

Parking and Starting

The trailhead for Mt. Temple is located at Moraine Lake, near the Village of Lake Louise. Walk along the northwest shore of Moraine Lake past the lodge and take the trail leading up to Larch Valley. Then follow the route description illustrated on the other side of the brochure.

Gear List

- Lightweight rain/wind jacket
- Sweater
- Hat and gloves
- Sturdy hiking boots
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Helmet
- Food/lunch
- Water - enough for a long day, there are often no water sources on the route
- Hiking pole
- Light first aid kit (especially tape)
- If you’re wearing shorts, take lightweight wind pants
- Headlamp (in case you get back late)
- Camera, etc.
- Cellphone (no reception unless you are near the summit)
- A copy of this brochure!

Depending on your party - consider taking a short rope and harnesses if you are trained /experienced in short roping techniques.

If any snow remains on the climb [see Season section] a climber's ice axe and crampons are likely required.

Climbing and Safety Tips

1. Tell someone where you are going. Always leave a detailed description of your plans with a reliable person. Include where you are going, when you expect to return, your vehicle description, plate number and location where parked. A Voluntary Safety Registration service is available at park information centres in Banff, Lake Louise and Field.

2. Start early. Take advantage of the cool mornings for hiking and allow yourself the best chance to summit and descend before afternoon thundershowers develop.

3. Turn-back time. Plan your day to allow enough time to get home before dark. Turn back at a set time regardless of whether or not you have made it to the summit.

4. Keep your party together. Parties that split up are one of the most common causes of problems that result in requests for assistance. If you must separate from your party, make specific arrangements to re-connect.

5. Weather changes. Mountain weather changes quickly. It often snows here in the summer. Climbing a 3500 m peak is the same as travelling to a different latitude and it could feel like the winter! No matter what the forecast says, always take a backpack with lightweight protective clothing. [See the Gear List]

6. It's a matter of perspective. Take advantage of opportunities to study your climb from a distance where you will see more of your route. Larch Valley meadows is a perfect spot to do this.

7. Looking back. At the end of a long day, the way down always looks different. As you climb up, make a conscious effort to look back and memorize landmarks for the way down. Note the **Look back** reminders in the route description.

8. Descending. Experienced climbers learn that it is almost impossible to assess a descent route by looking down from the top. Changing a descent route-line by a only a few degrees at the top of a mountain can put you in totally unfamiliar terrain by the time you are halfway down. For this reason, unless you are absolutely certain of what you are doing, always descend by the same way you went up.

9. Avoid shortcuts. Taking shortcuts can be a very bad idea in mountaineering. Inexperienced climbers taking shortcuts has resulted in serious accidents.

11. Lightning. Electrical storms are common in the mountains during the summer. Lightning strikes and associated ground currents can be deadly. Lightning storms are most common on warm afternoons and strikes are most likely to hit peaks, ridges, and prominent objects, such as climbers, on open slopes. If you hear an approaching thunderstorm, it is time to descend immediately to the safety of lower elevations. If a thunderstorm catches you in an exposed position: pick a spot away from any dangerous drop, crouch down so your head is not raised above the surrounding terrain, sit on your pack at a distance from any metal belongings, keep your feet together, and try not to touch the ground with any other parts of your body. Do not shelter under overhanging rocks or caves during electrical storms as the current will pass through you as it grounds through the rock above and below.

12. Rockfall. One of the leading causes of accidents on this scramble route is people being struck by human-generated rockfall, (see some of the **Xs** on the route photo). You can minimize your exposure to this hazard. Travel in a cluster with other scramblers so any dislodged rocks do not gather speed and hit people below, or wait until the party is no longer directly under/above you. Travel more slowly on descent to avoid causing rockfall. Tell others in your party if you see people below so you can be extra diligent and not cause any rockfall. Protect yourself by taking short stops behind rock bluffs or faces and by taking longer breaks next to the ridge. Avoid travelling in the gullies and cross them quickly. If you dislodge a rock, yell “rock” to people below so they have a chance to move out of the way. **Wearing a helmet is strongly recommended** (helmets can be rented locally).

EMERGENCIES

Out Overnight

If, for any reason, your party is detained, you should be prepared to spend at least one night out. This is one of the reasons why you are carrying spare clothing and high-energy food. Summer nights at altitude can be cold and uncomfortable, but are seldom life-threatening. If someone is injured, focus most of your resources on conserving their warmth and energy until help arrives.

Accidents

If a serious accident occurs, respond with care – avoid rushing. Stabilize the injured persons. Take measures to protect them from further danger. Provide them with shelter. If they require evacuation, call the emergency numbers below or send someone for help. Ideally, leave someone at the scene to care for the patient. Ensure the reporting person has all the information including the exact location of the patient, nature of the injuries, and time of the accident. Don’t forget details like car keys or change for a pay phone. If you have a cellular phone, try it! It may work near the summit or you may have to descend to Moraine Lake Lodge to phone for assistance.

