

explore

LIVE THE ADVENTURE



CANADA'S 35 GREATEST HIKES

PRESENTED BY EXPLORE MAGAZINE

TEXT BY DAVID WEBB

Celebrating
35 YEARS
of adventure

British Columbia

1.

Berg Lake Trail

Mount Robson Provincial Park

2.

West Coast Trail

Pacific Rim National Park

3.

Chilkoot Trail

Northern British Columbia/Alaska

4.

Black Tusk

[Garibaldi Lake]

Garibaldi Provincial Park

5.

The Sunshine Coast

Trail

Powell River

6.

The Iceline Trail

Yoho National Park

7.

Trophy Mountain

Alpine Meadows

Wells Gray Provincial Park

Alberta

8.

Plain of the Six

Glaciers

Banff National Park

9.

Skyline Trail

Jasper National Park

10.

Tamarack Trail

Waterton Lakes National Park

11.

Larch Valley-Sentinel

Pass

Banff National Park

Saskatchewan

12.

The Boreal Trail

Meadow Lake Provincial Park

13.

Grey Owl's Cabin

Prince Albert National Park

Manitoba

14.

Pisew Falls to

Kwasitthewan Falls

Paint Lake & Pisew Falls
Provincial Parks

15.

The Mantario Trail

Whiteshell Provincial Park

Ontario

16.

Highland Backpacking

Trail

Algonquin Provincial Park

17.

Bruce Trail

Southern Ontario

18.

Coastal Trail

Lake Superior Provincial Park

19.

Top of the Giant

[Kabeyun Trail]

Sleeping Giant Provincial Park

20.

La Cloche Silhouette

Trail

Killarney Provincial Park

Quebec

21.

Les Lacs & Les Crêtes

Forillon National Park

22.

Deux-Criques Trail

La Mauricie National Park

New Brunswick

23.

Fundy Footpath

Bay of Fundy

24.

Mount Carleton

Mount Carleton Provincial Park

Nova Scotia

25.

Liberty Lake Trail

Kejimkujik National Park

26.

Fishing Cove Trail

Cape Breton Highlands
National Park

Newfoundland

& Labrador

27.

Green Gardens Trail

Gros Morne National Park

28.

The East Coast Trail

Avalon Peninsula

Yukon

29.

Grey Mountain

Whitehorse

30.

Auriol Trail

Kluane National Park

31.

Montana Mountain

Trail

Carcross

32.

Grizzly Lake to Talus

Lakes

Tombstone Territorial Park

Northwest Territories

33.

Canol Heritage Trail

Northwest Territories/Yukon

34.

Ingraham Trail Hikes

Yellowknife

Nunavut

35.

Akshayuk Pass

Auyittuq National Park



Think back to the moment on your last hike when you stood in quiet awe of a view so perfect the world seemed to pause as you marvelled at its beauty. Remember the way the air smelled, perhaps scented by woodland foliage or ocean mist. Visualize the serenity of the forest, alpine or coastline. Think of how every drop of sweat was so worth it to experience this one mindful moment.

To commemorate *explore's* 35th anniversary, we've compiled 35 ways for you to feel that sensation again.

Canada is a big, beautiful country with boundless options for hiking in our vast parks and wild spaces. It's often challenging just to find a trail, let alone hoof it, so we've done the grunt-work for you with this guide to Canada's 35 Greatest Hikes.

By no means an exhaustive list of all of Canada's best hikes, let this guidebook serve as an entry point to a world of outdoor wonder. From here, you'll soon discover a plethora of additional hikes in every region.

We hope you enjoy these trails—35 of our favourites from 35 years of publishing Canada's number-one outdoor adventure magazine: *explore*.



flickr.com/photos/jeffpang

Hike
1

Berg Lake Trail

Location: Mount Robson Provincial Park, British Columbia

Length: 23 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Located in Mount Robson Provincial Park, near the BC/Alberta border, 23-kilometre-long Berg Lake Trail is like a highlight reel for the Rocky Mountains. Under the shadow of 3,959-metre Mount Robson—the high point in the Canadian Rockies—you'll wander past emerald-coloured Kinney Lake and near thundering Emperor Falls, entranced by dramatic mountain vistas throughout. Some lucky trekkers may even catch a glimpse of giant chunks of ice calving from the Mist, Berg and Robson glaciers. Of course, all this scenery draws a crowd—Berg Lake Trail is now managed by a reservation system, which opens annually on January 2.




 Parks Canada/J. McCulloch

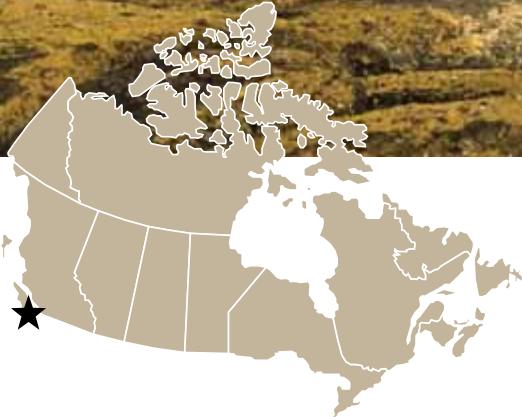
 Hike
2

West Coast Trail

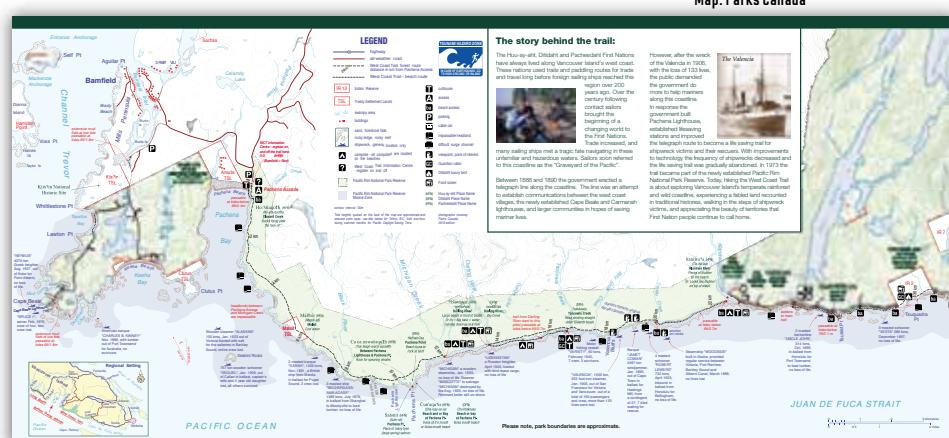
Location: Pacific Rim National Park, British Columbia

Length: 76 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Running along the west coast of Vancouver Island, in Pacific Rim National Park, the famous West Coast Trail attracts trekkers from around the globe. Originally forged to offer shipwreck survivors a route to safety, today, it's a reservation-managed three- to six-day bucket-list backcountry hike. Camping near Tsusiat Falls and the vertigo-inducing ladders of the southern half are two notable aspects of this trail—but every day is memorable on the WCT. Keep an eye out for offshore whales, and bring some cash to buy a hamburger at Chez Monique (\$25), the beloved halfway respite.





Chilkoot Trail

Location: Northern British Columbia/Alaska

Length: 53 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Linking northern BC and Alaska, and an absolute classic for two countries, this 53-kilometre trek has been a backpacker's must-do for decades. Forged by First Nations, used extensively by fortune seekers during the Gold

Rush and operated today as a reservation-managed multi-day hike, the Chilkoot Trail is a challenging slog that pays dividends in scenery, solitude and historical wonders. With a short season—mid-June to early September—inclement weather (expect snow in July) and hardy sections like The Pass, you'll want to be in top-shape and well-prepared. And remember your passport—you cross the U.S./Canada border midway.



