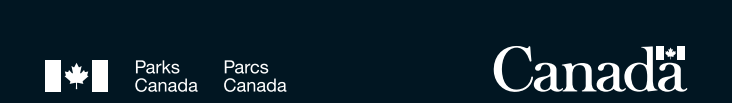




# Winter Trails in the Banff Area

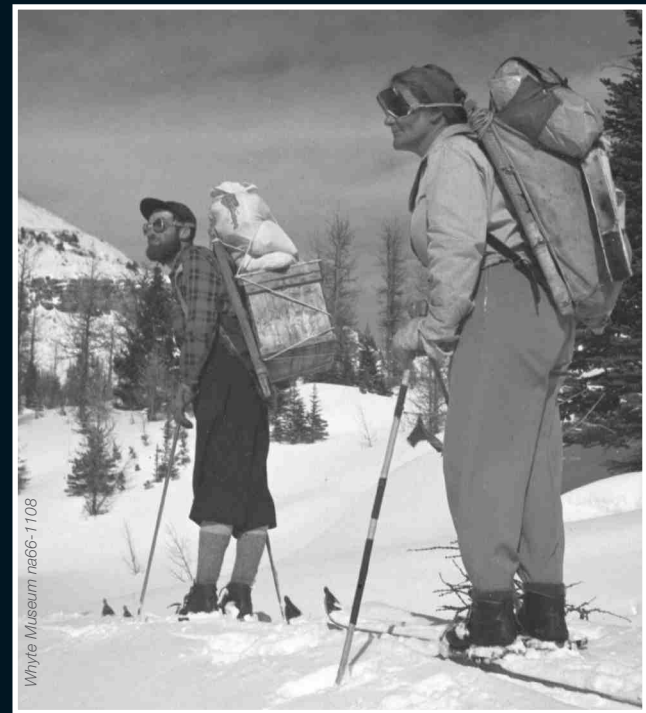
Tunnel Mountain Winter Trails / AVA Visualaid



## Winter, a season to play . . .

Welcome to Banff National Park. Canada's first national park. Whether you are here for a family adventure or a relaxing getaway, there is no better way to experience Banff's expansive mountain landscape than to get out there in the snow.

Lace up your boots, wax up your skis, strap on a pair of snowshoes or hop on a fat bike and enjoy one of many winter trails.



## Legend

- Winter hiking recommended
- Snowshoeing recommended
- Fat biking recommended
- Cross-country skiing recommended
- Dogs on leash at all times
- Dogs prohibited
- Bikes prohibited
- Avalanche hazard

## Dogs

Dogs or other pets cause stress for wildlife. Dogs, like wolves and coyotes, may be seen as a threat. Off-leash dogs can trigger aggressive behaviour from wildlife such as grizzly bears and elk. To prevent unsafe situations, it is your responsibility to:

- Ensure your dog is on a leash and under control at all times.
- Pick up and dispose of your pet's waste in a garbage bin.

Dogs are not allowed on some trails: read the trail descriptions or visit [parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails) for more information.

## How to Use this Guide

Whether you want to explore the national park by foot, ski, snowshoe or fat bike, this guide lists the recommended trails for each activity.

Stop by the visitor centres or visit [parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails) for trail conditions and closures before heading out.

For all trails, be prepared as conditions can change quickly; easy and moderate trails can become difficult due to weather change, icy conditions or poor visibility.

### EASY

- Suitable for all visitors, including those with little or no trail experience.
- Flat to gently rolling.
- Little or no elevation gain or loss.

### MODERATE

- Suitable for most visitors who have some basic trail experience.
- Gently rolling with short and steep sections.
- Moderate elevation gain or loss.

Trails are shared in the national park, which means you could see people fat biking while you are winter hiking, or people skiing while you are snowshoeing.

## Trail Etiquette

In Banff National Park, we share the trail:

- The track set portion of the trail is for classic skiing only. The flat, groomed lane is for other users.
- Walk and fat bike only on hard-packed trails to prevent ruts. If your feet or tires sink deeper than 2.5 cm (1 inch), conditions are too soft.
- When climbing, please yield the right of way to descending skiers and fat bikers.
- If you fall, move off the track as quickly as possible.
- When taking a break, step to the side, leaving room for others to pass.
- Leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in.

