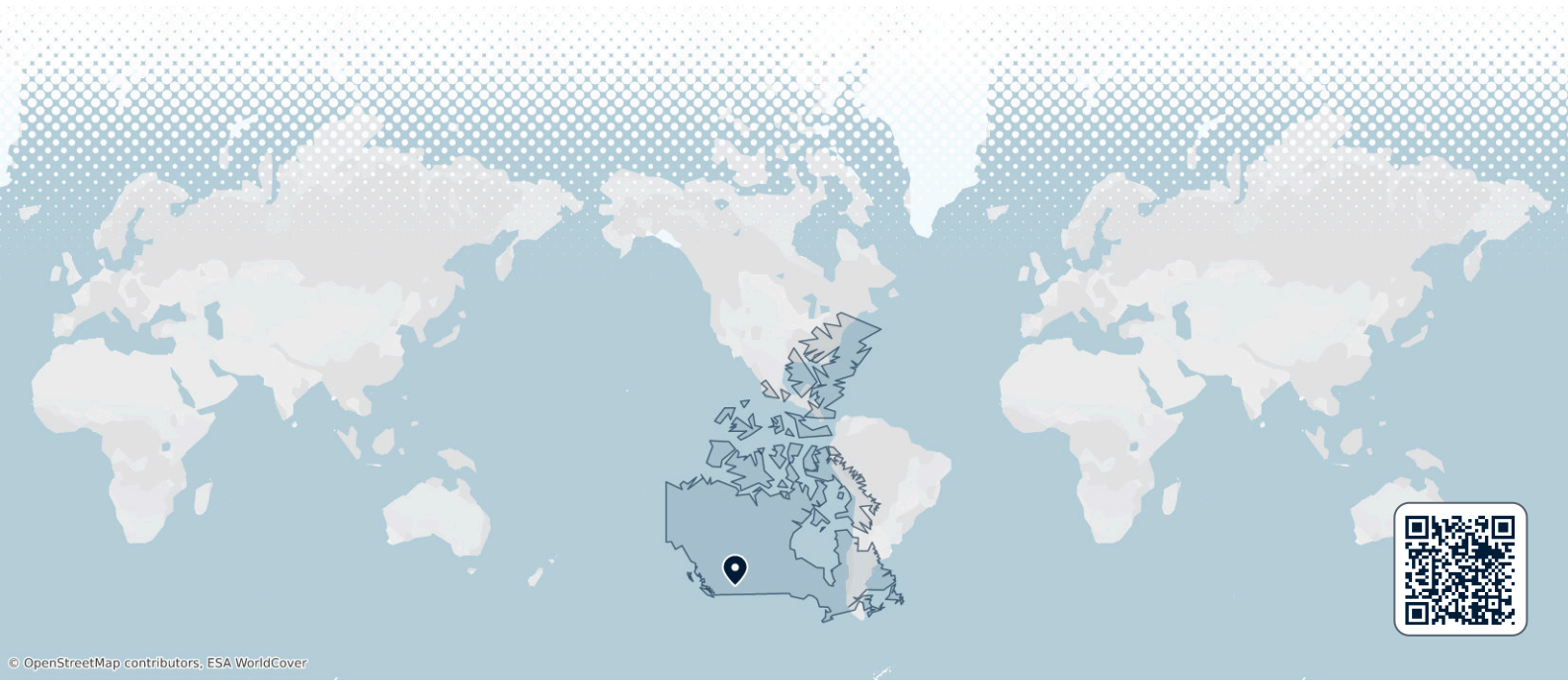


Canmore

Alberta · Canada

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Canmore is a mountain town in the Bow Valley of Alberta. It sits just outside Banff National Park, about 25 km southeast of Banff town. Steep peaks surround it, and the Three Sisters are the best known.

Canmore suits two to four days. Many visitors stay here for lower prices and a quieter base than Banff. Trails, a Bow River path system and the Canmore Nordic Centre start close to town. Kananaskis Country is next door, and Lake Louise is about an hour away by car.

When to visit

July and August are the warmest months and the best for hiking. Higher trails such as Ha Ling Peak are often snowy until late June, and snow can return in September. Rain falls often in early summer.