Map: Parks Canada

A large, rugged mountain peak, Black Tusk, with two hikers walking up its side.
Arran Yates

Hike

4

Black Tusk (Garibaldi Lake)

Location: Garibaldi Provincial Park, British Columbia

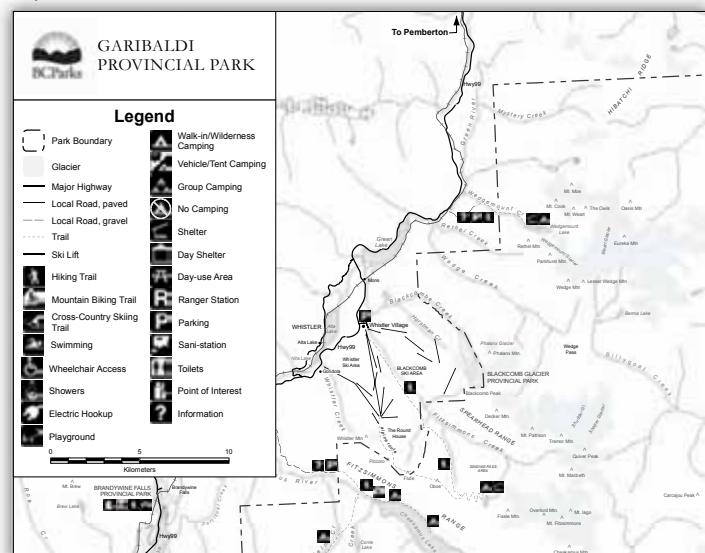
Length: 32 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



The skeleton of an ancient volcano, Black Tusk is the most recognizable prominence in Garibaldi Park. See it up close on a multi-day wilderness trek accessed via the Black Tusk/Garibaldi Lake Area, 40 kilometres north of Squamish. The route to Garibaldi Lake is nine kilometres of picturesque, moderately challenging switchbacks; at the lake, you'll find 50 tent sites, four cooking shelters and pit toilets. Pitch a tent here and fuel up before tackling the seven-kilometre trek (850 metres of elevation gain) to the base of Black Tusk. It is possible to climb the Tusk, but only skilled mountaineers should attempt this. Camp overnight at Garibaldi Lake and return to your car in the morning, or stay several days and explore the region's copious trails.

Map: BC Parks





Tourism Sunshine Coast

Hike
5

The Sunshine Coast Trail

Location: Powell River, British Columbia

Length: 180 km

Difficulty:

The Sunshine Coast Trail showcases 180 scenic kilometres through the mountains, along the coastline and past the lakes of BC's northern Sunshine Coast. It's Canada's longest hut-to-hut hiking trail, and the only free one—built and maintained by the Powell River Parks & Wilderness Society. Hikers can explore routes from a few hours, to a full day, to a week or more—overnighting at the 12 huts and 20-odd campsites along the way. If you have 10 to 12 days, try the whole route in one push! And make sure to buy an SCT Passport at the Powell River Visitor Centre to document your achievement—and to receive congratulatory goodies from local supporting businesses.



Map: Tourism Powell River





Tourism British Columbia

Hike
6

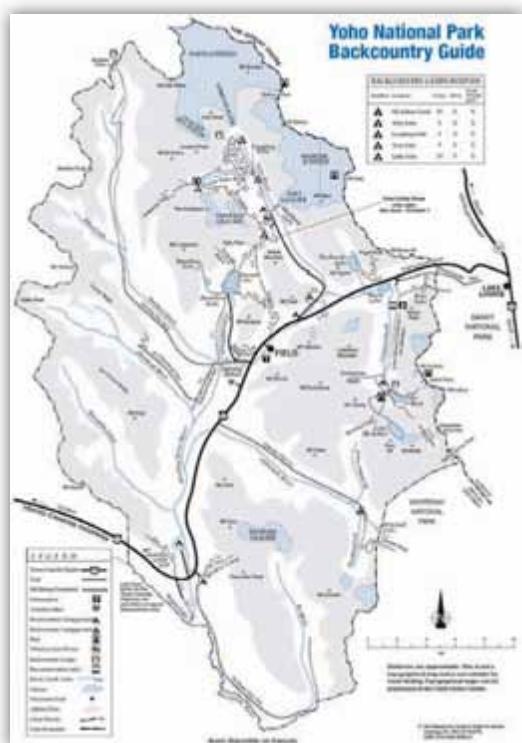
The Iceline Trail

Location: Yoho National Park, British Columbia

Length: 18 or 21 km

Difficulty:

Surely, this is one of BC's most picturesque Rocky Mountain hikes. With two lengthy circuits (Little Yoho, 18 kilometres and Celeste Lake, 21 kilometres; trail-heads located four kilometres east of Field, BC) and offering nearly 700 metres of elevation gain, day-hikers wishing to tackle this route should be in stout physical condition. So-named as the path follows the lower edge of a series of glaciers, expect scree slopes, babbling mountain streams, glaciers, snow fields, the occasional meltwater lake and tear-inducing Rocky Mountain environs throughout. The hike culminates with an unobstructed photo-op at 380-metre-tall Takakkaw Falls. If you'd like to take more time to ponder the environment in quiet contemplation, you can overnight on this trail at the Little Yoho Campground, about 10 kilometres into the path, or at the Stanley Mitchell ACC Hut (reservations required), about 11 kilometres from the trailhead.



Map: Parks Canada



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Hike
7

Trophy Mountain Alpine Meadows

Location: Wells Gray Provincial Park, British Columbia

Length: 12 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Spawling Wells Gray Provincial Park is one of BC's Thompson Region gems—offering thick evergreen forest, azure lakes (including Murtle, the world's largest canoe-only lake), robust Helmcken Falls and hikes galore. The Trophy Mountain area, a 6,900-hectare portion of the park, is accessed via Bear Creek Correctional Centre Road (gravel), north of the town of Clearwater. Within an hour of setting out, you'll be in flowery sub-alpine meadow, followed by alpine spruce and



fir trees and even more meadow as you meander to Sheila Lake. A light scramble from there leads you to the broad views of Skyline Ridge, about three hours after you started. Enjoy the mountain air and surrounding 2,500-plus-metre peaks before retracing your path to your car.



Map: BC Parks



Banff Lake Louise Tourism/Paul Zizka Photography

Hike
8

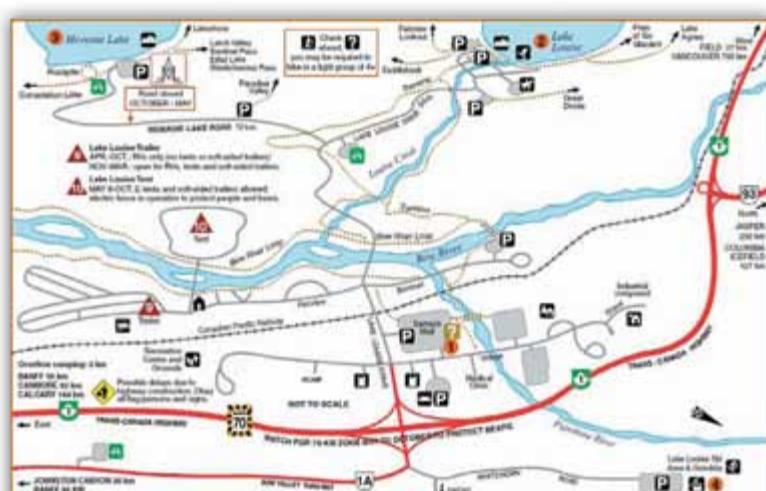
Plain of the Six Glaciers

Location: Banff National Park, Alberta

Length: 12 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Starting at the busy Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, follow the emerald shoreline to the far end (where the crowds thin) to begin your climb. Switchbacks treat you to monumental views over the lake, glaciers and pyramidal peaks. You may even spot a shaggy mountain goat. Reward yourself with a cuppa at Lady Agnes Tea House at the top, and continue for an additional 1.5 kilometres to the worthy Victoria Glacier viewpoint. This national parks classic hike never loses its luster, no matter how many hiking boots tread its path.



