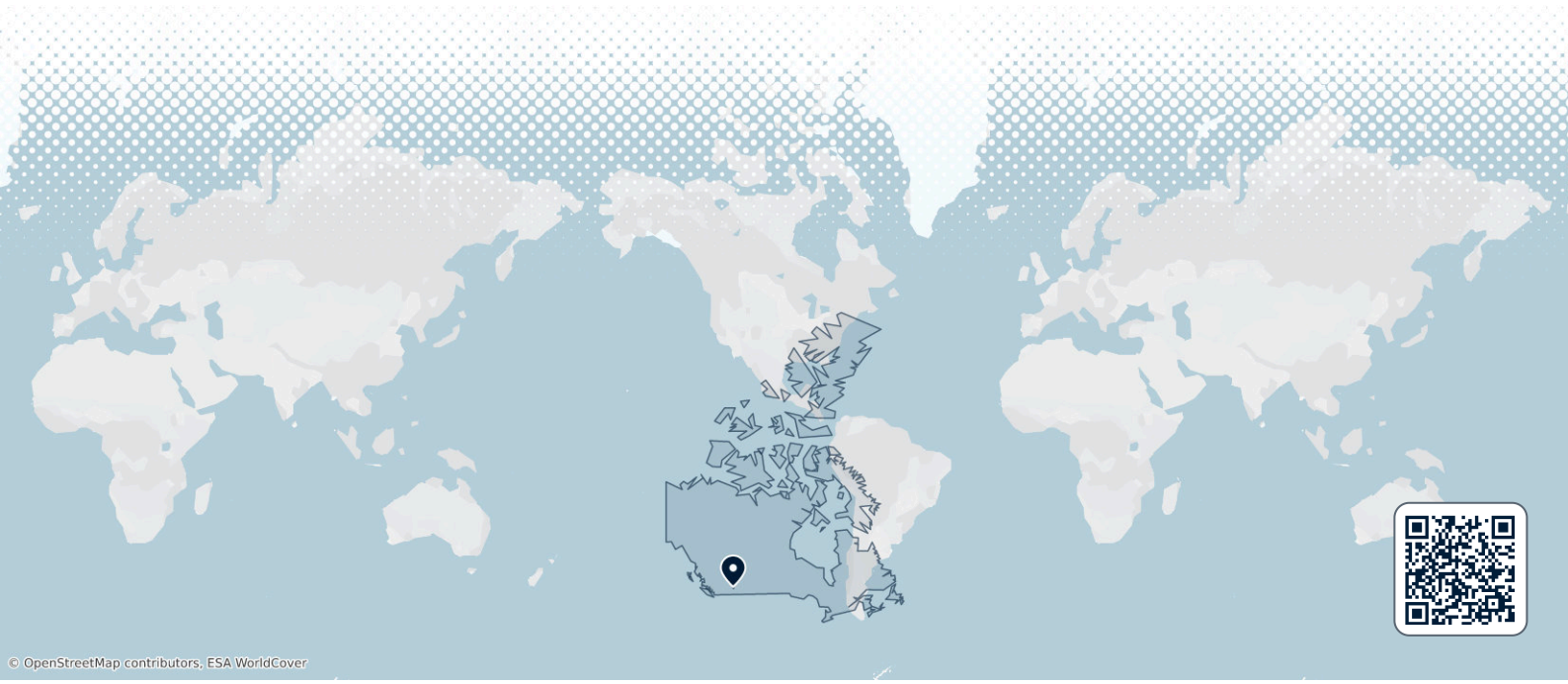


Kootenay National Park

British Columbia · Canada

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Kootenay National Park is a long, narrow park in the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia. It follows one road, Highway 93 South, for 94 km between Radium Hot Springs and the Alberta border. Most sights are short stops along the road.

The park suits a one-day drive or a stay of two to three days. It has less traffic than Banff, and the stops are quiet. Come for canyons, hot pools, mountain views and short hikes. Longer trails lead to glaciers and alpine lakes.

When to visit

July and August are the warmest months and the best time for hiking. Many trails are free of snow only from July to September. Visitor services run from May to mid-October. Winter is cold, and the road stays open but conditions can change quickly.

The hot pools at Radium Hot Springs are popular in every season, and they are especially good on a cold day.