Winter is long and cold, with good snow. Cross-country skiing at the Nordic Centre usually starts in November. Spring and late autumn are quiet, and some mountain trails are icy or muddy.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for skiing	-5° / 3° Feels like -9°	-13° / -26°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Great Great for skiing	-3° / 3° Feels like -8°	-13° / -26°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for skiing	0° / 5° Feels like -4°	-10° / -20°	17 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for skiing	4° / 11° Feels like 1°	-5° / -13°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Fair Fair for cycling	13° / 22°	2° / -4°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for sightseeing	17° / 25°	7° / 2°	21 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 28°	10° / 5°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 28°	10° / 4°	Dry air · Calm winds
September	Good Good for cycling	16° / 25°	5° / 0°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Fair Fair for skiing	8° / 17° Feels like 5°	-1° / -9°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for skiing	0° / 6° Feels like -4°	-9° / -20°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Great Great for skiing	-5° / 2° Feels like -10°	-14° / -27°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: August

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Ha Ling Peak is the town's most popular big hike. The trail is steep and rises to a high summit with views over Canmore and the valley. Allow a full half day.
- **Grassi Lakes** are two small turquoise lakes above town. The trail is short and suits families. Rock climbers use the cliffs beside the path.
- **Quarry Lake** is a small lake with a loop path, close to the town centre. People swim and paddle here in summer and skate in winter when the ice is safe.
- **Three Sisters Viewpoint** shows the three peaks that are the symbol of Canmore. It is a short stop on the way into town.
- **Canmore Nordic Centre** hosted cross-country events at the 1988 Winter Olympics. It has ski trails in winter and hiking and mountain biking trails in summer.
- **Engine Bridge** is a footbridge over the Bow River. It gives views of Mount Rundle and Ha Ling Peak.
- **Downtown Canmore** is a small walkable area of shops, cafés and restaurants along Main Street.



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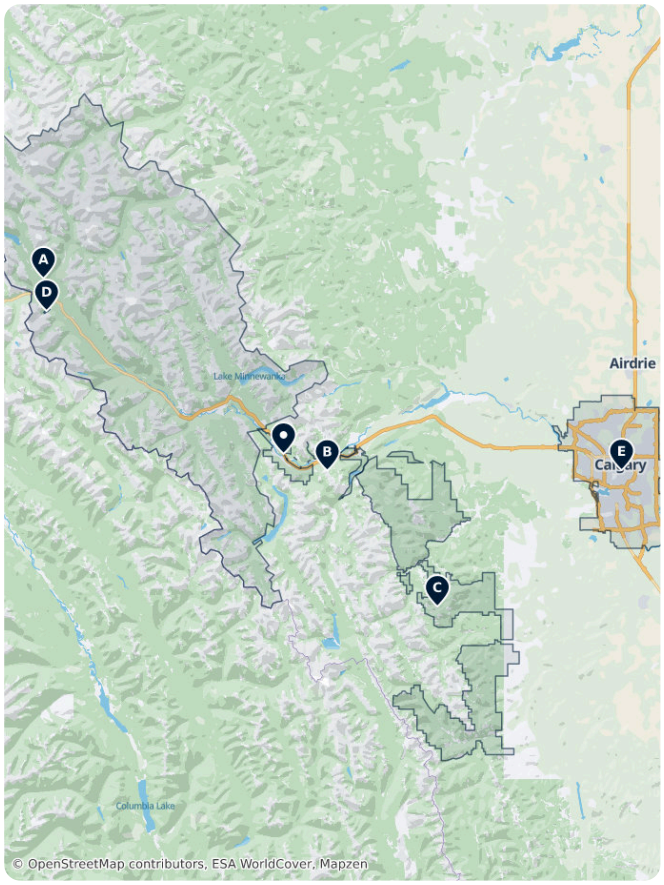
What to experience

- **Ski cross-country at the Nordic Centre.** Groomed trails suit beginners and racers. Rent skis and buy a trail pass on site.
- **Hike in summer.** Easy options are Grassi Lakes and the Quarry Lake loop. Ha Ling Peak is a hard climb for fit hikers.
- **Ride a mountain bike.** The Nordic Centre has trail networks and skills parks for all levels.
- **Cycle to Banff.** A paved path links the two towns. Bring a return plan for the bike or yourself.
- **Climb or scramble.** Canmore is a rock climbing and mountaineering base, and local guides offer lessons.