Map: Parks Canada



Parks Canada/Ryan Bray

Hike
9

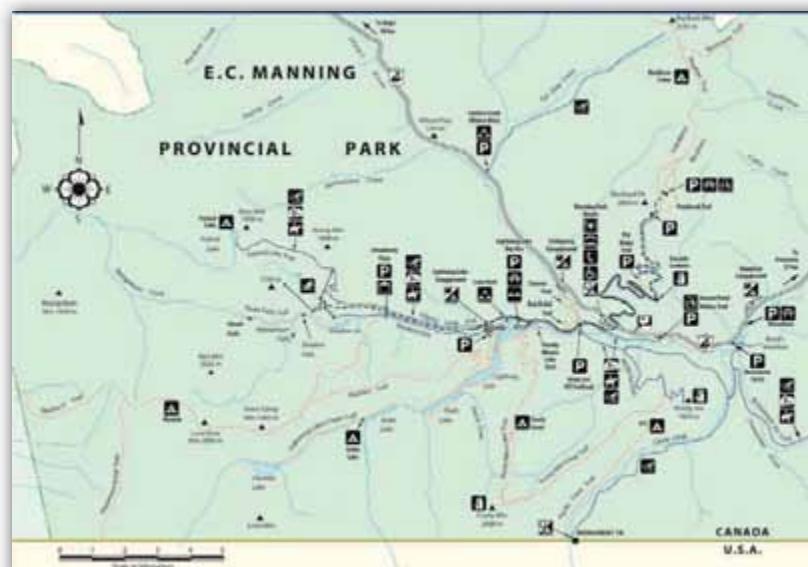
Skyline Trail

Location: Jasper National Park, Alberta

Length: 42 km

Difficulty:

The 42-kilometre-long Skyline Trail is Jasper National Park's signature backpacking trail—a scenic showpiece that meanders above the treeline for more than half of its distance. Expect a workout—the elevation gain from Maligne Lake is more than 1,200 metres—but it's worth it, as one of the most stunning of all hikes in Canada's Rocky Mountain national parks. Pack your camera—this trek is home to woodland caribou, grizzly bears and grey wolves. While some intrepid folks have jaunted through the trail in a day, most spend two to three days in this high-elevation (2,510 metres maximum) environment to fully appreciate its beauty. The trailhead is at Maligne Lake; backcountry permit is required for camping. The trail is linear, so book transport with Maligne Shuttle.



Map: BC Parks

A close-up photograph of yellow tamarack tree branches against a blue sky. The branches are densely packed with bright yellow needles.

Dave Webb

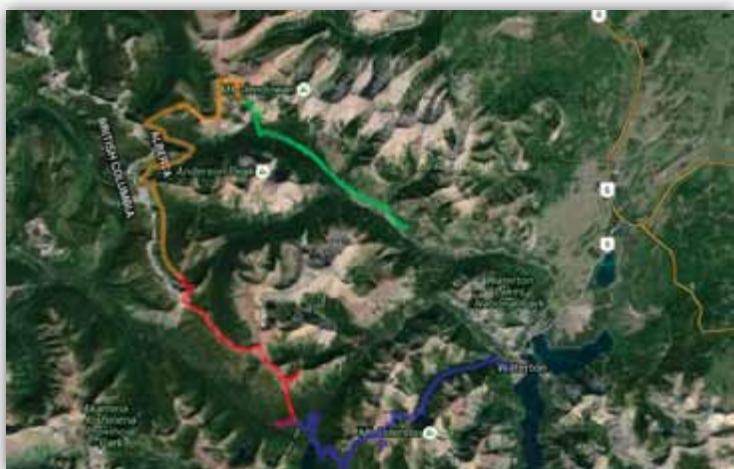
Hike
10

Tamarack Trail

Location: Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta

Length: 32 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Map: Google Maps

This is the premier multi-day hike in Waterton Lakes National Park—it's particularly popular in autumn, as the Tamarack tree, otherwise known as the larch, is in fall blaze during that time and is abundant throughout the route. To access, take the Tamarack Hikers Shuttle to the Red Rock Canyon trailhead (the route is one-way). From the trailhead, this path takes you through vibrant larch trees and evergreens, over sprawling alpine meadows, through rockbound peaks—this is Waterton's highest-elevation trail—and back to the townsite. There are three campsites along the route; backcountry permits are required.



Hike
11

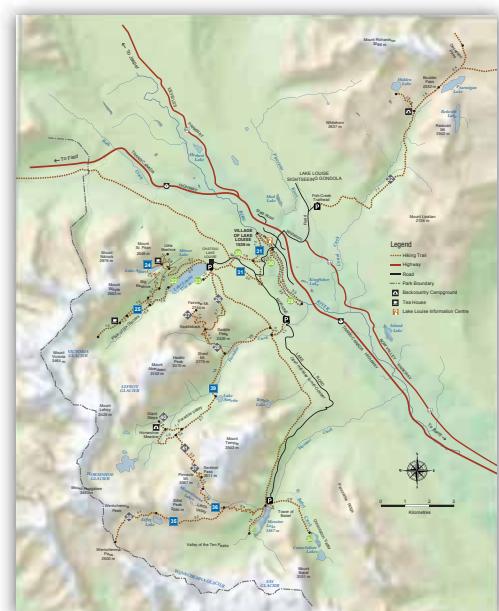
Larch Valley-Sentinel Pass

Location: Banff National Park, Alberta

Length: 12 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

The Rocky Mountain's larch trees are the most spectacular of all Canada's fall foliage—as their needles turn from green to gold (the only conifer to do so) they seem to glow like Christmas lights. Combine this with postcard Rockies' scenery and it's no wonder Larch Valley-Sentinel Pass is one of Banff's most sought-after day hikes—though it's stunning throughout the season, fall colours or not. Stretching for 12 kilometres from the parking lot on Moraine Lake Road, don't let the hike's popularity fool you into thinking it's a cakewalk. Grizzlies are known to roam the area, and it has an elevation gain of more than 700 metres. The trail starts alongside glacial Moraine Lake, before giving up views of the famous Valley of the Ten Peaks. Chase after 3,500-metre Mount Temple for a few hours and you'll reach Sentinel Pass and a knee-weakening panorama of Paradise Valley. Beat the crowds—hit it on a weekday.



Map: Parks Canada



Tourism Saskatchewan

Hike
12

The Boreal Trail

Location: Meadow Lake Provincial Park, Saskatchewan

Length: 120 km

Difficulty: ♦♦♦♦♦



Officially opened five years ago, the 120-kilometre Boreal Trail is Saskatchewan Parks' only officially designated backpacking trail. Meandering through lush Meadow Lake Provincial Park, a 1,600-square-kilometre beauty in the province's northwest, hikers can choose to embark on a multi-day tour of this east-west route—spending days beneath poplar, jack pine and spruce trees and falling asleep to a loon's call at one of the plentiful back- and front-country campsites—or tackle it in smaller stages for easy day-hikes. Keep your camera ready for moose, beaver and wolf sightings and always be Bear Aware; this is big-time bruin country. Terrain is gentle with minimal elevation gains—the challenge comes in the distance. Some front-country campsites feature stores for re-supplying and hot showers. Saskatchewan Parks recommends registering two weeks prior to hiking the trail if you wish to overnight in the backcountry.



Map: Saskatchewan Parks

Tourism Saskatchewan

Hike
13

Grey Owl's Cabin

Location: Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan

Length: 40 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Grey Owl—a.k.a. Englishman Archibald Stansfeld Belaney—may be one of Canada's strangest historical figures; however, his message of conservation, as our country's first naturalist, still rings true. If you'd like to pay homage, take a hike to his cabin and burial site in Prince Albert National Park. Accessed via Kingsmere Road, 33 kilometres from the town of Waskesiu, the route follows the eastern shoreline of Kingsmere Lake, and has three campsites en route plus one at either end. The cabin sits alongside Ajawaan Lake. This is all-backcountry—pack-in, pack-out—though bear caches, firewood and pit-toilets are available at the campsites. Park-use fees and a backcountry camping permit apply. The path is typical Canadian Shield terrain and should take less than six hours each way. For a quicker way to the cabin, a three-hour paddle across Kingsmere Lake, plus a 600-metre portage to Ajawaan Lake, bypasses the hiking route.