In Banff National Park, the **EMERGENCY NUMBER** is: **403-762-4506** (24 hrs – emergency only) or call **911** and tell them you have a mountain emergency in Banff National Park and require Parks Canada's mountain rescue team's assistance.

HELICOPTER RESCUE

If you require helicopter rescue in the backcountry, proper communication with the rescue crew can save critical time.

KNOW THESE STEPS:

1 Learn the Signal



2 Make the Signal

ON THE GROUND: Signalling to the helicopter rescue team
When the helicopter approaches, signal and stay in position (do not wave arms).

Mount Temple and You

Difficulty: Most of the climb is a steep, strenuous hike on loose scree or on worn, intermittent footpaths. Careful route finding minimizes your exposure to mountain hazards (rockfall, cornices, etc.) and leads you through weaknesses in three cliff bands that require climbing up short steps of rock, using your hands as needed for balance or climbing. Cairns along the route can help guide you, but not all cairns mark the safest ascent/descent line. Route finding decisions will still be required. Parties knowledgeable in short-roping techniques may bring a short piece of rope to provide extra security, especially for the second grey step of rock described on the other side. Crampons and an ice axe are likely required if the summit still holds snow. Being struck by human-generated rockfall is one of the leading causes of accidents on this route (refer to the “Climbing and Safety Tips” section of this brochure). **Wearing a helmet is strongly recommended** (these can be rented locally).

Season: Important: Mt. Temple is a **summer climb**. Route conditions are best after the winter snow has melted completely off the peak, usually by mid-July. Unfortunately, the route cannot be viewed until you are in Larch Valley. You may be able to determine how much snow remains by looking at neighbouring high elevation peaks; otherwise, you can check on conditions by phoning or visiting a park information centre.

Restricted Access and Bears: Trail restrictions for the Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass trails are often in place during the summer to protect resident grizzly bears and visitors. When in place you **must hike in a tight group of 4 or more** on these trails (check with national park visitor centres or call 403-522-1264). The Mount Temple scramble route above Sentinel Pass is not included in the restriction. The trails are busy, but it may be difficult to find others if you are starting at the trailhead early or arriving back at the pass late. For your convenience, plan this trip with four people.

Looking for Further Information?

- ▲ Banff Public Safety Specialists can provide trip planning and mountaineering advice: - call 403-762-1473 or drop by the Warden Office in the Banff Industrial Compound
- ▲ Visit the Park Information Centre in Field, Lake Louise, or Banff. (ph. 403-522-1264 Lake Louise backcountry trails office)
- ▲ Guidebooks available in local bookstores and Friends of Banff National Park outlets:
 - *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies*, by Alan Kane (describes moderate mountain climbs throughout the Rockies)
 - *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Sean Dougherty (for serious alpinists)
 - *The 11,000ers of the Canadian Rockies* by Bill Corbett
 - Certified Mountain Guides offer private guided climbs throughout the Rockies (visit The Association of Canadian Mountain Guides: www.acmg.ca)
 - Check the Banff National Park website: www.pc.gc.ca/banff
 - Current mountain reports (mcr) can be found on the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG) website (www.acmg.ca/mcr).

A Climber's Guide to MOUNT TEMPLE



Detailed Route Description

Getting to the Start of the Climb

Tips, Recommendations, Gear Lists



About Mount Temple and You

Mt. Temple is the prominent triangular shaped peak capped with ice and snow that you see towering above the hamlet of Lake Louise. While there are technical routes up this face, the easiest ascent route is hidden from view on the southwest side of the mountain. Mt. Temple is popular because it is one of the highest peaks in the Lake Louise group. This route description is aimed at strong hikers and scramblers. It is not a good choice for your first scramble route.

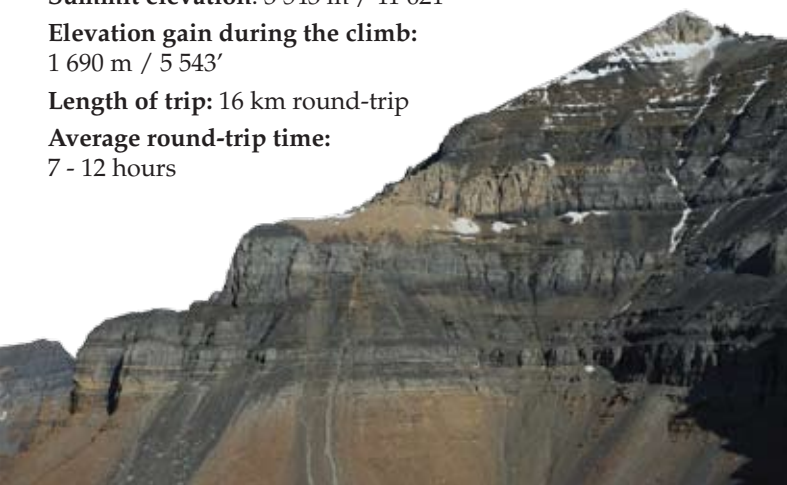
Mt. Temple is a moderate scramble with some hazards to be aware of. Because of Mt. Temple’s popularity and the number of accidents that have occurred on this route, we have prepared this special brochure with extra-detailed route information and important tips to assist you in having a safe climb.