Fat bikers yield to all users



Skiers yield to descending skiers

Snowshoers and winter hikers yield to skiers



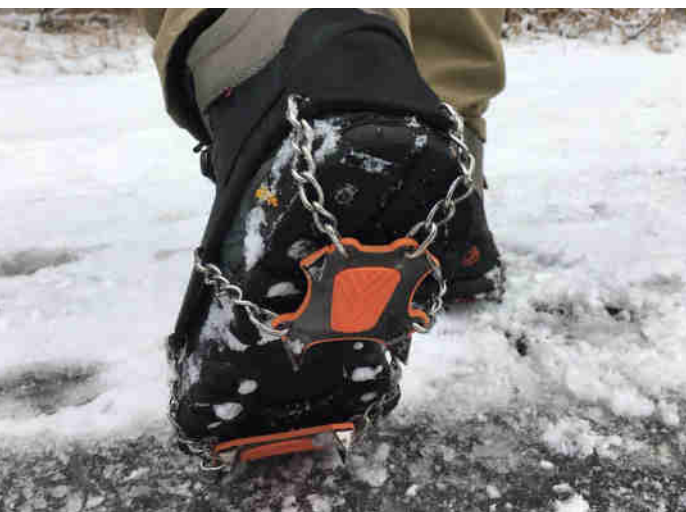
Track set for classic skiing only



Flat grooming for other users

## Ice Cleats

Trails can be icy in the winter. Hiking poles and ice cleats are recommended when exploring the trails. Cleats are designed to fit over shoes or boots and can be purchased at the Banff Visitor Centre, 224 Banff Avenue, and most outdoor stores in the town of Banff.



## Recommended Cross-country Ski Trails

### 1 Tunnel Mountain Winter Trails

8 km all loops  
No elevation gain  
Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court Campground entrance



Route 2

Two seasonally closed campgrounds offer first-time skiers the perfect place to try out a new sport. Get your evening fitness fix with 2.6 km of lit trails in Trailer Court or explore the 5.4 km quiet, forested loops of Village 1. **Dogs prohibited on ski trails.**

### 2 Spray River West Trail

5.6 km one way from Spray River West trailhead to Spray River bridge  
Elevation gain 105 m, elevation loss 70 m  
Trailhead: Spray River West trailhead, past the Fairmont Banff Springs



Route 2

This local's favorite is double track set with skate skiing lane, offering rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley. Bring a snack; there is a picnic spot beside the river near the bridge. **Avalanche hazard:** Avalanche paths from Sulphur Mountain cross the Spray River 4.5 - 5 km from the Spray River trailhead. **Do not stop in this area.**

### 3 Healy Creek

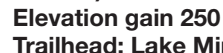
5.5 km one way from Healy/Brewster parking lot to Sundance Canyon junction  
Elevation gain 95 m, elevation loss 100 m  
West Trailhead: Healy/Brewster parking lot on the Sunshine Village access road  
East Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start at Sundance Trail west of the building



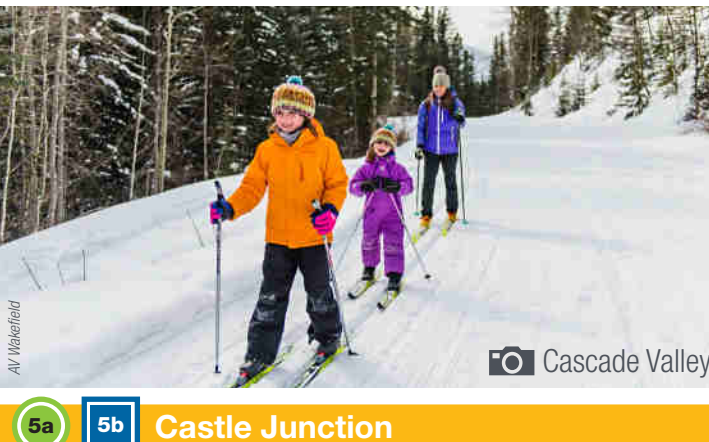
This forested trail is a taste of the backcountry, close to town. Track setting occurs when adequate snow is available. For a shorter one-way trip, arrange for a drop-off at the Healy/Brewster parking lot, and ski or fat bike into the town; a short trail will bring you along Cave Avenue to the Banff Avenue bridge.

### 4a) 6.3 km one way to Cascade River bridge

Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 50 m  
4a + 4b) 15.1 km one way  
Elevation gain 250 m, elevation loss 85 m  
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area parking lot



This wide trail is double track set with a skate skiing lane to Cascade River bridge and single track set for the remaining route to Stoney Creek on pleasant rolling terrain. Enjoy a fun downhill return trip. For an additional 2 km round trip, ski the trail to Upper Bankhead.



### 5a) 3.9 km of trails

Minimal elevation gain  
5b) 5 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain  
Starting point: Parking area on the HI Hostel road south of Castle Junction



A series of interconnected single track set trails that wind through spruce forest. The main trail runs from Castle Junction to Castle Mountain Lookout along the Bow Valley Parkway (Hwy 1A).