Map: Saskatchewan Parks

 Travel Manitoba

 **Hike**
14

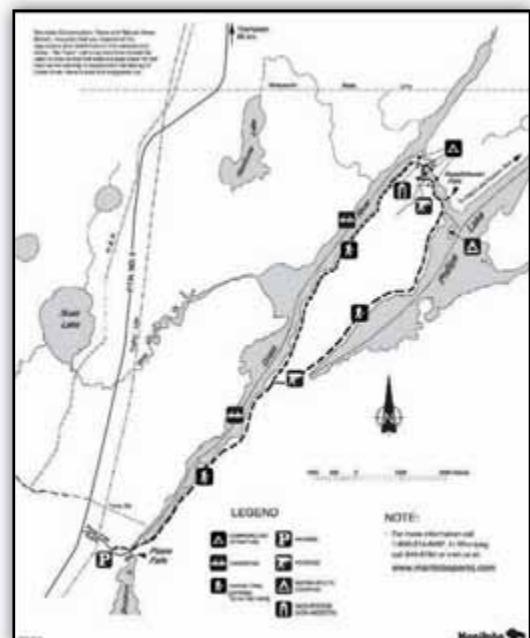
Pisew Falls to Kwasitchewan Falls

Location: Paint Lake & Pisew Falls Provincial Parks, Manitoba

Length: 22 km

Difficulty: 

The eight hours it'll take you to drive to Pisew Falls Provincial Park from Winnipeg (via Highway 6) has a way of thinning out the crowds, as does the 22 kilometres of backcountry trails between the province's two highest waterfalls—you may just find your party totally alone. The trailhead starts at 13-metre-high Pisew Falls, proof there are elevation changes in this pancake province, before winding through 22 kilometres of marked trail en route to the 14-metre-high Kwasitchewan Falls. Camp overnight at one of the free backcountry campsites here; some industrious trekkers have knocked this route off in a day. Pack-in, pack-out; pit toilets are available at the campsite. This hike follows the Grass River, a famous 18th century fur-trading route.



Map: Government of Manitoba



© Travel Manitoba

Hike
15

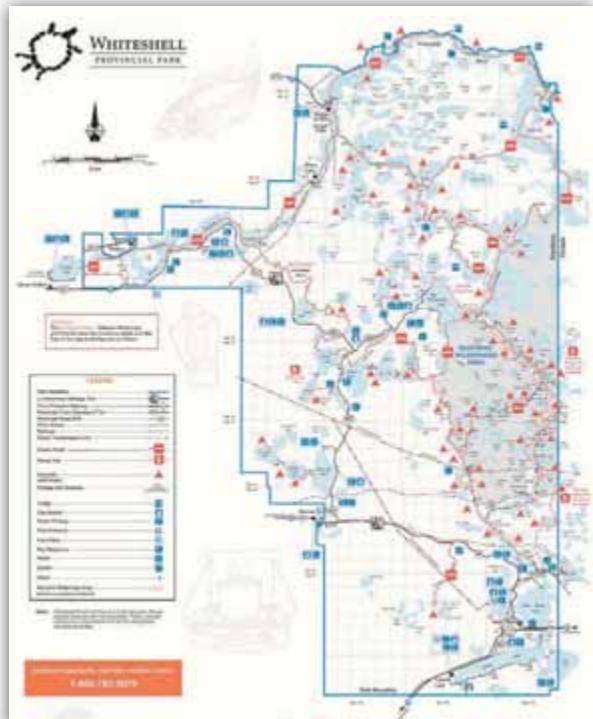
The Mantario Trail

Location: Whiteshell Provincial Park, Manitoba

Length: 66 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Whether you choose to tackle the three- or four-day end-to-end route of Manitoba's classic backpacking route or knock-off a day-trip segment, the Mantario Trail delivers a hard-hiking challenge only two-and-a-half hours' drive east of Winnipeg. Despite being reasonably well-known and relatively close to the province's largest city, it's far from crowded. Expect heaving Precambrian Shield terrain, granite cliffs, beaver dams, fallen timber, peat bogs, steep gullies, jack pines and maple trees. There are 10 primitive campsites along the route, with fire pits and food storage boxes and, maybe, a picnic table or two. The trail is well-marked, and water can be accessed at many points throughout. Parking is at the north and south trailhead—keep in mind this is not a loop; you'll have to arrange return transport. The Mantario Trail is best in fall, as spring's floods can be troublesome and summer's bugs are brutal.



Map: Manitoba Parks & Natural Areas



Hike
16

Highland Backpacking Trail

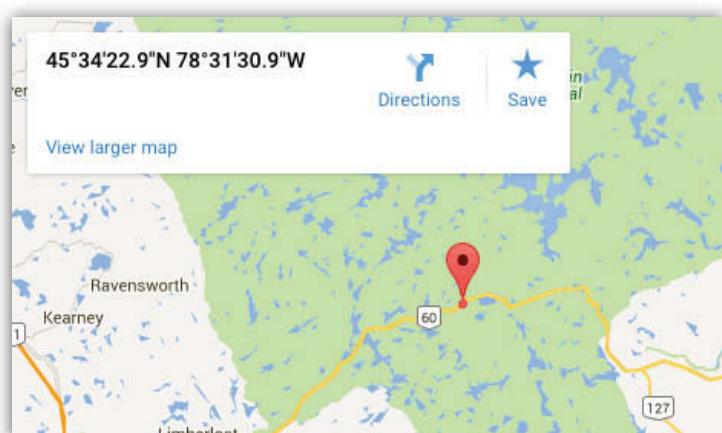
Location: Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario

Length: 19 or 35 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Offering two loops, 19 or 35 kilometres, this is a challenging multi-day backpacking route. The trailhead begins near the well-serviced Mew Lake Campground (near the Bat Lake trailhead). Expect several steep climbs and technical sections throughout; keep your camera ready for various birdlife, including owls, hiding in the dense trees. You can loop back after camping at Provoking Lake (19 kilometres return trip) or continue on for the full loop, which takes you past Head and Harness Lakes (35 kilometres return). Expect plenty of viewpoints and several waterfalls; an Interior Camping Permit is required to overnight on the route.



