**Banff**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

Environmental awareness

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

31

**Intermediate Runs**

25

**Advanced Runs**

79

**Total Runs**

135

**Lifts**

16

**Chairs**

13

**Drags**

1

**Gondola Cable Cars**

2

**Parks**

4

**Pipes**

3

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

Norquay: 3m (10ft); Sunshine: 10m (33ft).

**Overview**

Arguably the most famous of Canada’s numerous resorts, Banff, situated in the spectacular Canadian Rockies, owes its success to a combination of beautiful location, terrific terrain and vibrant nightlife.

The town was named after its Scottish counterpart in 1884, and the surrounding national park was established a year later. Skiing followed in 1909 with the arrival of Swiss and Austrian mountain guides. Finally this was joined by the accompanying infrastructure, now an impressive plethora of shops, bars and restaurants that help Banff pull in visitors throughout the year.

Banff has two ski areas nearby: Mt Norquay, which lies just beyond the town, and Sunshine Village, 20 minutes' drive away. Most visitors ski at Lake Louise too, which is included in a tri-area lift ticket, 45 minutes away.

One of Banff’s few downsides is that access to ski areas is either by car or ski shuttle – unless you stay at the sole ski-in/ski-out hotel at Sunshine, Sunshine Mountain Lodge. Temperatures can plummet here too, so be prepared, and watch out for elk, which are often spotted strolling along the streets.

**Location**

Banff is located in the western Canadian province of Alberta, 120km (75 miles) west of Calgary. The resort itself is 16km (10 miles) inside Banff National Park, in the Rocky Mountains.

**Website**

http://www.skibig3.com

http://www.banfflakelouise.com

**Piste Map**

http://cdn.skibig3.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Trailmaps-Ski-Banff-Lake-Louise-Sunshine-2014-15.pdf

**Hit The Slopes**

Banff has two main ski areas, Mt Norquay and Sunshine Village.

Mt Norquay is the smallest but also closest to downtown Banff. There are runs for all levels here and the more advanced skiers can test their mettle on several steep and challenging mogul runs: Upper Lone Pine and Gun Run are two of the best. Night skiing is also popular here at weekends.

Sunshine's excellent snow record makes it a good bet for early or late season skiing. A modern gondola transports skiers from the car park up to the day lodge, where numerous high-speed lifts fan out to three mountains: Goat's Eye (intermediates and up only), Lookout and Standish.

Beginners will enjoy cruising along Banff Avenue: a wide, easy green run with several fun offshoots. Intermediates should head for the Continental Divide chair on Lookout Mountain, offering the added thrill of crossing into British Columbia on the way up and skiing into Alberta on the way down. Expert skiers can drop into the super steep Delirium Dive or the recently opened Silver City (but only if equipped with transceiver, probe, shovel and ski buddy).

For freestylers, both resorts have popular terrain parks. Sunshine's is the largest, with more than 20 rails, boxes and tabletops.

The ski and snowboard schools in the two main resorts run lessons for all levels. Equipment hire is available at many outlets in town or at the bases. The Tri-area lift ticket also allows skiing at Lake Louise.

Norquay's ski season runs from mid-November until April. Sunshine's runs open from mid-November until late May.

**Sunshine**

**Resort**

1397

**Base**

1660

**Top**

2730

**Norquay**

**Resort**

1383

**Base**

1630

**Top**

2133

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

For those who don't ski or fancy a day off the slopes, Banff offers snowmobiling, dog sledding, ice climbing, ice fishing and cross-country skiing. Alternatively, head underground on a cave tour or enjoy a helicopter trip. And, just five minutes from town, Banff Gondola whisks sightseers to the summit of Sulphur Mountain, affording unrivalled views of the Rockies.

For a spot of pampering, head to Banff's Upper Hot Springs (tel: +1 800 767 1611; [www.hotsprings.ca](http://www.hotsprings.ca/)). Temperatures in the outdoor pool vary between a toasty 37°C to 40°C (98°F to 104°F).

Indoor attractions include a bowling alley, cinema, a few small museums and galleries. The Banff Park Museum (tel: +1 403 762 1558; [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca/)) offers a good introduction to the region's wildlife, while The Banff Centre (tel: +1 403 762 6100;[www.banffcentre.ca](http://www.banffcentre.ca/)) hosts cultural performances, exhibitions and concerts.

If you fancy on-mountain activities, try snow tubing and cross-country skiing at Mt Norquay or snowshoeing at Sunshine Village.

**Family Fun**

Banff ticks the right boxes for skiing families, with a scattering of family-friendly hotels and restaurants and beginner slopes suitable for little ones.

Mt Norquay's ski school offers lessons for ages six to 12 and 'ski 'n' play' for ages three to five. This ski school and the Tiny Tigers Daycare at Sunshine provide day care for children from 19 months to six years. At the latter, young skiers can join the Tiny Tigers Ski and Play (ages three to six) before progressing to Kids Kampus (ages six to 12). The ski school also runs special classes for teenagers.

Off the slopes, parents can treat their kids to a sleigh ride or try out the indoor water park at the Douglas Fir Resort (tel: +1 403 762 5591;[www.douglasfir.com](http://www.douglasfir.com/)), with its pool and slides.

**Retail Therapy**

In Banff, shoppers can find everything from international chains to independent boutiques.