### 6) 2 Goat Creek and Spray River

19 km one way  
Elevation gain 435 m, elevation loss 160 m  
Goat Creek trailhead: 8 km south of Canmore on Spray Lakes Road  
Spray River West trailhead: Parking area behind the Fairmont Banff Springs



Route 2

The track set trail can be skied and the flat, groomed lane can be biked in either direction. Most people choose to start at the Goat Creek above Canmore and ski or bike downhill most of the way to Banff. **Vehicle shuttle recommended.** **Avalanche hazard:** Avalanche paths from Sulphur Mountain cross the Spray River 4.5 - 5 km from the Spray River trailhead. **Do not stop in this area.**

### 7 Brewster Creek

11.1 km one way (2.6 km from trailhead to Brewster Creek junction, plus 8.5 km to Sundance Lodge)

Elevation gain 315 m, elevation loss 150 m  
Trailhead: Healy/Brewster parking lot on the Sunshine Village access road



This trail offers valley views through open and forested areas. Track setting occurs when adequate snow is available. For the more experienced, take the trail to Sundance Lodge. **Note that hills can get icy.**

### 8 Redeearth Creek

10.5 km one way  
Elevation gain 335 m  
Trailhead: Redeearth Creek trailhead



The trail climbs gradually through lodgepole pine forests to the Shadow Lake Trail. The last few kilometres back to the highway can be exhilarating; be extra cautious if conditions are icy. **Avalanche hazard:** From the trailhead, two avalanche paths cross the trail at kilometres 3.3 and 4.4. Between kilometres 6.3 and 8, beyond two bridges, avalanche paths from Copper Mountain exist above the trail. **Do not stop in these areas.**

## Recommended Snowshoeing Trails

Snow conditions on snowshoe trails are best after a recent snowfall.

### 9 Tunnel Mountain Drive

2 km one way  
Elevation gain 130 m, elevation loss 135 m  
Starting point: The closed gate at the intersection of Tunnel Mountain Drive and St. Julien Road



Route 7

Closed to vehicles in the winter, this route has splendid views of Cascade Mountain. It also connects with Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint Trail (11).

### 10 Johnson Lake

2.8 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain  
Trailhead: Johnson Lake Day-use Area



This trail follows the lakeside shoreline and includes views of Cascade and Rundle mountains. This forest of Douglas fir, spruce and pine trees, is the richest biological zone in Banff National Park – the montane ecoregion.

### 11 Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint

4.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 115 m, elevation loss 90 m  
Trailhead: Surprise Corner, east end of Buffalo Street



Route 7

This sunny trail provides open vistas to the Hoodoos Viewpoint. Keep an eye out for wildlife and watch for icy sections. You can make a loop or return to town along Tunnel Mountain Road.

### 12 Upper Stoney Loop

4.8 km loop  
Elevation gain 205 m  
Trailhead: Kiosk at the south end of Mount Norquay ski area parking lot



This narrow trail climbs, at times steeply, through thick forest to the Stoney Lookout where you can enjoy views of Cascade Mountain and the Bow Valley. From there, continue north and descend on a twisting trail back to the old ski runs above the Cascade Lodge.

### 13) 25a Sulphur Mountain Westside

7.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 885 m  
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start at Sundance Trail west of building



Follow Sundance Trail 2.6 km to the junction, where you will find the Sulphur Mountain Westside Trail branching back to the east. From there, this old weather station access road is a sustained climb for snowshoers or hikers with ice cleats.

### 14 Ink Pots via Moose Meadows

5.6 km one way  
Elevation gain 340 m, elevation loss 130 m  
Trailhead: Johnston Creek trailhead at the Moose Meadows parking lot



A quieter alternative to the busier Johnston Canyon Trail, this trail climbs through thick forest to an open meadow with brilliantly coloured mineral springs.

## Recommended Winter Walking Trails

### 15 Fenland Trail

2.1 km loop  
No elevation gain  
Trailhead: Fenland Trail parking lot, west of Mt. Norquay Road. Trailhead is a 20 minute/1.5 km walk from downtown Banff.



This interpretive trail under old growth spruce trees is great for families with young children. For a longer walk from the Banff townsite, start at Central Park and follow the Bow River to the Fenland trailhead. Walk east, just over the railway tracks on Mt. Norquay Road (0.9 km one way).

### 16 Marsh Loop

2.8 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain  
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site parking lot



This trail is located in the wide expanse of the Bow Valley and circles around a marsh. It comes alive with birds in the winter and is a great place to see animal tracks.

### 17 Spray Connector

2 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain  
Starting point: Park at the Bow Falls Day-use Area, walk past the gate and across the bridge. Follow the Golf Course Road 350 m to the Spray River East trailhead kiosk. Go past the kiosk, head west and take the trail closest to the Spray River.



This short outing close to town links the Spray River East Trail to Spray River West Trail via a small scenic bridge. **If conditions are icy, ice cleats are strongly recommended.**

### 18 Stewart Canyon

1.5 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain  
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, kiosk at the far end of picnic area



Explore the Cascade River which feeds Banff National Park's largest lake. This trail can be very icy, especially during the spring.

### Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint



### 19a) 1.2 km one way to the Lower Falls

Elevation gain 50 m  
19a + 19b) 2.5 km one way to the Upper Falls  
Elevation gain 120 m  
Trailhead: Johnston Canyon Day-use Area



Travel in the depths of the canyon on wide trails and narrow bridges with railings that lead to the Lower Falls or to the spectacular 30 m high frozen Upper Falls. **The trail is usually very icy – ice cleats are strongly recommended.** Travel an additional 3.2 km beyond the Upper Falls to reach the Ink Pots.

