



Cross-Country Skiing in the Lake Louise Area

Cross-country skiing is a wonderful way to enjoy the Lake Louise area in winter. Draped in snow and ice, the Rockies form a dramatic backdrop to the pleasures of travelling over crisp snow. The ski season on valley bottom trails generally extends from November to April.

For Safety, Plan Ahead

Safety is your responsibility; you venture out at your own risk. There are always hazards involved in backcountry travel, especially in winter. Minimize your risk by planning ahead.

Planning Tips

- ☑ Study the trail description and map; choose a trail suitable for the least experienced member in your party
- ☑ Check the weather forecast, current trail conditions and daily avalanche report
- ☑ Ski with a friend or group
- ☑ Tell someone where you are going and your expected return time
- ☑ Be prepared for changes in weather and for emergencies

If you are planning a long or hazardous trip and have no friends or family with whom you can leave details, you may choose to complete a *Voluntary Safety Registration* at a Visitor Centre. If you register out, by law, *you must register your return* to prevent a costly and unnecessary search.

Avalanches

Anywhere in the park, a snowy slope bare of trees or any slope above timberline has the potential to avalanche. Know how to recognize avalanche terrain and take the time to learn about safe travel in this terrain. If you plan to cross avalanche areas, each member of your party should carry a shovel, transceiver and a probe, and know how to use them.

Groomed cross-country trails have limited exposure to avalanches; however, under extreme conditions, some avalanches could reach these trails. Backcountry travel always involves some avalanche risk. Before setting out, obtain up-to-date avalanche and weather information, available at park visitor centres, by phone or over the Internet (*see Directory on back*).

Check Your Gear

- ☑ extra wax, cork and scraper
- ☑ map, compass and guidebook
- ☑ full water bottle or thermos
- ☑ high energy food, carry extra
- ☑ sunscreen and sunglasses
- ☑ first aid kit
- ☑ repair kit: cord, tape, wire, pliers, knife, screwdriver and pole basket
- ☑ lightweight emergency blanket, candle, and lighter or waterproof matches
- ☑ head lamp or flashlight
- ☑ extra clothes, including extra hat and gloves.
Use the layering system! Peel off or add layers of synthetic material, silk or wool as needed to stay dry and warm

Ski Trail Etiquette

Please show courtesy to fellow recreationists:

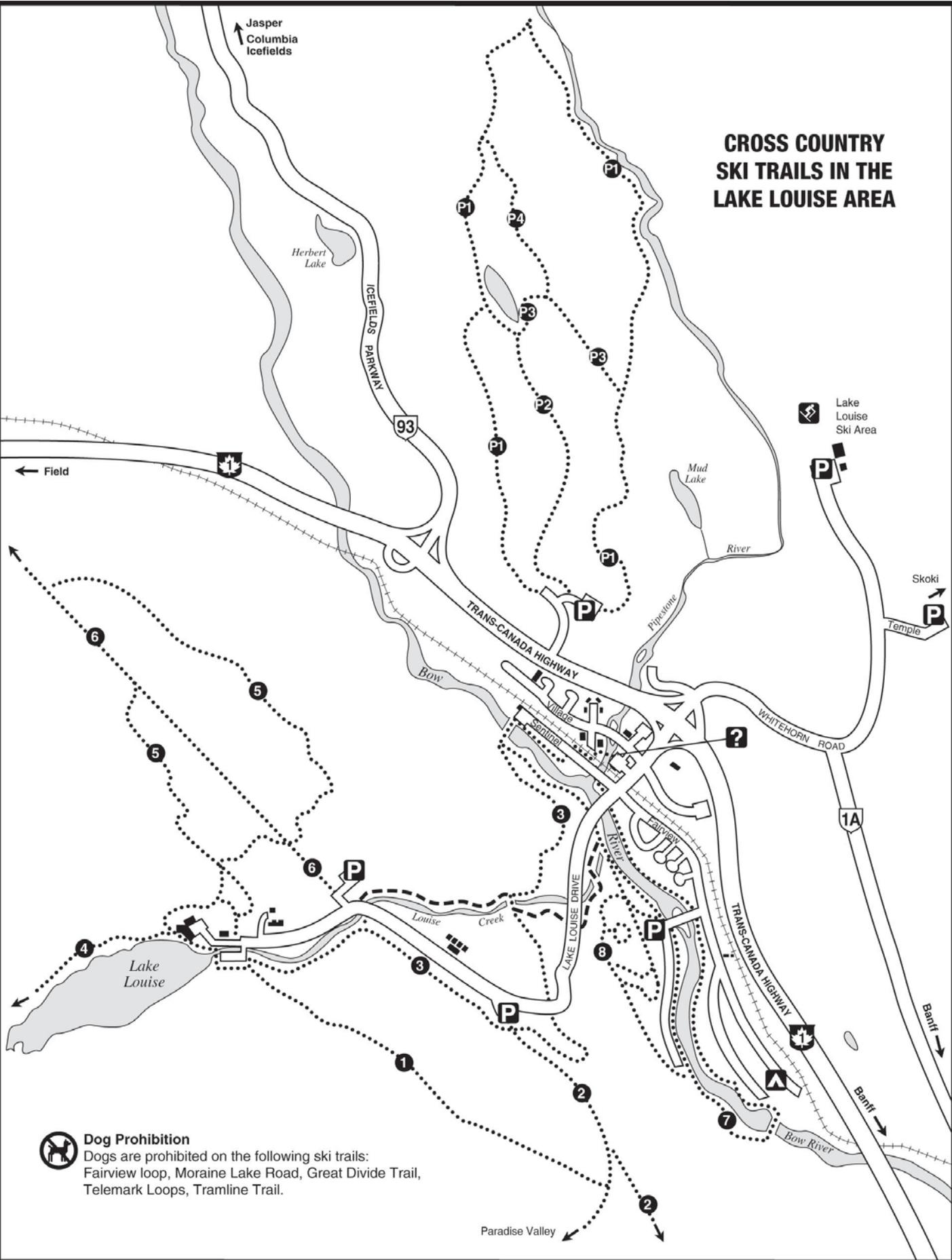
- Do not walk or snowshoe on groomed cross-country ski tracks
- Do not skate-ski on traditional ski tracks
- Keep right when meeting skiers
- When climbing, give way to descending skiers
- If you fall, move off track as quickly as possible and fill your imprint
- When stopped, step to the side, out of tracks
- Yield the trail to skiers that overtake you from behind or ask for the "track".