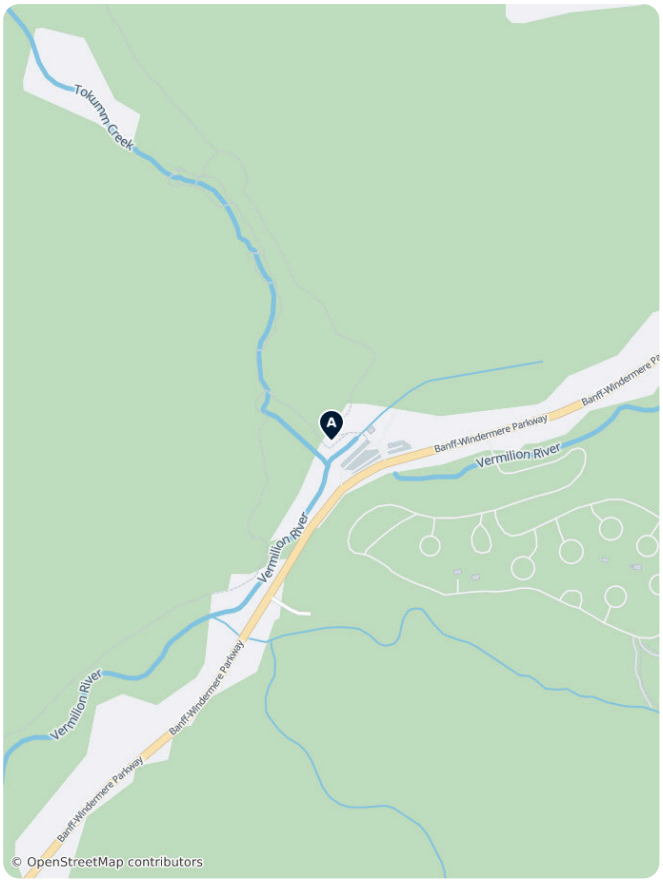
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for hiking	-8° / -1° Feels like -13°	-17° / -30°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for hiking	-6° / 0° Feels like -11°	-17° / -29°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Poor Poor for hiking	-3° / 1° Feels like -7°	-13° / -23°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Poor Poor for hiking	2° / 11° Feels like -1°	-7° / -16°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Poor Poor for hiking	11° / 20° Feels like 8°	0° / -5°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for hiking	16° / 23°	4° / 0°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 26°	8° / 3°	Dry air · Calm winds
August	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 27°	7° / 2°	Dry air · Calm winds
September	Good Good for hiking	15° / 24°	3° / -3°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Poor Poor for hiking	6° / 15° Feels like 3°	-3° / -11°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Poor Poor for hiking	-3° / 4° Feels like -7°	-12° / -24°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for hiking	-9° / -1° Feels like -14°	-18° / -31°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: July, August

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

Top sights

- A Marble Canyon is a narrow limestone canyon on Tokumm Creek. A short trail crosses it on bridges and passes waterfalls. It is one of the most popular stops in the park.
- Paint Pots are orange-red mineral springs and ochre beds near Marble Canyon. A short, flat trail leads to them. First Nations peoples used the ochre for paint.
- Radium Hot Springs is a hot pool near the west gate. The water is between 37 and 40 degrees. A deep cooler pool is next to it.
- Sinclair Canyon is a rock gorge at the west entrance. The highway passes through a narrow gap in the red cliffs, and bighorn sheep are often on the road.
- Continental Divide is at Vermilion Pass, on the border with Alberta. Streams on one side flow west to the Pacific, and on the other flow east toward Hudson Bay. The Fireweed Trail here crosses a forest that burned in a wildfire and is now regrowing.
- Stanley Glacier is a half-day hike from the highway. The trail climbs through a burned forest to a valley below cliffs and a glacier.
- Floe Lake is a long day hike or an overnight trip. The lake sits below a tall rock wall. It is part of the Rockwall Trail.



Kootenay National Park – Plan Your Trip

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What to experience

- **Soak in the hot pool in any season.** Radium Hot Springs is next to the highway. Pool entry is charged separately from the park pass.
- **Hike to Stanley Glacier.** The trail starts at the highway and passes through a burned forest with wildflowers in summer.
- **Take the Rockwall Trail.** This multi-day backpacking route follows a long limestone wall and passes alpine lakes and glaciers. Backcountry camping needs a booking.
- **Watch for wildlife on the drive.** Bighorn sheep, elk, deer and black bears are often seen from the road in early morning and evening.

Where to explore

- Banff National Park is the next national park to the northeast, with the town of Banff and many more visitors.
- Lake Louise is a lake and village on Highway 1, close to the north end of the park road.
- Yoho National Park is the neighbouring park to the north, with waterfalls and the Burgess Shale area.
- Calgary is the nearest major city and airport gateway.

