breakfast included.**

Day 6: Sun Peaks – Whistler

We can expect a day of dramatic scenery changes when we drive through the ranch lands and head for the coastal mountains. A journey along the Duffey Lake Road exposes new vistas at every turn. An **optional* Floatplane Sightseeing Tour over Garibaldi Park gives you an inspiring view of a natural preserve of volcanic peaks, alpine lakes and meadows. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. **Accommodation Stay – 1 Night in Whistler. Canadian Breakfast included.**

Day 7: Whistler – Victoria

The Sea-to-Sky Highway leads us south through spectacular coastal scenery today. From Horseshoe Bay, we cruise by ferry across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver Island and continue by coach to Victoria, British Columbia's capital city. Arriving in Victoria, we embark on a city tour of this former British enclave. **Accommodation Stay – 2 Nights in Victoria. Canadian Breakfast included.**

Day 8: Victoria

Proud of her maritime heritage, Victoria has retained a quaint, colonial demeanor evident in the many 19th century landmarks throughout the city. Today we treat ourselves to a tour of the world famous Butchart Gardens, one of the world's great floral displays set in a reclaimed stone quarry. Time will be allocated here for browsing through the regal gardens. You can take part in an **optional* Floatplane Sightseeing Tour over downtown Victoria and the Strait of Juan de Fuca with the Olympic Mountains in the distance. You can also go on an **optional* Whalewatching Excursion aboard a Zodiac or a regular vessel. Watch for the magnificent orcas and the abundance of marine wildlife. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore the city's delights. **Overnight in Victoria. Continental Breakfast Included.**

Day 9: Victoria – Vancouver

We continue through the resort region of the Gulf Islands to the Oceanside city of Vancouver. Upon arrival in Vancouver, we enjoy an interesting tour of the city, including Stanley Park, English Bay, Gastown, Chinatown, and much more. The remainder of the day is free for independent exploration or simple relaxation. This evening features our farewell dinner party. **Accommodation Stay – 1 Night in Vancouver. Continental Breakfast and dinner included.**

Days 10-11: Vancouver – UK

A time for last-minute shopping and sad farewells. Independent transfer to Vancouver International Airport in time to check in for your overnight return flight. Arrive in the UK on day 11. **Continental Breakfast Included.**

***Denotes local charge** – Optional trips and excursions listed on the itinerary are bookable and payable locally. Passengers must pay by Visa or MasterCard credit card only. Cash or other methods of payment cannot be processed by our Tour Directors.

This is a set tour itinerary, if you have booked any pre/post or optional tour arrangements please refer to your separate vouchers and final documents.

TOUR NOTES

For current departure dates and prices please check our website

Pre/Post Tour information

If you would like to extend your trip or make the tour part of a longer holiday, we can easily add on a pre or post night stays for you. Our Sales Team will work with you to arrange the best connecting flights and book any additional hotel stays. Simply tell us what you'd like and we can arrange it.

Time difference

GMT -5 hours Eastern Canada
GMT -8 hours Western Canada

Tour inclusions

- Private air conditioned motorcoach transportation throughout
- Accommodation and sightseeing as listed above
- Service of an English Speaking guide.

Tour exclusions

- International flight in economy class, including all UK and overseas airport taxes and applicable fuel surcharges
- Flight upgrades and airport transfers in the UK
- Insurance
- Airport transfer upon arrival and departure
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, tips & gratuities, video camera fees at monuments
- The required Canada Electronic Authorization (eTA)
- Anything not detailed on the itinerary.

Dining inclusions

9 breakfasts and 1 dinner on day 9 included.

Included activities

Tours listed in the itinerary.

Accommodation

Accommodation listed on the itinerary is a mix of 3-4V graded properties. Please note some tours are up to 3 weeks in duration and there may be some nights when staying in remote locations e.g. the National Parks, when the 'V' rating may vary. Hotels are subject to change up until 30 days prior to departure, but you will be advised of any changes.

Journey times

Please note due to long distances covered on some of the tours, there will be some days when the majority of the day will be spent on the coach, so just sit back and enjoy the view.

Group size

Minimum 20 passengers, maximum approximately 50 passengers (full coach).

Language

This tour will operate as English guaranteed however Dutch passengers may join the tour therefore English and Dutch will be both spoken.

Visa requirements

Under Canada's new eTA program, British citizens WILL need to obtain an online authorization before flying to Canada.

This new entry requirement is mandatory. Eligible travellers will have the opportunity to go online and apply for their eTA. The earlier travellers get their eTA, the sooner they will benefit from knowing they have been pre-screened to enter Canada. A fee of \$7 is payable for processing an application for an electronic travel authorization.

An application for an electronic travel authorization must be made by means of an electronic system that is made available by the Department (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) for that purpose.

An electronic travel authorization is valid for a period of five years from the day on which it is issued to the applicant or until the earliest of the following days, if they occur before the end of that period:

- (a) The day on which the applicant's passport or other travel document expires,
- (b) The day on which the electronic travel authorization is cancelled, or
- (c) The day on which a new electronic travel authorization is issued to the applicant

Visit: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp> to arrange the eTA.

Alternatively you can apply for your eTA through our partners CIBT visas who make the process as easy as possible and will apply for the eTA on your behalf. Contact them on www.cibtvisas.co.uk/virginholidays for more information.

Currency

The official unit of currency in Canada is the Canadian dollar. Optional excursions will need to be paid locally by cash to the tour guide. Major credit cards and debit cards will be accepted within the Canada.

Electricity

If you bring any electrical appliance to Canada, you may need an adaptor to fit the Canadian electrical receptacles. You may also need a converter to change the voltage from 110 volts to 220 volts.

Tipping

Tipping is a big part of Canada's service economy and their taxation system, all visitors should understand that this is a part of the local culture; please see below a list of useful suggestions for tipping:

- Waiters/Waitresses: 15% - 20% for average - good service, more for exceptional service.
- Bartenders: \$1 - \$2 a round -or- 15% to 20% of the tab, with a minimum of 50 cents per soft drink, \$1 per alcoholic drink.
- Room Service: 15% - 20%
- Taxi driver: Varies depending on locality. Assume 15% will be enough; an extra \$1 to \$2 for help with bags.
- Hotel doorman: \$1 per bag for help with luggage; \$1 per person for hailing a cab.
- Tour guide: \$5 per person, per day in your party.

What to expect

We recommend you are of a reasonable fitness as touring often involves long walks and uneven surfaces; this tour is not suitable for those who require special assistance.

Recommended vaccinations

We advise you to discuss your individual requirements for Canada with your GP at least 6-8 weeks prior to travel.