Map: Google Maps



Wikimedia Commons

Hike
17

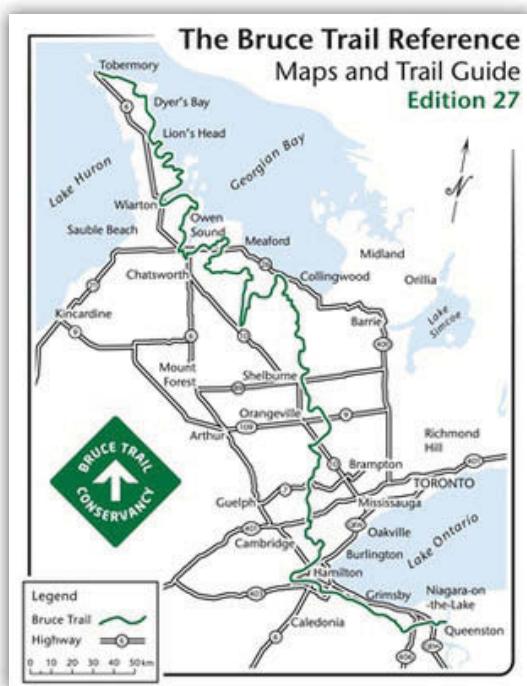
Bruce Trail

Location: Southern Ontario

Length: 885 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

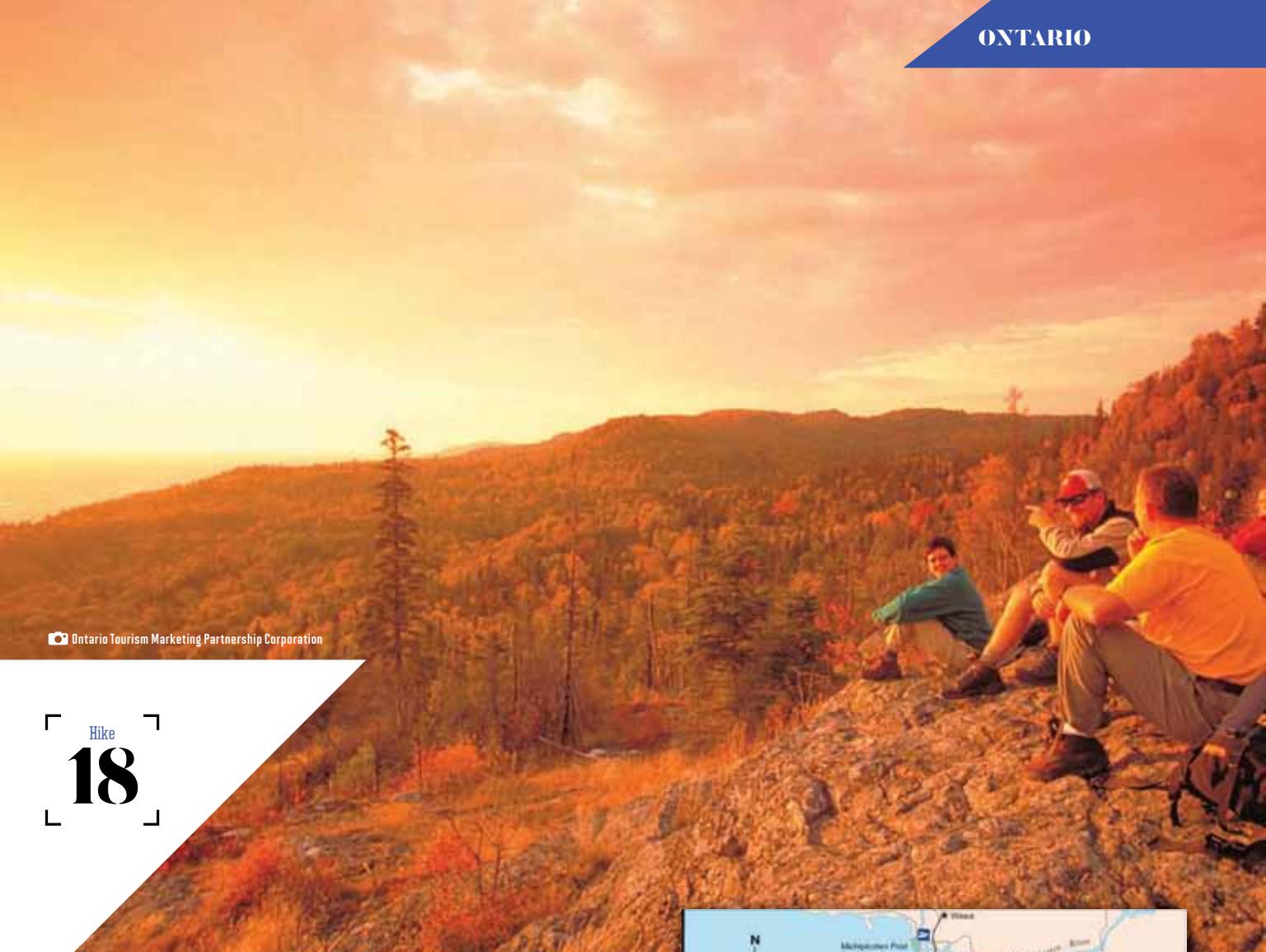
You can certainly try to hike the entire 885-kilometre-long Bruce Trail in one non-stop effort. People have done it. But most tend to bite off smaller chunks—a day hike here, a weekend there, camping or staying at hotels and B&Bs along the way. Revel in the lush Carolinian forest, enjoy views of Lake Ontario in the south and Georgian Bay in the north, and generally appreciate the serenity along Canada's oldest and longest continuous footpath. Some of the most remote trails are found



Map: Bruce Trail Conservancy



on the Peninsula Section; the views from the Blue Mountains are jaw-dropping; and routes along the Niagara Escarpment lead to world-famous wineries. Waterfall hunters should head to the Iroquoia Section—but really, you can't go wrong on the Bruce. (And the fall leaf show is spectacular!) Looking for a short leg to start? Try the six-kilometer Cape-Dundas Loop, on the Bruce Peninsula.



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Hike
18

Coastal Trail

Location: Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario

Length: 60 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

One of Ontario's most scenic hikes, the Coastal Trail follows the rocky shores of Lake



Superior for just over 60 kilometres, treating trekkers to expansive vistas, secluded cobblestone or sandy beaches, dizzying lookouts and challenging terrain. Access the Coastal Trail at Agawa Bay if you'd like to hike the whole route, or, day-hikes can be done from points along the trail, such as Sinclair Cove, Katherine Cove or Agawa, but you'll have to retrace your steps; there are no loops. The trail is well-marked by blue-diamond signs; it generally follows the coastline if you get sidetracked. Almost all of the backcountry campsites feature sunset views; bald eagles are particularly abundant along the trail. Warp and Gargantua Bays are especially worthy of exploration; set up camp here and enjoy day's worth of side trips, if you can spare the time.



Map: Ontario Parks



© Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation

Hike
19

Top of the Giant (Kabeyun Trail)

Location: Sleeping Giant Provincial Park, Ontario

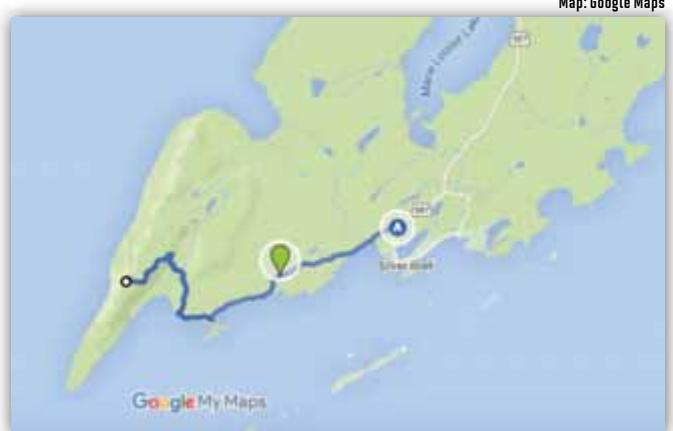
Length: 22 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

This is the signature hike of Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. Located near Thunder Bay, on Highway 587, ensure you've packed plenty of water and your cardio is up to snuff before tackling this heavy-duty hike—the reward is a panorama of Lake Superior from one of the highest points in Ontario. Featuring 300 metres of elevation gain, this hike starts at the South Kabeyun trailhead, which meanders alongside the lake until Tee Harbour; but don't be fooled by the relatively easy start. After this seven-kilometre jaunt, you'll hit the Talus Lake Trail, and the route will begin to slope decidedly



Map: Google Maps



upwards. The next section is a steep, zigzagging route, followed by a slightly less intense cool-down path to the lookout. Eat your picnic lunch next to the 200-metre cliffs and stand in awe of colossal, deep-blue Lake Superior. Return the way you came. Note: if you want to expedite your trek, mountain bike along the Kabeyun Trail, then hike from Tee Harbour onward.



Dave Sproutle

Hike
20

La Cloche Silhouette Trail

Location: Killarney Provincial Park, Ontario

Length: 100 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Map: Google Maps



Trailling 100 kilometres though some of Killarney Provincial Park's hilliest terrain, La Cloche Silhouette Trail is a stout challenge for experienced hikers. Starting in the west, the linear route rambles through forested hills toward scenic lakes. You may have to cross a few streams; excellent wildlife-watching abounds. Soon, you'll be enjoying views of Georgian Bay as you hike over billion-year-old pink granite. In the eastern section, the trail ascends towards The Crack. The sparkling white quartzite cliffs are worth the effort; this area was once higher than the Rocky Mountains. There are 54 campsites along the route (permit required). Fall is the best time to tackle La Cloche, for the vivid foliage and nightly wolf-howls.