Getting there

- **By air**: There is no airport in the park. Calgary International Airport (YYC) is the main gateway, about 4 hours from Radium Hot Springs by car. Cranbrook airport (YXC) is closer, about 1.5 hours away, but it has fewer flights.
- **By car from Alberta**: Take Highway 1 west past Banff to Castle Junction. Then turn onto Highway 93 South. Banff is about 2 hours from Radium Hot Springs.
- **By car from BC**: Radium Hot Springs is on Highway 93/95, about 15 minutes from Invermere and about 1.25 to 1.5 hours from Golden.
- **By bus**: Few scheduled buses serve the park. A car is the practical way to arrive.
- **Park pass**: A Parks Canada pass is needed to stop in the park. See Parks Canada, Kootenay National Park.

Getting around

- **By car**: Highway 93 South is the only main road. Most stops have a parking area beside the highway.
- **Public transit**: There is no public transit inside the park.
- **On foot**: The park is not walkable between sights. Each stop has short trails, and the sights are far apart.
- **By bike**: Cycling on the highway is possible but demanding. The road is long and has steep sections and little shoulder in places.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

Sights are spread along a 94 km road. Each stop has short trails, but you need a car between them.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

The road is long, hilly and shared with traffic. It suits only experienced riders.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Yes. The park has no transit, and a car is the best way to visit the stops.
- **Distances**: The drive through the park takes about 1.5 hours without stops. Plan a full day if you stop at the main sights.
- **Fuel and services**: Services are few along the highway. Fill up in Radium Hot Springs or in the Banff area before you enter.
- **Winter**: Roads can be icy and snowy. Winter tires are advised, and conditions change quickly.
- **Wildlife**: Bighorn sheep and bears often stand near the road. Drive slowly and do not stop in the lane.

Safety & health

The park is safe for visitors. Weather is the main risk. Mountain weather can change in an hour, and snow can fall in any month at high elevation. Bring layers and rain gear, even on short hikes.

Bears live in the park. Carry bear spray on trails and know how to use it. Keep a safe distance from all wildlife, and never feed animals. Keep food out of parked cars and tents.

There is almost no phone signal along the road. Tell someone your plan before a long hike. Stay on marked trails around the canyons and the hot springs. Rocks near water are slippery.

History

The land is the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa people. Ktunaxa and other First Nations collected ochre at the Paint Pots for paint and trade.

The park was created in 1920 as a strip of land on each side of a new mountain road. The Banff-Windermere road opened in 1923. It runs through Sinclair Canyon at the west entrance and over Vermilion Pass. Highway 93 South follows that route today.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Canada at a glance:

CURRENCY
CAD $

EMERGENCY
911

ELECTRICITY

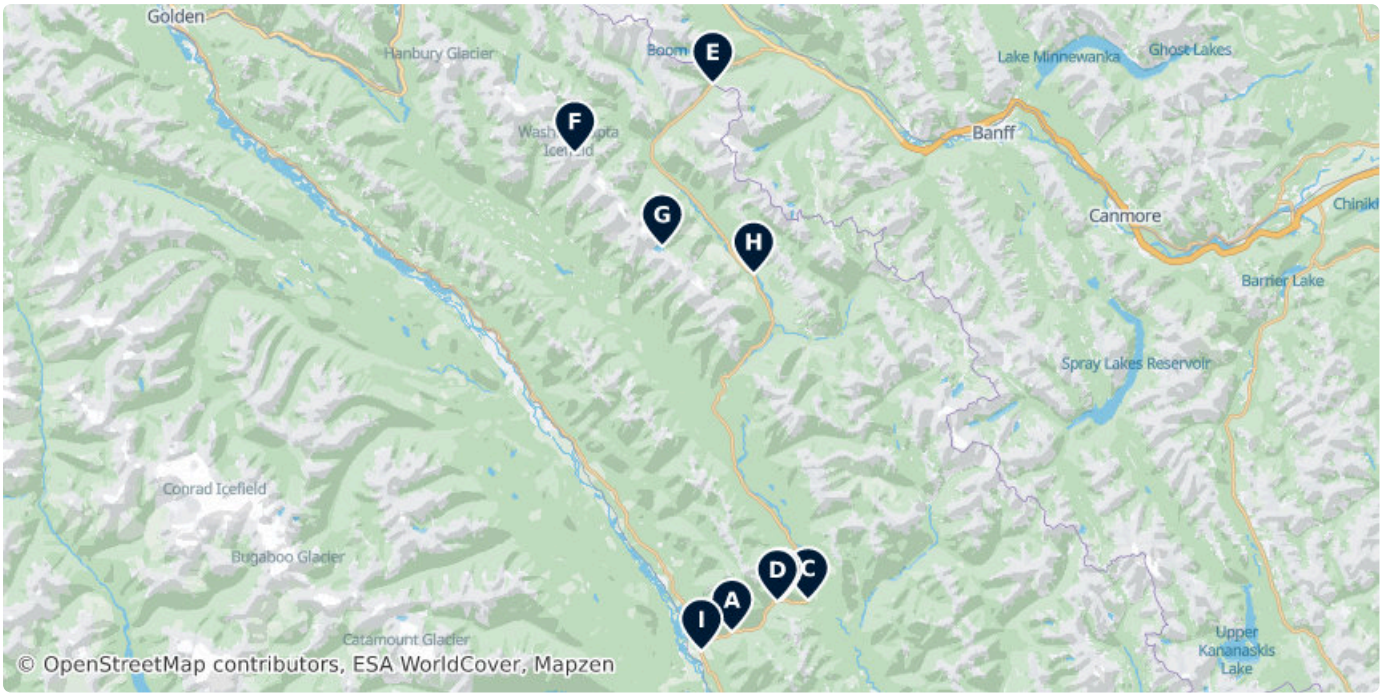
Type A / Type B
120 V · 60 Hz

LANGUAGES
English, French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Kootenay National Park Essentials

Kootenay National Park follows the 94-kilometer Banff-Windermere Parkway, crossing the Continental Divide between the Rocky and Purcell Mountains. This selection highlights the 55-kilometer Rockwall trail, famous for its massive limestone cliffs and alpine meadows. Key locations include the red rock walls of Sinclair Canyon, the turquoise waters of Floe Lake, and the Kootenay Valley Viewpoint, which offers expansive panoramas of the Mitchell and Vermilion ranges. The park's history is anchored by the 1923 completion of the highway, the first motor road across the Canadian Rockies.





A British Columbia Highway 93

Highway 93 is a north–south route through the southeastern part of British Columbia, in the Regional District of East Kootenay and takes...

5487 Highway 93, V0A, Canada (50.64059, -116.01740)

B Olive Lake

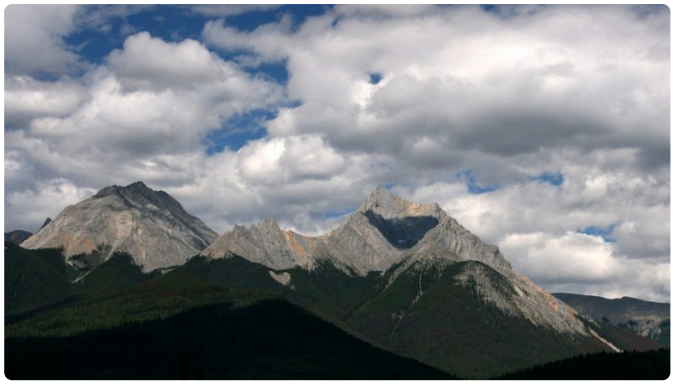
A small, spring-fed lake located near the summit of Sinclair Pass. A short boardwalk circles the jade-colored water, which serves as a habitat for brook trout and various bird species.

Highway 93, V0A, Canada (50.67392, -115.93468)

C Kootenay Valley Viewpoint

Located along the Banff-Windermere Parkway, this overlook provides expansive views across the Kootenay River valley toward the Mitchell and Vermilion mountain ranges.

(50.67461, -115.88782)



D Sinclair Pass

Sinclair Pass is a high mountain pass in Kootenay National Park between the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers to the northeast of present-day...

Highway 93, V0A, Canada (50.67318, -115.93990)

E Continental Divide Monument

This monument marks the boundary between British Columbia and Alberta, as well as the border between Kootenay and Banff National Parks at the height of the Continental Divide.

Fireweed Loops Trail, Area G (Forster Creek/Mount Assiniboine), BC, Canada (51.22800, -116.04989)

F Rockwall

A massive limestone escarpment stretching 55 kilometers through the park. Reaching heights of up to 900 meters, it forms the backdrop for the multi-day Rockwall Trail and several alpine lakes.

(51.15401, -116.28467)

G Floe Lake Camp

A backcountry campground situated at the base of the Rockwall cliffs on the shores of Floe Lake. Access requires a 10.5-kilometer hike with approximately 700 meters of elevation gain.

V0A, Canada (51.05444, -116.13613)

H Kootenay Park Lodge

Originally established in 1923 by the Canadian Pacific Railway, this historic lodge at Vermilion Crossing offers cabin accommodations and services in the center of the park.

Highway 93, V0A, Canada (51.02504, -115.98013)

kootenayparklodge.com, +1-250-434-9648

I National Park

Located in the village of Radium Hot Springs near the park's west gate, this center provides maps, backcountry permits, and interpretive exhibits about the local ecosystem.

7556 E Main St, V0A, Canada (50.61962, -116.06944)

parcs.canada.ca/pn-np/bc/kootenay/visit/heures-hours

DATA SOURCES

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- Sinclair Pass — "Kootenay National Park of Canada. View to the Southeast from the view point..." by Tupungato, CC BY 2.5

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