### 20 Tunnel Mountain Summit

2.4 km one way  
Elevation gain 260 m  
Trailhead: Lower parking lot on St. Julien Road. Trailhead is a 15 minute/1 km walk from downtown Banff.



Reach the summit of a mountain in the heart of the Banff townsite. Take in breathtaking views of the town and Bow Valley. This steep trail can be extremely icy. **Hiking poles and ice cleats are strongly recommended.**

### Tunnel Mountain Summit



### 21 Sulphur Mountain

5.5 km to top of gondola, plus 0.5 km to Sanson Peak  
Elevation gain 655 m  
Trailhead: Banff Upper Hot Springs parking lot



Switchbacks on the slopes of Sulphur Mountain provide a steady uphill hike to a summit renowned for its stunning mountain views. Take a 0.5 km side trip on the boardwalk along the ridge ending at Sanson Peak. You will find more great views, the Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station National Historic Site and the 1903 weather observatory. **If conditions are icy, ice cleats are strongly recommended.**

**Avalanche hazard:** There is hazardous avalanche terrain adjacent to this trail. Stay on the trail at all times.

### 22) 25a) 25b) Sundance Canyon

3.7 km one way, plus 2.1 km loop  
Elevation gain 155 m, elevation loss 60 m  
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, start at Sundance Trail west of building



Follow the Sundance Trail to this moderately difficult canyon loop. **Bikes are not permitted past the bike racks. This trail can be icy - ice cleats are strongly recommended.**

## Recommended Fat Biking Trails

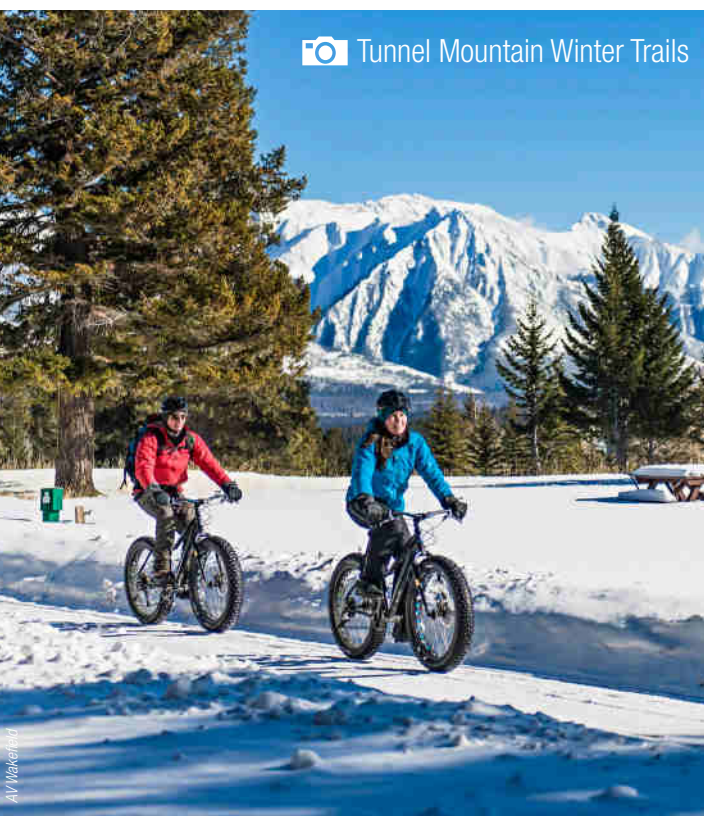
### 23a) 23b) Tunnel Mountain Winter Trails

23a) 3.4 km of trails  
No elevation gain  
23b) 2.5 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain  
Trailhead: Tunnel Mountain Trailer Court Campground entrance



Route 7

Looking for a place to get a feel for fat biking on wide, groomed trails? Want to enjoy a quiet stroll in nature with your dog or try out snowshoeing after a big snowfall? The flat terrain of Trailer Court has something for everyone, and the trails are lit at night. For a slightly more difficult terrain, try the 2.5 km fat bike loop that meanders through coniferous forest.



### 24 Spray River East Trail

5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead to Spray River bridge  
Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 80 m  
Trailhead: Park at the Bow Falls Day-use Area, walk past the gate and across the bridge. Follow the Golf Course Road 350 m to the Spray River East trailhead kiosk. Go past the kiosk, head west and take the east-most trail.



This trail offers rolling terrain in a picturesque river valley. As the snow falls throughout the year, snowshoers flatten the trail and fat bikers compact the snow, creating a hard-packed trail for both.

### 25a) 25b) Sundance Trail

3.7 km one way  
Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 60 m  
Trailhead: Cave and Basin National Historic Site, trail starts west of building



This trail offers views of the Bow Valley while winding through forested areas to the Sundance Canyon picnic area. Sections of the trail are single and double track set. **Bikes are not permitted past the bike racks.**

### 26 Banff Avenue Trail

3.3 km one way  
Elevation gain 65 m, elevation loss 50 m  
Starting point: East end of Banff Avenue at the junction with Banff Legacy Trail



Route 1

Access this trail from the start of the Banff Legacy Trail located at the east end of Banff Avenue. Ride 100 m until you see a steep path going up through thick forest. Beware of icy conditions. The trail levels off gradually until it reaches an open meadow; head left on nice rolling singletack. This north-facing slope retains snow well and is a reliable fat biking experience. The trail ends at Tunnel Mountain Road. Return the same way or connect with the Tunnel Bench Loop (Coastline) to return to town.