Day trips

All trips are one way from Canmore, in order from closest to farthest.

- A Banff National Park: about 30 minutes by car or bus. The national park has Banff town, hot springs, the gondola and many lakes.
- B Bow Valley Provincial Park: about 30 minutes by car. A quiet park with short walks and wildlife along the Bow River.
- C Kananaskis Country Public Land Use Zone: begins just south of town. It has lakes, trails and alpine meadows with fewer people than Banff.
- D Lake Louise: about 1 hour by car. Lake Louise and Moraine Lake are the most famous lakes in the Rockies.
- E Calgary: just over 1 hour by car. A large city with the nearest major airport.



Where to explore

- Banff National Park is the national park next to Canmore. It has more sights and also higher prices.
- Lake Louise is the lake and ski area in the north of Banff National Park.
- Jasper is the next national park to the north, about 4 hours by car along the Icefields Parkway.

Getting there

- **By air**: Calgary International Airport (YYC) is the nearest major airport. Canmore is about 120 km away, just over 1 hour by car. Shuttle services run from the airport and from Calgary to Canmore.
- **By car**: Canmore is on the Trans-Canada Highway, west of Calgary. The road is usually clear, but winter storms can slow traffic.
- **By bus**: Roam Transit links Canmore with Banff and Lake Louise. See Roam Transit.
- **Park pass**: Canmore is outside Banff National Park. You need a Parks Canada pass if you stop in the park, for example in Banff.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: Roam Public Transit buses inside Canmore are free. Routes to Banff, Lake Louise and other park sights need a fare. A free seasonal local route serves Grassi Lakes and the Nordic Centre.
- **Parking**: Downtown has paid parking zones. Free parking is available at Elevation Place and at the gravel lot behind Save-On-Foods. Overnight parking outside a campground is not allowed.
- **On foot and by bike**: The centre is compact. Paved paths follow the Bow River and lead to trails and Quarry Lake. Bike shops rent bikes in town. A paved path also runs to Banff.
- **Tourism office**: Tourism Canmore Kananaskis has trail and transport information.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The town centre is compact and flat, but trailheads and the Nordic Centre are a short ride or drive away.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Paved river paths, a path to Banff and many mountain bike trails start in town.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Helpful. Free local buses cover the town and a few trails. A car makes day trips to Kananaskis, Banff and Lake Louise easier.
- **Winter driving**: Roads can be icy from October to April. Use winter tyres and carry warm clothing.
- **Parks passes**: A Parks Canada pass is required to stop in Banff National Park. A Kananaskis Conservation Pass is required to stop in Kananaskis Country.
- **Wildlife on roads**: Elk and deer cross roads at dawn and dusk. Slow down and watch the verges.

Food & drink

Canmore has many cafés, bakeries, pubs and restaurants, mostly along Main Street downtown. Menus lean on Canadian dishes such as bison, elk and Alberta beef. Craft beer is common. Prices are lower than in Banff, but still high for Canada.

Tipping of 15 to 20 percent is normal in sit-down restaurants.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Tourtière
A savory meat pie, traditionally made with pork, beef, or game, especially popular in Quebec.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Poutine
Fries topped with cheese curds and hot gravy, originally from Quebec and now popular nationwide.

Bannock
A simple fried or baked bread with roots in Indigenous cooking, found in many regional variations across the country.

Montreal-style Bagel · Bagel montréalais
A smaller, sweeter, denser bagel than the New York style, boiled in honey water and baked in a wood-fired oven.

Maple Syrup · Sirop d'érable
Syrup tapped from maple trees, mainly in Quebec and Ontario, used on pancakes and in baking and savory dishes alike.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Butter Tart
A small pastry shell filled with a sweet, gooey butter, sugar, and egg filling, sometimes with raisins or pecans.

Nanaimo Bar
A no-bake dessert bar from British Columbia with a chocolate-crumb base, custard filling, and chocolate topping.

DRINKS

Caesar
Canada's signature cocktail: vodka, Clamato juice (tomato and clam broth), and spices, served with a celery stalk.