Bookshops, sweet shops, jewellers and numerous gift shops are available jam-packed with merchandise including t-shirts, elk cuddly toys and maple syrup. Mountain Chocolates (tel: +1 403 762 2624) sells handmade confectionary, including 'bear paws' made of cashew nuts and caramel dipped in chocolate. Snowboarders should check out Rude Boys (tel: +1 403 762 8480; www.[rudeboys.com](http://rudeboys.com/)) for stylish gear and clothing.

**Splashing Out**

Cheer on the Calgary Flames ice-hockey team at the Calgary Saddledome. Tours, including pick-up from your hotel, transport, hockey ticket and guide, are available through Banff Adventures Unlimited (tel: +1 403 762 4554; [www.banffadventures.com](http://www.banffadventures.com/)).

**Apres Ski**

Banff has somewhat of a reputation as a party town with young Canadians, boasting a vibrant nightlife scene along its central streets.

The St. James Gate Irish Pub (tel: +1 403 762 9355; [www.stjamesgatebanff.com](http://www.stjamesgatebanff.com)) is a traditional Irish tavern that has a great selection of beers to sample. Additionally, The Rose & Crown (tel: +1 403 762 2121; [www.roseandcrown.ca](http://www.roseandcrown.ca/)) serves Canadian beers and cocktails, is open until 0200, and has live nightly music.

For those looking for something a little out of the ordinary, head to Wild Bill's Legendary Saloon (tel: +1 403 762 0333; [www.wildbillsbanff.com](http://www.wildbillsbanff.com/)) for some late night line dancing - the extra daring can even try calf roping.

**Eating Out**

Banff caters well to skiers with a fondness for food, boasting a huge array of eateries, from traditional to international and budget to luxury.

Evelyn's Coffee Bar (tel: +1 403 762 0352; [www.evelynscoffeebar.com](http://www.evelynscoffeebar.com/)) is a great place to grab a homemade muffin and a hot drink while waiting for the ski bus. For something more substantial, taste Albertan AAA-grade beef at Melissa's (tel: +1 403 762 5511; [www.melssteak.com](http://www.melssteak.com)), which offers a good-value steak dinner.

Vegetarian skiers need not fear, Banff has a huge choice of establishments catering to herbivores including Nourish (tel: +1 403 760 3933; [www.nourishbistro.com](http://www.nourishbistro.com)), a much-loved restaurant on Bear Street, which serves a number of inventive meals, including Mac & Squeeze, which the restaurant claims, ‘you’ll love so much you’ll want to hug your chef’.

The award-winning Maple Leaf (tel: +1 403 760 7680; [www.banffmapleleaf.com](http://www.banffmapleleaf.com/)) sources fresh Canadian seafood and serves up specialities such as bison stroganoff and organic game from local farms.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Calgary International Airport (YYC).

Distance to resort: 140km (88 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Most places in Banff are within walking distance of each other, but it can become bitterly cold at times, so if you're not staying in the centre, grab a taxi. Alternatively, some hotels operate shuttles.

A public bus runs between the Fairmont Banff Springs hotel, Banff Avenue and Tunnel Mountain at the far end of town. A ski bus links various points in town and the ski areas (including Lake Louise); this is a free service for those holding a Tri-area lift pass.

**Hotels**

There is a huge range of accommodation in Banff, including hotels, self-catered apartments and catered chalets; most of which are built in a traditional wooden-chalet style. Note that Sunshine Mountain Lodge is the only ski-in/ski-out hotel in Banff.

**Red Carpet Inn**

This affordable motel-style property is just a couple of blocks away from Banff's shops and restaurants. Though basic, all rooms here come with free Wi-Fi internet access.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

425 Banff Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1B6

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 4184

**Website**

www.banffredcarpet.com

**Mount Royal Hotel**

Centrally located in downtown Banff, Mount Royal Hotel houses 135 comfortable rooms and suites, as well as a restaurant and on-site pub.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

138 Banff Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1A7

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 3331

**Website**

www.mountroyalhotel.com

**Fairmont Banff Springs**

The magnificent Banff Springs is based on a Scottish castle and has been welcoming guests since 1888. The resort’s large Willow Stream spa boasts a 32m (105ft) indoor saltwater pool and year-round outdoor pool. Guests can choose from multiple dining options.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

405 Spray Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1J4

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 2211

**Website**

www.fairmont.com

**Rimrock Resort Hotel**

This large hotel offers accommodation ranging from simple single rooms to luxury suites, all tastefully decorated in earthy tones. Accommodation aside, The Rimrock Resort Hotel boasts an excellent on-site restaurant and spa.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

300 Mountain Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1J2

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 3356

**Website**

www.rimrockresort.com

**Hidden Ridge Resort**

Attractive hotel in traditional log design, the Hidden Ridge Resort contains suites and condos with kitchenettes. The hotel has good reputation for service quality and excellent facilities including natural hot pools.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

901 Hidden Ridge Way

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1H8

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 3544

**Website**

www.banffhiddenridge.com

**Irwin's Mountain Inn**

One of the more affordable options on Banff Avenue, Irwin’s Mountain Inn is located close to all amenities, houses spacious rooms and provides a friendly and helpful service. Other perks include complimentary Wi-Fi, a traditional dry cedar sauna and a communal hot tub.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

429 Banff Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

AB

**Postcode**

T1L 1B2

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

+1 403 762 4566

**Website**

www.irwinsmountaininn.com