### 27 Tunnel Bench Loop

9.7 km loop  
Elevation gain 60 m  
Starting point: Hoodoos Viewpoint parking area



Typically ridden clockwise, this popular loop connects **The Spine, Coastline, Teddy Bear's Picnic** and **Don's Bypass** to make a winding and varied entry-level singletack with minimal elevation gain. Take in the spectacular views of iconic Mount Rundle and Cascade Mountain as well as the Fairholme Range. Some sections have significant vertical exposure.

For an alternative route, after you enter onto **Teddy Bear's Picnic** from the service road, watch for the trail junction to **Stinky D**. This forested trail opens up to wide-open views of the valley, then loops around to **Wolf Scat Alley** bringing you back to **Teddy Bear's Picnic**.

### 28) 19) Lake Minnewanka

7.8 km one way to Aylmer Pass junction  
Elevation gain 45 m, elevation loss 35 m  
Trailhead: Lake Minnewanka Day-use Area, kiosk at far end of picnic area



Don't let the gentle opening of this iconic ride fool you; the physical demands and the remoteness of this trail require excellent fitness, bike handling skills and preparation. The challenging and at times exposed sidehill trail climbs steeply out of Stewart Canyon and heads east on a rollicking single track. Some sections may be very icy – be alert.

## Fat Bike Tips

The wide tires of a fat bike add extra surface area for a smooth ride over firm snow, but deep fresh snow or warm conditions are no fun and leave ruts in the trail. If your tires sink deeper than 2.5 cm (1 inch) then conditions are too soft - come back when it is colder. If trails are icy, studded tires are recommended to add grip to your ride.



## Roam Public Transit

Trails identified with a bus symbol indicate that the trailhead is accessible by public transit. Pick up a Roam public transit brochure at the Banff visitor centres or visit [roamtransit.com](http://roamtransit.com) for public transit fares, maps and schedules.



## Plan Ahead and Prepare

## Winter Safety

Safety is your responsibility. There are always hazards associated with outdoor recreation. Even short trips from the town of Banff can have serious consequences.

- Ask for advice at a Parks Canada visitor centre for help with trip planning.
- Visit [parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/banfftrails) for up-to-date information on trail conditions, warnings and closures.
- When trails are icy, hiking poles and ice cleats can make winter hiking much more enjoyable.
- Study descriptions and maps before heading out. Always choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your group.
- Tell somebody where you are going, when you will be back and who to call if you do not return.
- Expect that trail conditions and winter hazards may change throughout the day. Consult weather forecasts and be prepared for changing weather and emergencies.
- Winter hazards include avalanches, disorientation, thin ice, hypothermia and frostbite.
- From November to March, make sure your vehicle is winterized. Snow tires, proper clothing, and an emergency kit are recommended. Visit [511.alberta.ca](http://511.alberta.ca) for road reports.

## Avalanche Risk

Avalanche season in the mountains extends from November to June, and even a short walk



### Recommended Cross-country Ski Trails

- 1** 8 km all loops  
No elevation gain
- 2** 5.6 km one way from Spray River West trailhead to Spray River bridge  
Elevation gain 105 m, elevation loss 70 m
- 3** 5.5 km one way from Healy/Brewster parking lot to Sundance Canyon junction  
Elevation gain 95 m, elevation loss 100 m
- 4a** 6.3 km one way to Cascade River bridge  
Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 50 m
- 4b** 4a + 4b 15.1 km one way  
Elevation gain 250 m, elevation loss 85 m
- 5a** 3.9 km of trails  
Minimal elevation gain  
5b) 5 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain
- 6** **Goat Creek and Spray River**  
19 km one way  
Elevation gain 435 m, elevation loss 180 m
- 7** **Brewster Creek**  
11.1 km one way (2.6 km from Healy/Brewster parking lot to Brewster Creek junction, plus 8.5 km to Sundance Lodge)  
Elevation gain 315 m, elevation loss 150 m
- 8** **Redearth Creek**  
10.5 km one way  
Elevation gain 535 m



### Recommended Snowshoeing Trails

- 9** 2 km one way  
Elevation gain 130 m, elevation loss 135 m
- 10** **Johnson Lake**  
2.8 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain
- 11** **Surprise Corner to Hoodoos Viewpoint**  
4.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 115 m, elevation loss 90 m
- 12** **Upper Stoney Loop**  
4.8 km loop  
Elevation gain 205 m
- 13** **Sulphur Mountain Westside**  
7.8 km one way  
Elevation gain 835 m
- 14** **Ink Pots via Moose Meadows**  
5.6 km one way  
Elevation gain 540 m, elevation loss 130 m



Pick up a Roam public transit brochure at the Banff visitor centres or visit [roamtransit.com](http://roamtransit.com) for public transit fares, maps and schedules.