Canadian Whisky
A lighter, smoother style of whisky than Scotch or Bourbon, often blended with rye.

Ice Wine
A sweet dessert wine made from grapes frozen on the vine, produced mainly in Ontario's Niagara region and British Columbia's Okanagan Valley.

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Safety & health

Canmore is a very safe town. The main risks are in the mountains.

- **Wildlife**: Bears, elk, cougars and coyotes live in and around town. Keep at least 100 m from bears and wolves and 30 m from elk and deer. Elk can be aggressive in autumn and when they have calves. Carry bear spray on trails and know how to use it.
- **Weather**: Mountain weather changes fast. Snow can fall in any month at high elevation. Carry layers, water and a map.
- **Winter**: Avalanche risk is real outside ski areas. Check avalanche reports before you leave the marked trails.
- **Water**: Quarry Lake and the Bow River are cold, even in summer.

History

The Stoney Nakoda and other Indigenous peoples have lived in the Bow Valley for thousands of years. Canmore began in 1883 as a camp on the new Canadian Pacific Railway. It was named after a Scottish king.

Coal mining supported the town until the last mine closed in 1979. Canmore then turned to tourism. The 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary used the Nordic Centre for cross-country events. Ha Ling Peak is named after Ha Ling, a cook who climbed it in 1896 as part of a bet.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Canada at a glance:

CURRENCY
CAD $

EMERGENCY
911

ELECTRICITY



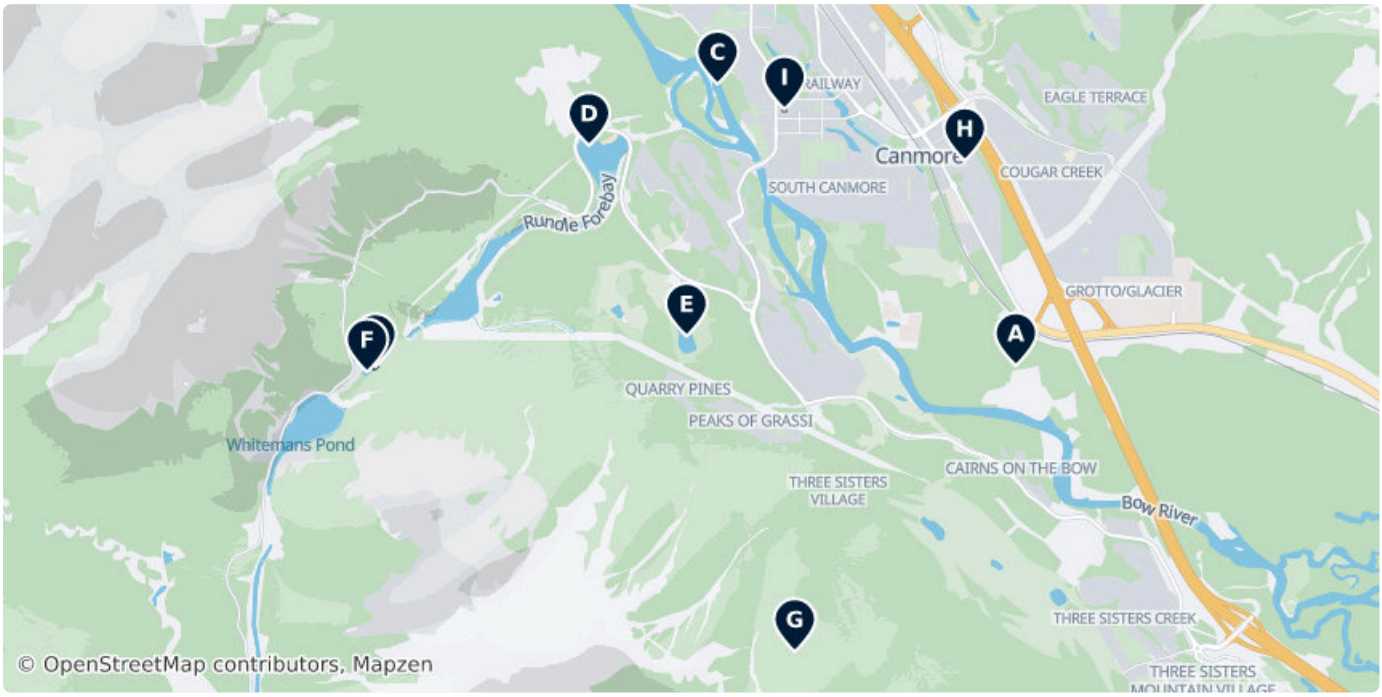
Type A / Type B
120 V · 60 Hz

LANGUAGES
English, French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Canmore's Essential Rockies & Vistas