Hike
21

Les Lacs & Les Cretes

Location: Forillon National Park, Quebec

Length: 16 to 17 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Map: Sepaq

Tucked away at the edge of Quebec's Gaspe Peninsula, Forillon offers not only exemplary Maritime scenery, it's also a gateway to the International Appalachian Trail. Experienced hikers should head to Les Lacs (17 kilometres one-way) or Les Cretes (16 or 18 kilometres, one-way) Trails. Les Lacs follows the Riviere Morris Valley, has a wilderness campsite about six kilometres along and passes Lac au Renard, Penouille and other scenic stillwaters before connecting to the 3,058-kilometre-long Appalachian Trail. As a more mountainous route, Les Cretes offers vistas of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Anse-au-Griffon Valley, has campsites at five and 10 kilometres along and connects to other trails (such as Les Graves) leading to the easternmost tip of the park, which stabs like a pointed finger into Gaspé Bay.





flickr.com/photos/mikeab/

Hike
22



Deux-Criques Trail

Location: La Mauricie National Park, Quebec

Length: 17 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Come autumn, Quebec's La Mauricie National Park, near Shawinigan, is an explosion of vibrant reds, oranges, yellows and gold—and Deux-Criques (Two Creeks) Trail could offer up some of the best views in all the Laurentians. A challenging day-hike suitable for trekkers with strong cardio and a willingness to climb, the trailhead is located near Riviere a la Peche Campground and will take you on an uphill march for the next 8.5 kilometres. Expect some well-maintained stairs and scramble-worthy rock sections and you'll have to ford a creek (which is at its lowest in fall)—but the payoff is multiple lookout points (many with platforms or benches), including Ruisseau de Fou Falls. The campground at the trailhead offers secluded sites (some with electricity), kitchen shelters, drinking water, flush toilets and showers.





© David Webb

Hike
23

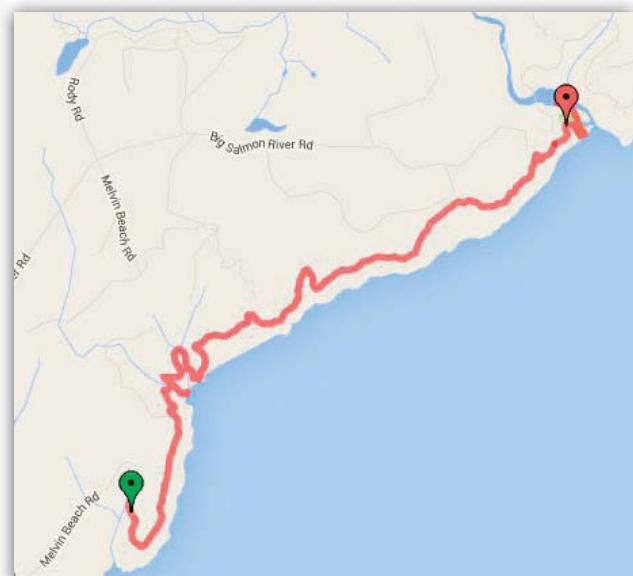
Fundy Footpath

Location: Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick

Length: 42 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

The time to hike New Brunswick's Fundy Footpath is now. Still relatively unknown, you can expect near-total solitude on this difficult, four-day, 42-kilometre trek along the Bay of Fundy coastline. But word is getting out—and for good reason. Vistas from atop 100-metre-tall sea cliffs; empty beaches manipulated by extreme Fundy tides; thick mixed-woods forests—and did we mention zero crowds? This is for experienced hikers only. If your skill level isn't quite there, try day-hikes on the nearby Fundy Trail—a maintained mixed-use network accessible for most people that still offers those wonderful views.



Map: Google Maps



Hike
24

Mount Carleton

Location: Mount Carleton Provincial Park, New Brunswick

Length: 10 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Set amid 1,700-square-kilometres of Acadian woodlands and the continent's oldest mountains, this Maritime high point offers a boundless view atop its namesake provincial park, stretching to nearby Mount Sagamook and Mount Head. The 10-kilometre route presents an intermediate-level challenge, and the 820-metre peak is adorned with an old fire tower. Two trail options lead from the parking lot to the top; make this summit-hike a loop for a change of scenery on the return jaunt.



Parks Canada/Eric Le Bell

Hike
25

Liberty Lake Trail

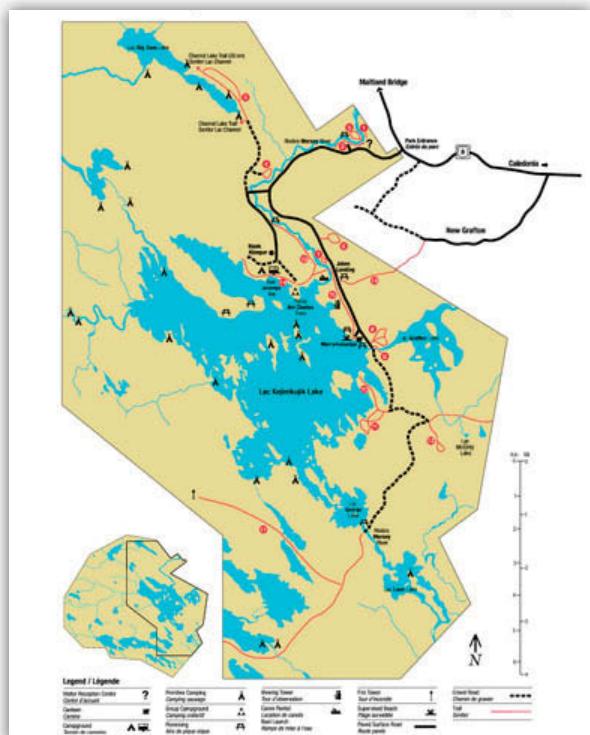
Location: Kejimkujik National Park, Nova Scotia

Length: 64 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

More than 80 per cent of Nova Scotia's Kejimkujik National Park is classified as "backcountry" and there are 46 designated campsites that can only be accessed via canoe or booteather. At each, expect tent pads, fire pits, pit privy and cables to hoist your food clear of bears. So, when exploring the traditional home of the Mi'kmaq, where does one start? For the quintessential Keji experience, tackle the 64-kilometre Liberty Lake Trail. There are 11 options for backcountry camping along the route; though three or four nights out is a good rule of thumb.

Lakes, babbling brooks, loons and moose will be your companions as you loop your way through mixed softwoods en route to Campsite 42—the most remote in the park's entire 404-square-kilometres. Bonus: Kejimkujik is a Dark Sky Preserve, so the night-time scenery rivals the daytime.



Map: Parks Canada



Hike
26

Fishing Cove Trail

Location: Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Nova Scotia

Length: 6 to 18 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



From the top of 355-metre Mackenzie Mountain, this trail winds through mixed-woods forest alongside the Fishing Cove River en route to Cape Breton Highlands National Park's only designated wilderness campsite. On a clearing next to a serene ocean cove and pebble beach (once home to a Scottish fishing village), set up your tent for a pleasant overnight while you explore the beaches and inlets of the

Map: Parks Canada



Cape Breton coastline. You'll need to pack in your own water, as well as a camp stove, as fires are not permitted. Pit toilets are available. There are effectively three options for tackling this trail: a six- or 12-kilometre trail, both returning the way they came, or an 18-kilometre route, but this linear route requires a vehicle shuttle.