### Recommended Winter Walking Trails

- 15** 2.1 km loop  
No elevation gain
- 16** **Marsh Loop**  
2.8 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain
- 17** **Spray Connector**  
2 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain
- 18** **Stewart Canyon**  
1.5 km one way  
Minimal elevation gain
- 19a** **Johnston Canyon**  
19a) 1.2 km one way to the Lower Falls  
Elevation gain 50 m  
19a + 19b) 2.5 km one way to the Upper Falls  
Elevation gain 120 m
- 20** **Tunnel Mountain Summit**  
2.4 km one way  
Elevation gain 260 m
- 21** **Sulphur Mountain**  
5.5 km to top of gondola, plus 0.5 km to Sanson Peak  
Elevation gain 655 m
- 22** **Sundance Canyon**  
3.7 km one way, plus 2.1 km loop  
Elevation gain 155 m, elevation loss 60 m

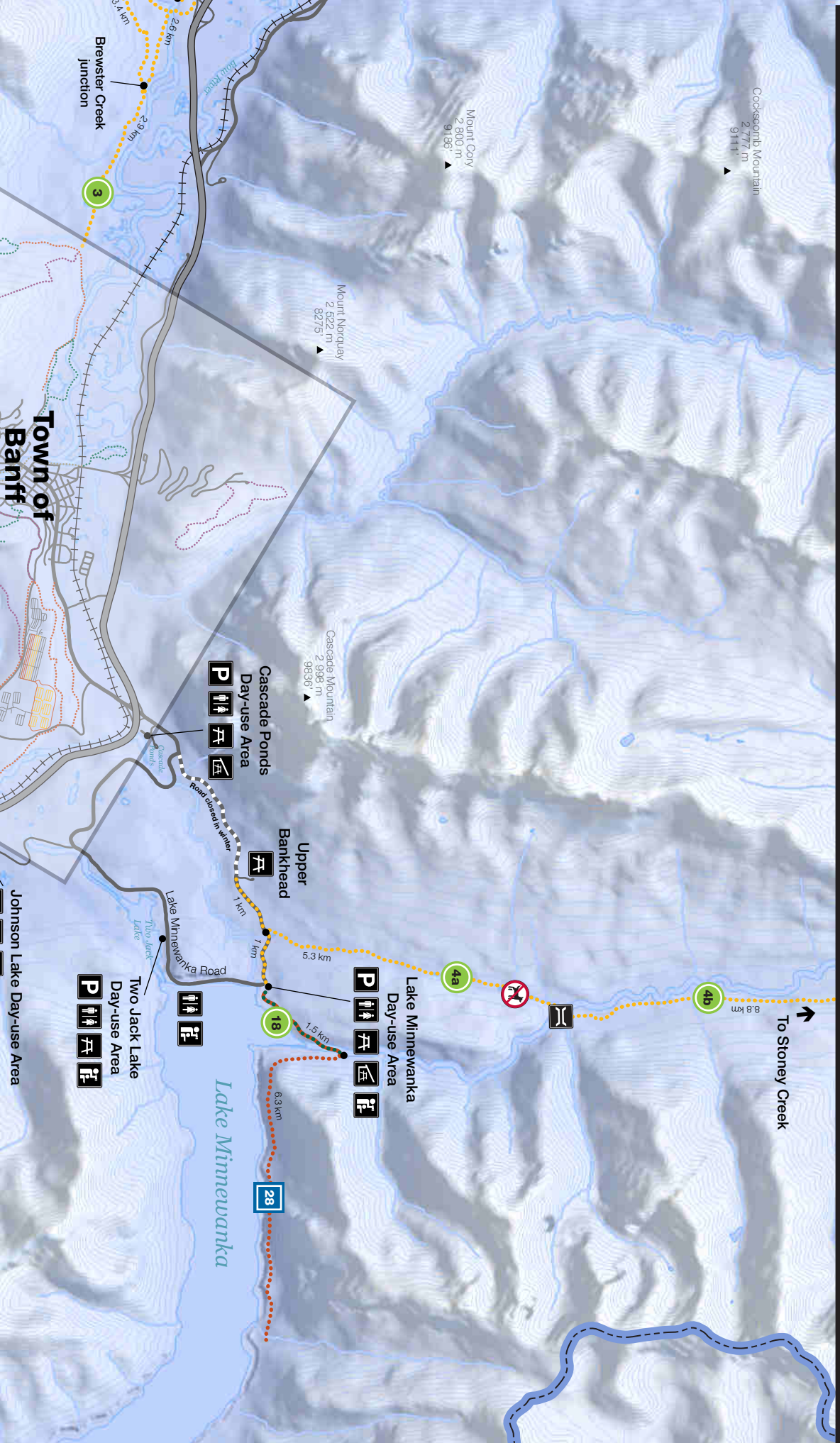
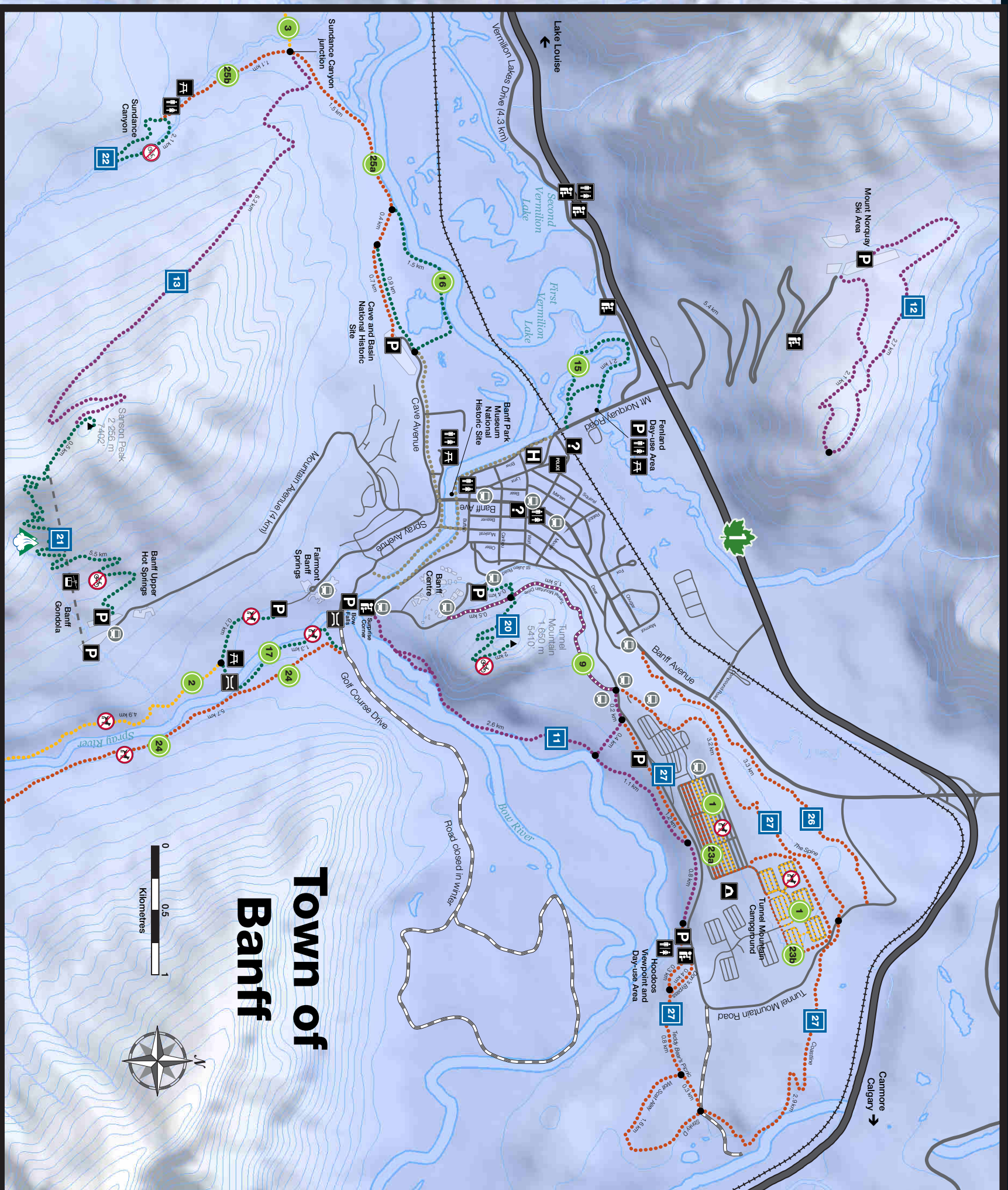
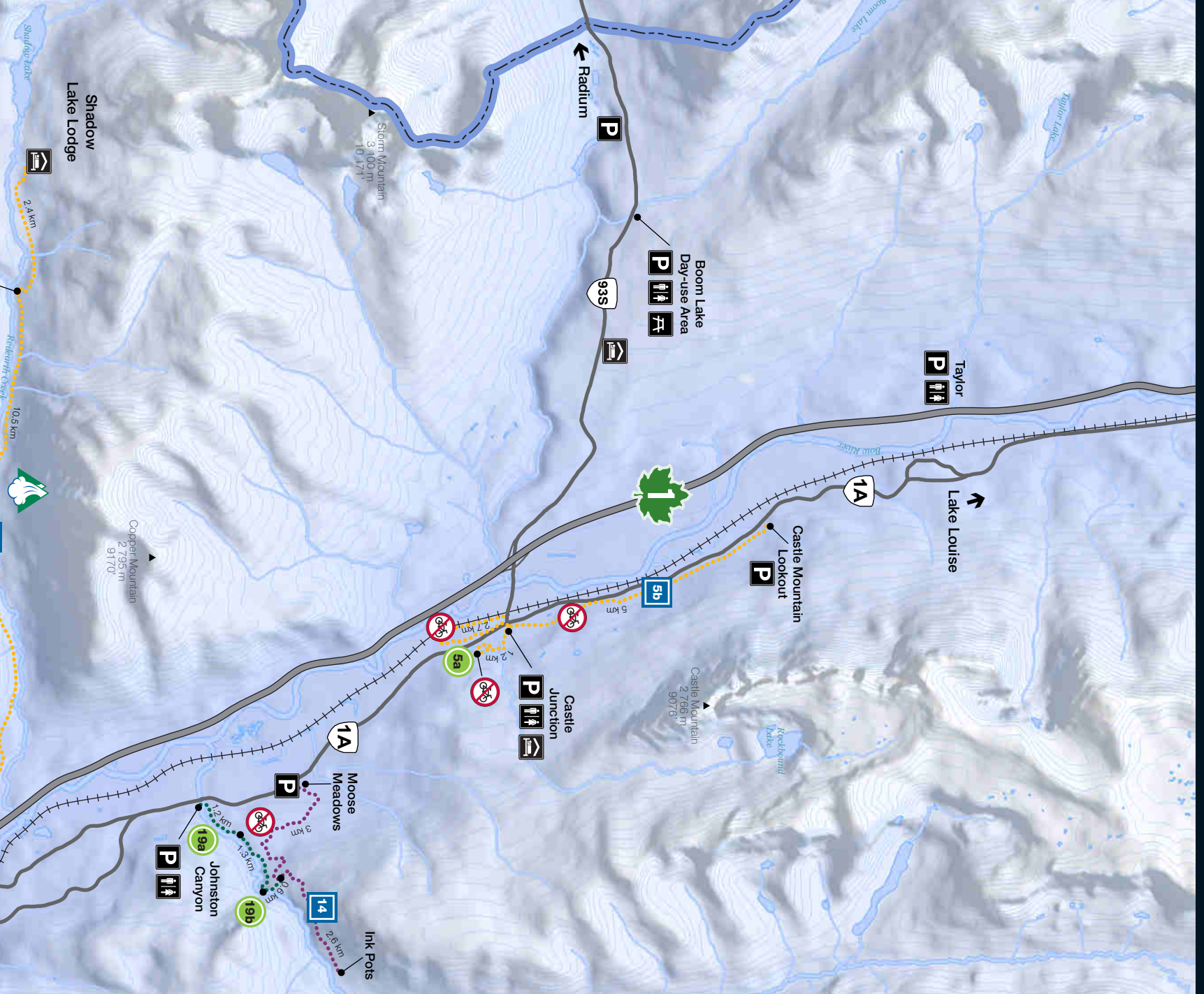