Cross-Country Ski Trail Reports

Cross-country trail reports are updated at visitor centres and on the park website as conditions change. Trails are rated on their overall condition and by their state of grooming; most trails are groomed shortly after a fresh snowfall.



CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAILS IN THE LAKE LOUISE AREA



Dog Prohibition

Dogs are prohibited on the following ski trails:
 Fairview loop, Moraine Lake Road, Great Divide Trail,
 Telemark Loops, Tramline Trail.

Easy

② Moraine Lake Road: 8 km (5 mi) one way

Double trackset with skating lane

The trail climbs gradually with some flat and some gently rolling stretches. It ends at a viewpoint where the road curves and begins to make its way up to the Valley of the Ten Peaks. Beyond this viewpoint, the road crosses large avalanche paths.

③ Tramline: 4.4 km (2 3/4 mi) one way

Double trackset

The Tramline provides cross-country skiers with a trail between the village on the valley floor and Lake Louise. The trail is broad and well-defined with a constant grade. It follows the old railway bed of a tramline that provided transportation between the train station and Chateau Lake Louise from 1912 to 1930. Park at either end of the trail.

⑥ Great Divide: 7.5 km (4 3/4 mi) one way

Double trackset with skating lane

Following the old 1A Highway, this trail is fairly flat with some gently rolling stretches. It ends at the Great Divide exhibit and picnic area on the Banff – Yoho National Park boundary. A dogsled operation runs on its own track for the first 2 km. From the Divide, you can continue into Yoho along the old road to the Lake O'Hara parking lot (11 km one way). This section is not groomed.

⑦ Bow River Loop: 6.9 km (4 1/4 mi)

Double trackset

The trail follows the edge of the river. Flat, with a few small ups and downs, cutting across any of the bridges can shorten the loop. The south side of the river is in good condition earlier and later in the season being sheltered from the sun. Park near the Station Restaurant; alternatively there is a connection to the Bow River Loop from the Post Hotel and Samson Mall area. The loop can be extended by skiing the trails in the Lake Louise Campground.

⑧ Campground Loop: 2.2 to 4.5 km loops

Double trackset with skating lane

This trail loops around and through the campground on gentle terrain. Extend the 2.2 km outer loop distance by adding on inner loops. To access this trail, drive past the kiosk at the campground entrance and park just over the bridge. Those seeking a longer ski can continue along the adjacent Bow River Loop.

Moderate

① Fairview Loop: 7.5 km (4 3/4 mi)

Double trackset; Recommended direction: counter-clockwise

Park at Moraine Lake Road and begin skiing up the upper Tramline trail. When the Tramline ends at the back end of the Lake Louise parking lots, look left and take the trail marked #1 that heads into the trees. From here the Fairview trail gently rolls through the landscape. More than half way along there is an exhilarating, winding downhill run. The Fairview exits onto Moraine Lake Road. Turn left and head back down to your vehicle.