Tourism Newfoundland & Labrador/Barrett & MacKay Photo

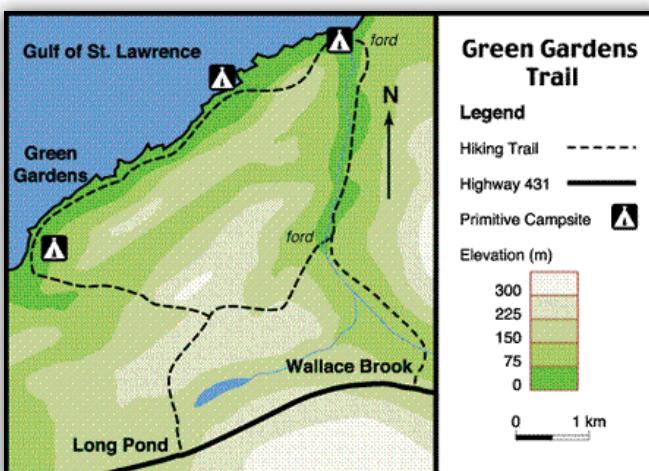
Hike
27

Green Gardens Trail

Location: Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland & Labrador

Length: 9 or 16 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Map: Parks Canada

Green Gardens Trail may just offer the best overview of Gros Morne National Park's dramatic and varied terrain. There are two options, the more popular Long Pond Trail (nine kilometres return) or the more challenging—you will have to make two stream crossings—Wallace Brook Trail (16 kilometres return). Green Gardens opens with the barren Tablelands before winding through boreal forest en route to the volcanically-shaped coastline Gros Morne is famous for. Sea stacks and jagged cliffs border the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as do fields of wildflowers with the occasional grazing sheep, shepherded by local farmers. There are three backcountry campsites on the coastline, with pit toilets and picnic tables. Fires are permitted on the beach. Explore the coastline for a day before trudging back through the all-uphill return trail.



Tourism Newfoundland & Labrador

Hike
28

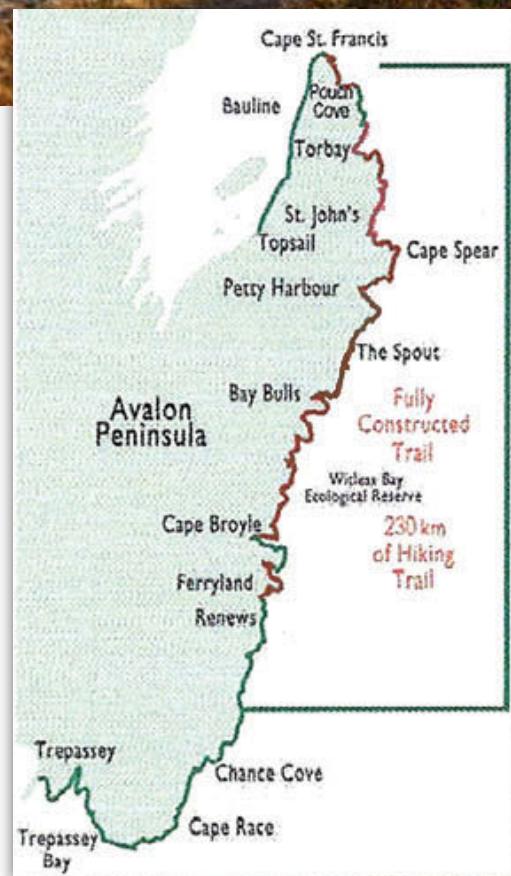
The East Coast Trail

Location: **Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland & Labrador**

Length: **265 km**

Difficulty: **◆◆◆◆◆**

Nefoundland's East Coast Trail runs south from Cape St. Francis, on the tip of the Avalon Peninsula, tracing the rugged Atlantic coastline for 265 well-marked and maintained kilometres to Cappahayden. Cute lighthouses, fluttering puffins and, offshore, leviathan whales and maybe even icebergs are just a few highlights. If you're especially lucky, you may even spot the world's southernmost caribou herd. Camp, or book B&B stays along the way and enjoy Newfoundland hospitality. And if you're adventurous, you can continue on the "under construction" portion, an additional 275 kilometres that will one-day be as well-marked as the inaugural half.