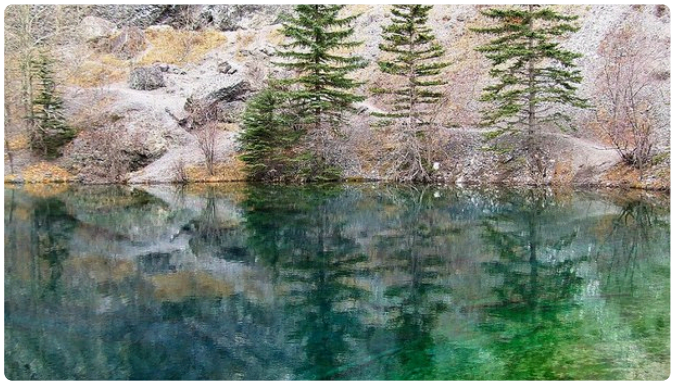
Canmore's landscape is defined by the Three Sisters peaks, visible from vantage points throughout the Bow Valley. This collection features the turquoise waters of the Grassi Lakes, accessible via forested trails, and the historic Canmore Engine Bridge, a remnant of the town's coal mining era. Cultural venues like artsPlace and Cornerstone Theatre provide space for local performances and galleries, while the Rundle Forebay and Quarry Lake offer calm waters for recreation against the backdrop of Mount Rundle and Ha Ling Peak.



A Three Sisters Viewpoint

This vantage point offers clear views of Faith, Hope, and Charity—the three distinct limestone peaks of the Three Sisters. Located near the Bow River, it is a primary site for mountain photography.

River, Canmore, AB T1W 3B7, Canada
(51.07280, -115.33790)



B First Grassi Lake

A shallow, crystal-clear turquoise lake fed by underground springs. Reached via the Grassi Lakes Trail, the water's vibrant color is caused by light refracting off minerals on the lakebed.

Grassi Lakes Trail, Canmore, AB T1W 2T6, Canada
(51.07274, -115.40580)

C Canmore Engine Bridge

A historic steel truss bridge built in 1891 by the Canadian Pacific Railway to serve local coal mines. It now functions as a pedestrian crossing over the Bow River within the town's trail network.

(51.09154, -115.36952)

D Rundle Forebay

A man-made reservoir used for hydroelectric power generation. The calm, sheltered waters are used for paddleboarding and kayaking, offering clear reflections of Mount Rundle and Ha Ling Peak.

(51.08744, -115.38316)

E Quarry Lake

A former open-pit coal mine reclaimed as a mountain lake and park. It features a sandy beach and swimming area, surrounded by views of the Lawrence Grassi mountain range.

Powerline Trail, Canmore, AB T1W 3C2, Canada
(51.07476, -115.37282)

F Second Grassi Lake

Located just above the first lake, this body of water features similar brilliant green and blue hues. It sits near ancient coral reefs and a waterfall visible from the interpretive trail.

(51.07238, -115.40668)

G Little Grassi Knob Viewpoint

An elevated vantage point offering a wide perspective of the Bow Valley and the Canmore townsite. It is accessible via a steep hiking trail through the forest.

(51.05375, -115.36133)

H Cornerstone Dinner Theatre

A rustic, cabin-style venue featuring reclaimed wood and mountain-inspired architecture. It hosts live musical theater, weddings, and community events throughout the year.