④ Lake Louise Shoreline: 2.4 km one way

Double trackset

This trail begins in front of the Chateau Lake Louise, branching off the main footpath to follow the pony trail around the west shore of Lake Louise. After 1.8 km the trail rejoins the footpath and soon passes below frozen Louise Falls to end in the open area at the back of the lake. Beyond this point, the trail enters avalanche terrain.

① to ⑤ Pipestone Loops

Check at Lake Louise Visitor Centre for trackset status.

P1: 12.6 km (8 mi) loop

P2: 2.8 km (1 3/4 mi) one way; mostly in trees

P3: 2.1 km (1 1/4 mi) one way; mostly in open

P4: 1.9 km (1 1/4 mi) one way

Forest thinning has significantly changed the appearance of some of these trails. Newly-created forest openings and minor trail rerouting may make trail locations unclear in places. Hidden hazards, such as logs and stumps buried under snow, exist next to some trails.

To avoid hazards, watch for trail markers and stay on trackset trails.

⑤ Lower Telemark Loop: 8.3 km (5 1/4 mi)

Double trackset; Recommended direction: counter-clockwise

The Telemark Loop is composed of two sections: the upper trail runs above the Great Divide Trail and the lower trail below. Ski only the bottom half of the trail to eliminate the difficult upper section. Park at Great Divide trailhead (old 1A Highway). Ski 700 metres, turn right onto the trail marked #5. From here the trail meanders up and down among old growth spruce and fir. Once back on the Great Divide trail, turn left to return to your vehicle.

Difficult

5 Telemark Loop: 9.3 km (5 3/4 mi)

Double trackset

This loop is composed of two sections, the upper trail runs above the Great Divide trail (old 1A Highway) and the lower trail runs below it. The upper trail is steep, technically demanding, and often confusing. Beginning in front of the Chateau Lake Louise, the trail branches off the shoreline trail onto trail #5. Follow the trail up and behind the Chateau then ski steeply down to the Great Divide trail. Cross over the Great Divide trail, follow along for 4 km as the trail meanders up and down through old growth forest, until once again the telemark loop meets the Great Divide trail. Turn left and ski along the Great Divide trail for 1.7 km. Turn right into the woods and climb gradually uphill to end at the Chateau's staff residence.

Respect Wildlife

Human disturbance, especially in winter, can cause wildlife to waste energy critical for survival or reproductive success. Please help protect wildlife:

- If tracks are observed, do not follow them toward the animal.
- If you see wildlife, do not approach; observe from a distance with binoculars or a telephoto lens.
- **DOGS** must be kept on leash at all times in the national parks. Please consider leaving your pet at home.

Maps and Recommended Reading

Available from the Friends of Banff:

www.friendsofbanff.com

phone 403.762.8918

- Topographic sheet Lake Louise 82N/8, 1:50,000
- Lake Louise/Yoho recreation map, 1:50,000, Gem Trek Publishing
- *Ski Trails of the Canadian Rockies*. Chic Scott, Rocky Mountain Books, 1992
- *Avalanche Safety for Skiers, Climber & Snowboarders*. Tony Daffern, Rocky Mountain Books, 1999

Your comments are welcome:

Banff National Park

Box 213, Lake Louise, Alberta TOL 1E0

E-mail: LL.info@pc.gc.ca

Snowshoeing?

Trip planning and winter safety advice also apply to snowshoeing. Please call or visit the Lake Louise or Banff Visitor Centre for route suggestions.

Sharing groomed cross-country ski trails: Do not walk or snowshoe on trails groomed for skiers; this damages the groomed track and puts you in the path of fast moving cross-country skiers. Stay well to the side.

Venturing off on your own: It can take two to three times as long to complete a given distance on snowshoes as it would on a dry summer trail. Route finding skills are essential. You must be able to evaluate the safety of creek and river crossings and be able to identify avalanche terrain. Following previous snowshoe or ski touring tracks does not guarantee safety; it means you are relying on the skills and knowledge of strangers. Weather and avalanche conditions can change by the hour in the mountains.

Directory

Cell phones don't work in many areas of Banff Park

Emergency: 911

Lake Louise Visitor Centre 403.522.3833
Samson Mall, Lake Louise

Banff Visitor Centre 403.762.1550/403.760.1305
224 Banff Avenue, Banff

Lake Louise Warden Office 403.522.1220
Banff Weather 403.762.2088
Road Conditions 403.762.1450

. Avalanche Reports:

Banff, Yoho, Kootenay 403.762.1460
Western Canada 1.800.667.1105

Canadian Avalanche Association

avalanche reports: www.avalanche.ca

Banff National Park

www.pc.gc.ca/banff

Catalogue No.: R63-267/2001E

ISBN : 0-662-31375-5

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