Summit elevation: 3 543 m / 11 621’

Elevation gain during the climb:
1 690 m / 5 543’

Length of trip: 16 km round-trip

Average round-trip time:
7 - 12 hours



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The route description to the summit begins at the Moraine Lake parking lot. For information on how to reach this point, see the other side of this sheet. The following description is keyed to the numbers on the photos. Round trip time is 7-12 hours.

1. Moraine Lake to Larch Valley

Follow the lakeshore trail, past the Moraine Lodge (1888 m), for 35 m to the trail junction for Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass. Thirteen gentle switchbacks lead you up 352 m through 2.5 km of forest to another trail junction near a bench. Take the right (north) fork towards Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass/Paradise Valley (the left fork leads you to Eiffel Lake).

2. Larch Valley to Sentinel Pass

As Sentinel Pass comes into view, take time to look at the route and conditions from a distance. If there is any snow on the upper mountain, ice axes and crampons will likely be required and it may mean turning around. Ascend the switchbacks to Sentinel Pass between Pinnacle and Mount Temple. This is a good spot to put on helmets.

3. Up the scree from Sentinel Pass (2611 m)

After hiking 5.8 km and ascending 723 m to reach Sentinel Pass, a worn scree path dotted with cairns leads you up and just right of the ridge. Avoid the heavily beaten-in path that leads you towards the centre of the broad gully (the furthest right dotted line in the picture). Stay left, closer to the ridge, where the footing is more secure and there is less exposure to rockfall from parties above. At the top of the gully, a long diagonal path will lead you up and to the right, past a yellow rock wall to the first grey rock band.

4. First grey rock band

Traverse to the right below the grey cliff striped with yellow rock, pass two large gullies and ascend the left side of the third shallow gully (look for a cairn marking the ascent line). Climb the 4 m step of rock. The 2 prominent scree paths below are an important landmark for where you ascend. Don't be lured by the beaten path taking you off to a big traverse to the right, passing the 2 scree gullies below, to where the cliff band becomes more difficult to ascend. After scrambling through the first grey rock band, the path and cairns lead you up through the grey/black steps towards the second grey rock band. **Look back** and landmark the correct descent so you are not lured to the wrong feature when you descend.

5. Second grey rock band (may be considered the crux of the route)

Traverse under two gullies closest to the ridge and climb 2 steep blocky steps just to the right of the second gully. Look for the yellow and blue painted squares that mark the line of ascent. Both the 5 m and 3 m steps involve some exposed climbing. You may appreciate the security of a rope and solid belay, especially on the way down. Be careful at the start, as there are some polished holds. It's not recommended to follow the beaten paths up the gullies, as they leave you exposed to the large bowls above where both natural and human-generated rockfall may occur. After the step, follow the cairned path zig-zagging over the pea gravel-covered rock slabs/steps (take extra caution here during the descent), then angle left, back to the ridge to find the weakness in the next band of light brown rock. **Look back** to ensure you remember the way back to the step.

6. Light brown rock step

Follow the cairned trail to the ridge crest and ascend the weakness just right of the ridge. Initially ascend the rock steps on the left side of the gully, making every attempt to stay to the side of the gully, especially if there are people above. The gully is crossed near the top where gentle rock steps lead you out of the weakness on the right side.

7. Summit ascent

Follow the switch-backing trail in the scree towards the summit. **CAUTION** – if snow remains on the upper mountain, expect to have unstable cornices on the ridgeline on the climber's right. Be sure to stay on the rock well back from the edge. This hazard can be especially difficult to avoid in poor visibility and fresh snow. Also, in early season this ridge can be a mix of snow and ice requiring crampons and an ice axe. Check the conditions before you go and be prepared to turn back if necessary.

DESCENDING

On the descent, stick to the plan **and follow exactly the same way back down**. Be very careful on your descent not to dislodge rocks, which can injure people below. Other gullies or routes may look inviting (there may even be cairns!) when looking down from above, but any other route will lead to larger cliffs or looser rock.

After descending the last rock band, it may look tempting and even shorter to plunge down one of the two scree paths leading well away from the ridge into the middle of the amphitheatre. On a busy day, these routes leave you exposed to rockfall from above and there have been a few rescues of people hit by rocks in the lower section.

Now you've done Mount Temple! If you're interested in more scrambling at this level, the park has prepared a similar brochure for Cascade and Rundle Mountains near the Town of Banff. If you have done both of these and want more, it is time to purchase *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies*, join the Alpine Club, hire a guide, or take a course... good luck!