(51.08644, -115.34332)

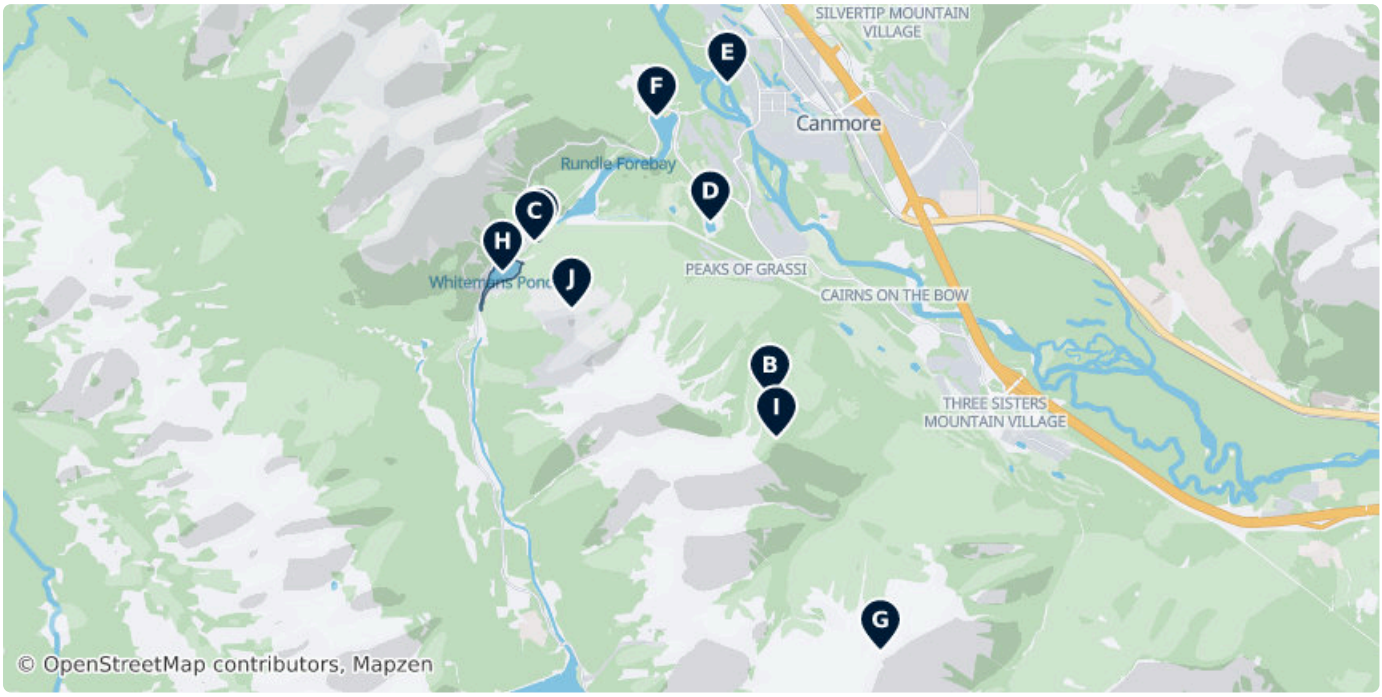
I artsPlace

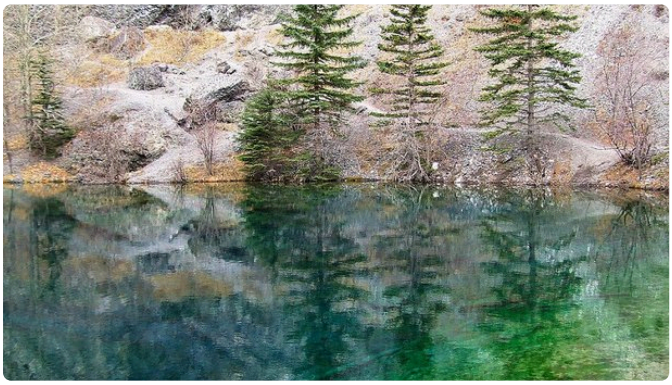
Canmore’s public arts and culture center. It houses a gallery, ceramics studio, and a 160-seat theater for films, live music, and creative workshops.

8 Avenue 950 (51.08986, -115.36243)

Scenic Vistas and Peaks

This collection spans the diverse geography surrounding Canmore, featuring the historic 1891 Engine Bridge and the turquoise, spring-fed Grassi Lakes. It includes reclaimed industrial sites like Quarry Lake and hydroelectric infrastructure such as Whitemans Pond and the Rundle Forebay. Elevated perspectives are provided by prominent summits like Ha Ling Peak and the Middle Sister, which showcase the region's distinctive limestone formations and the expansive Bow Valley corridor.