### Recommended Fat Biking Trails

- 23a** 3.4 km of trails  
No elevation gain
- 23b** 2.5 km loop  
Minimal elevation gain
- 24** **Spray River East Trail**  
5.7 km one way from Spray River East trailhead to Spray River bridge  
Elevation gain 135 m, elevation loss 80 m
- 25a** **Sundance Trail**  
3.7 km one way  
Elevation gain 75 m, elevation loss 80 m
- 25b** **Banff Avenue Trail**  
3.3 km one way  
Elevation gain 65 m, elevation loss 50 m
- 26** **Tunnel Bench Loop**  
9.7 km loop  
Elevation gain 60 m
- 27** **Lake Minnewanka**  
3.3 km one way to Aylmer Pass junction  
Elevation gain 45 m, elevation loss 35 m
- 28** **Lake Minnewanka**  
Elevation gain 45 m, elevation loss 35 m
- 18**



Share the trail  
Parategons le sentier




Bikes allowed beyond this junction only from December 15 until March 15.

## LEGEND

- Recommended for cross-country skiing
- Recommended for snowshoeing
- Recommended for winter hiking
- Recommended for fat biking
- Other trails
- Trans-Canada Highway
- Bow Valley Parkway
- Road
- Road closed in winter
- Atmospheric Hazard
- Visitor Centre
- Washrooms
- Police
- Hospital
- Parking
- Campground
- Backcountry Campground
- Day-use Area
- Viewpoint
- Bridge
- Shelter
- Lodge
- Gondola
- Roam Public Transit Stop
- Bikes Prohibited
- Dogs Prohibited
- See other side of map for information on trails where dogs are permitted

DO NOT WITH THIS BROCHURE! Please return to a park facility or store it with others. HOW WAS YOUR TRIP? Please send your comments to [pc.banff-wrc.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.banff-wrc.pc@canada.ca)



Although bears are denning during the winter, they can awaken at any time for short periods. Cougars, wolves and other wildlife remain active throughout the year. If you see wildlife, do not approach; give them lots of space and observe from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens. If tracks are observed, do not follow them towards the animal. Be alert, make noise and carry bear spray. Visit [pc.gc.ca/banff-wildlife](http://pc.gc.ca/banff-wildlife) to learn more about keeping yourself safe.