A First Grassi Lake

One of two turquoise pools fed by a waterfall. The water's clarity reveals ancient coral reef fossils embedded in the surrounding limestone cliffs.

Grassi Lakes Trail, Canmore, AB T1W 2T6, Canada
(51.07274, -115.40580)

B Little Grassi Knob Viewpoint

An elevated vantage point along the trail to Grassi Knob, offering views of the Bow Valley and the Canmore townsite.

(51.05375, -115.36133)

C Second Grassi Lake

The upper pool of the Grassi Lakes, characterized by deep turquoise water and proximity to a seasonal waterfall and popular rock climbing routes.

(51.07238, -115.40668)

D Quarry Lake

A reclaimed open-pit coal mine now used as a mountain-spring-fed swimming area. The surrounding park offers views of Ha Ling Peak and Mount Rundle.

Powerline Trail, Canmore, AB T1W 3C2, Canada (51.07476, -115.37282)

E Canmore Engine Bridge

A steel bridge constructed by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1891 to transport coal. It now serves as a pedestrian crossing over the Bow River.

(51.09154, -115.36952)

F Rundle Forebay

A calm reservoir used for hydroelectric power generation. The still water is a designated area for paddleboarding and provides reflections of the adjacent Mount Rundle.

(51.08744, -115.38316)

G Middle Sister

The central and highest peak of the Three Sisters mountain range, reaching an elevation of 2,769 meters.

(51.02293, -115.34010)

H Whitemans Pond

A high-altitude reservoir located between Ha Ling Peak and Mount Lawrence Grassi, serving as part of the regional hydroelectric system.

Smith-Dorrien / Spray Lakes Trail, Canmore, AB T1W 2T6, Canada (51.06874, -115.41278)

I Grassi Knob

A 1,783-meter summit providing views of the Three Sisters and the Spray Lakes Road corridor.

T0L, Canada (51.04867, -115.36011)



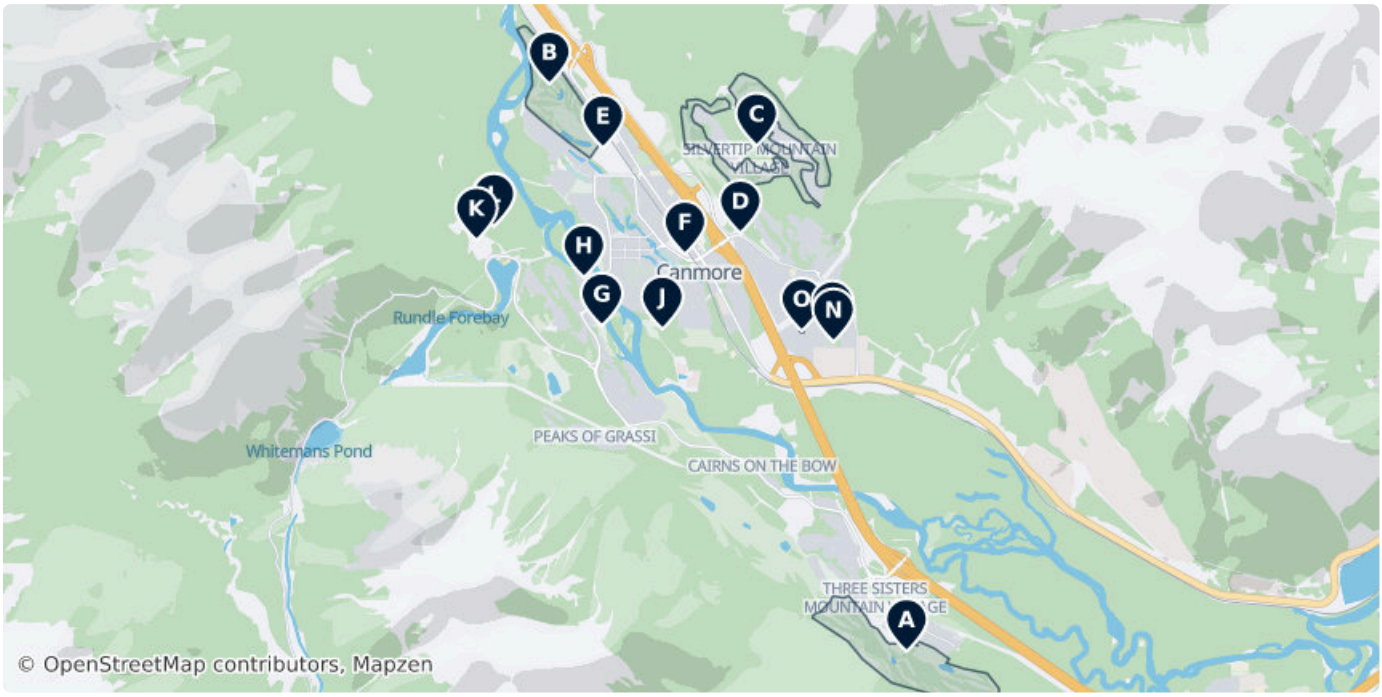
J Ha Ling Peak

A 2,407-meter peak overlooking Canmore. Renamed in 1997 to honor Ha Ling, who first recorded a summit of the mountain in 1896.

T0L, Canada (51.06428, -115.39949)

Outdoor Activities & Sports

Canmore's mountain landscape supports a diverse range of athletic facilities, from the 1988 Olympic legacy of the Canmore Nordic Centre to high-altitude golf courses like Silvertip and Stewart Creek. The town features specialized infrastructure including technical mountain bike skills parks, indoor climbing walls at Elevation Place, and multiple ice rinks. Local parks and riverside trails provide dedicated spaces for field sports, off-leash exercise, and recreational cycling across the Bow Valley.



A Stewart Creek Golf & Country Club

An 18-hole championship course designed by Gary Browning, featuring dramatic elevation changes and views of the Three Sisters mountain peaks.

(51.04605, -115.31269)

stewartcreekgolf.com, +1-877-993-4653

B Canmore Golf Club

Established in 1926 along the Bow River, this traditional course offers a flatter layout compared to the surrounding mountain terrain.

(51.10697, -115.37373)

C Silvertip

High-altitude golf course characterized by 600 feet of elevation change and rugged mountain terrain overlooking the Bow Valley.

Silvertip Trail 2000, Canmore (51.10033, -115.33829)

D Bike Skills Park

Community cycling facility featuring dirt jumps and a pump track designed for various skill levels.

(51.09098, -115.34109)

E Canmore Recreation Centre

Public sports facility housing two ice rinks, a weight room, and community meeting spaces.

(51.10013, -115.36457)

F Elevation Place

Modern indoor hub featuring a competitive climbing wall, an aquatic center with a lazy river and waterslides, and the public library.

(51.08874, -115.35056)

G West Canmore Park

Riverside green space providing access to the Bow River loop trail and open areas for recreation.

(51.08103, -115.36476)

H Rundle Crescent Park

Local neighborhood park equipped with a playground and open grass space.

(51.08622, -115.36782)

I Elk Run Ball Park

Sports complex featuring several fenced baseball and softball diamonds.

(51.08018, -115.32532)

J Millenium Park

Large open field near the town center used for community festivals, sports matches, and large-scale events.

(51.08068, -115.35441)

K Canmore Nordic Centre Cross Country Stadium

Former 1988 Winter Olympics venue with over 65 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails and a world-class biathlon range.

2048 Olympic Way, T0L, Canada (51.09020, -115.38618)

L MTB Skills Park

Technical training area at the Nordic Centre featuring wooden features, rock gardens, and obstacles for mountain bikers.

T0L, Canada (51.09171, -115.38321)

M MTB Skills Park

Specialized mountain bike training zone located within the Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park.

T0L, Canada (51.09174, -115.38324)

N Elk Run Off-leash Dog Park

Fenced off-leash area for dogs located near the Elk Run industrial district.

(51.07932, -115.32517)

O Moraine Road Playground

Residential playground featuring climbing structures and a small grassy area.

150 Moraine Rd, Canmore T1W, Canada (51.08048, -115.33057)

DATA SOURCES

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