Map: Hiking Newfoundland



Hike
29

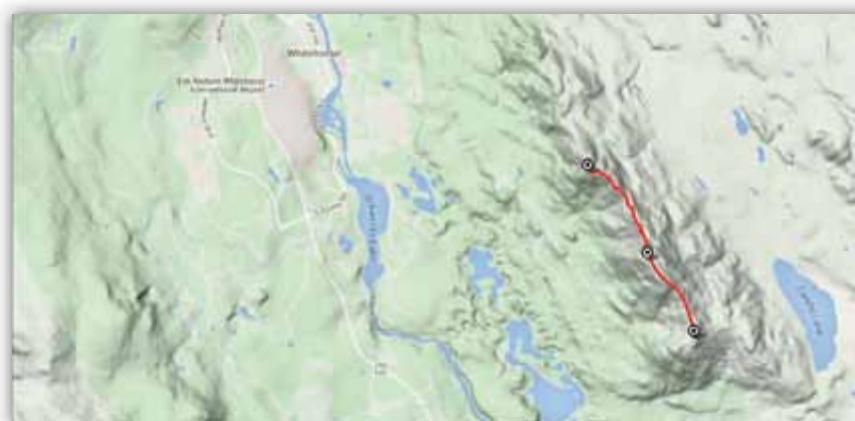
Grey Mountain

Location: **Whitehorse, Yukon**

Length: **6 or 12 km**

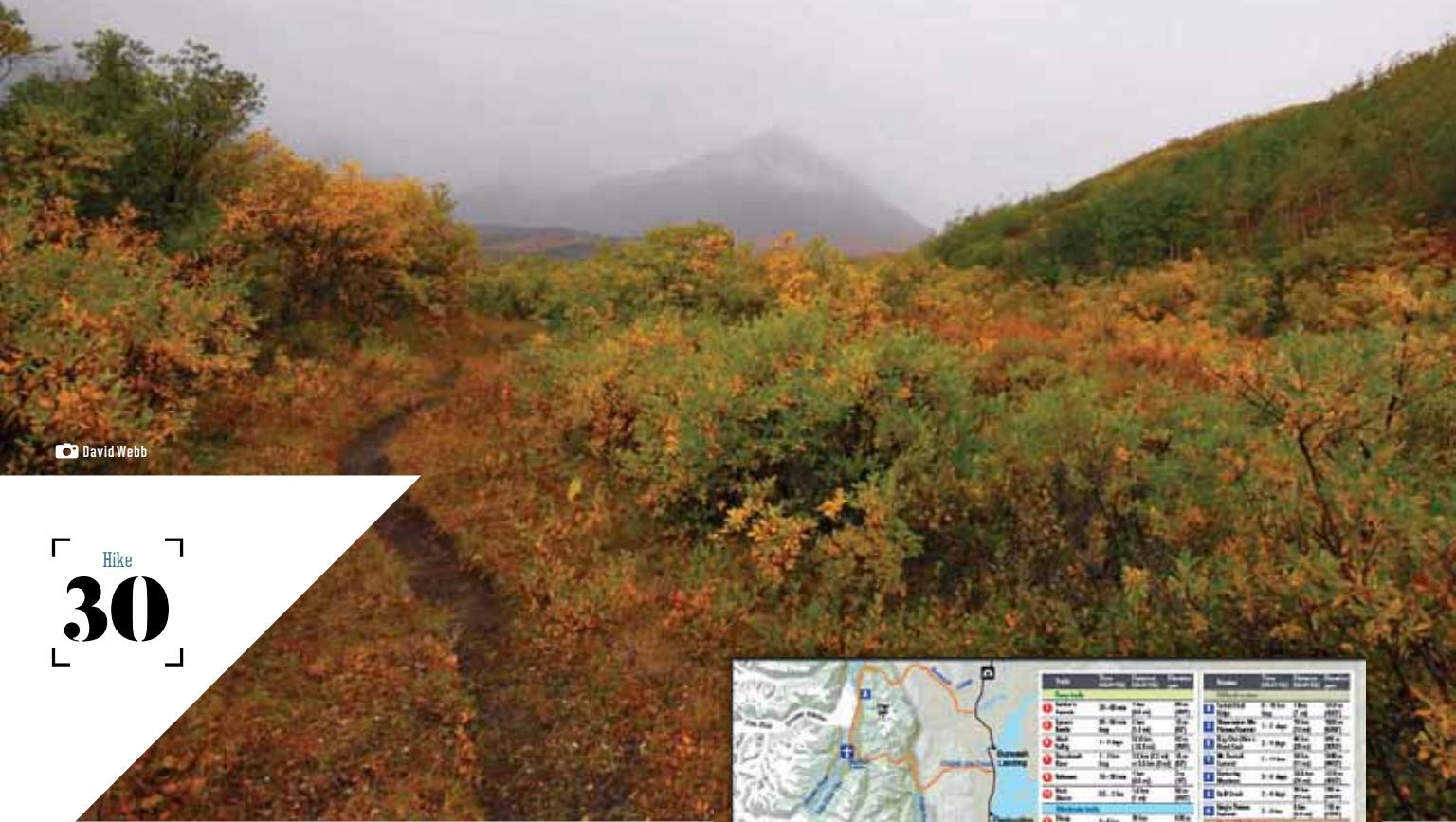
Difficulty: **◆◆◆◆◆**

Noted for being the closest alpine hike to Whitehorse, Grey Mountain offers visitors to The Wilderness City a chance to escape for a day, enjoy some classic Yukon terrain and challenge themselves with some steep climbs and ridgeline trekking before returning to their comfy hotel or campsite at day's end. A four-wheel-drive is not essential for reaching the trailhead, but it is a good idea—it is located about 10 kilometres outside of the city, on Grey Mountain Road. The path starts on a steep, decommissioned road before opening up on the ridge-hike to the summit. If you want to keep going, a third peak about three kilometres past the summit offers views of downtown Whitehorse. The trail can be difficult to discern at times and remember, this is bear country.



Map: Google Map





Hike
30

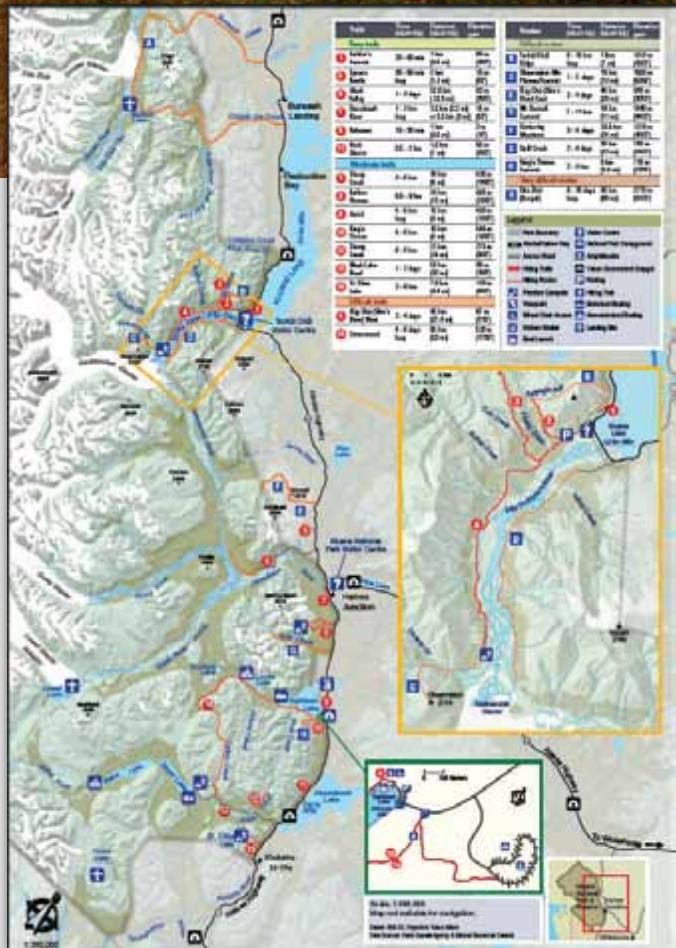
Auriol Trail

Location: Kluane National Park, Yukon

Length: 15 or 19 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

For an introduction to Kluane National Park, hike the popular Auriol Trail, located about seven kilometres southwest of Haines Junction. (By “popular,” we mean perhaps 20 to 30 people in the area at one time, during peak summer season.) This trail carves a 15-kilometre loop into the Auriol Mountain Range’s sub-alpine, with a optional two-kilometre offshoot that climbs into the alpine for an outstanding mountain view. With only 400 metres of elevation gain, it’s an easy entry to Kluane’s wilderness; expect to spend about five hours on the hike. One backcountry campsite is located on the trail. In the winter, it is also used as a cross-country ski and snowshoe trail.





Hike
31

Montana Mountain Trail

Location: **Carcross, Yukon**

Length: **15 km**

Difficulty: **◆◆◆◆◆**



Most often noted for mountain biking, the multi-use trails on Montana Mountain offer fantastic hiking with above-treeline vistas. The moderate-intensity summit-hike is about 15 kilometres long and requires a capable vehicle to access the trailhead. Keep an eye out for caribou as you ramble through a moonscape to this stratovolcano's 2,205-metre summit; the environment is particularly remarkable in fall colours. In fact, this trail is best hiked in late-July through early September, after the bugs have died down and before the weather turns foul. (Be careful—some trails are mountain-bike only!)



Map: Montana Mountain

© Government of Yukon

Hike
32

Grizzly Lake to Talus Lakes

Location: Tombstone Territorial Park, Yukon

Length: 45 km (or more)

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

Let the stunning, broken-glass peaks of the Tombstone Mountains be your motivation as you sweat through this off-trail backpacking route. You'll start in boreal forest before reaching scrubby birch and willow trees and finally into the tundra. Over the next two days, viewpoints from Glissade and Grizzly pass are your rewards for the often-challenging conditions. Watch out for grizzlies, and you may even spot migrating caribou. There are three campsites along the trail: Grizzly, Divide and Talus Lakes. Truly, this is one of Yukon's signature hikes.



Map: Google Map



© Spectacular Northwest Territories

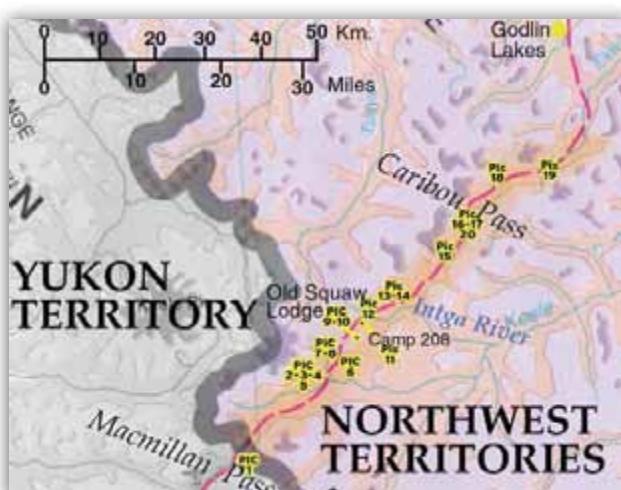
Hike
33

Canol Heritage Trail

Location: Northwest Territories/Yukon

Length: 350 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆ +



Map: MotorcycleExplorer.com

The Canol Heritage Trail may well be the most challenging trail in this book. For starters, it's long. Like, really long. Also, it requires either a fly-in or fly-out, or both, if you sprain your ankle. It also usually requires food drops, extreme self-sufficiency and bear spray (grizzlies and black bears). The route follows an old industry road, unmaintained since 1945, so expect the occasional rusting hulk and oil barrel along the way. But mostly, it's all taiga, tundra, mountains and moose. And it's for experienced backpackers only. (Note: two explore magazine contributors rode this route on mountain bikes in a record-setting eight days, sans food drops; an award-nominated story we published in our Fall 2013 issue.)



Enviro Foto (J.F. Bergeron)

Hike
34

Ingraham Trail Hikes

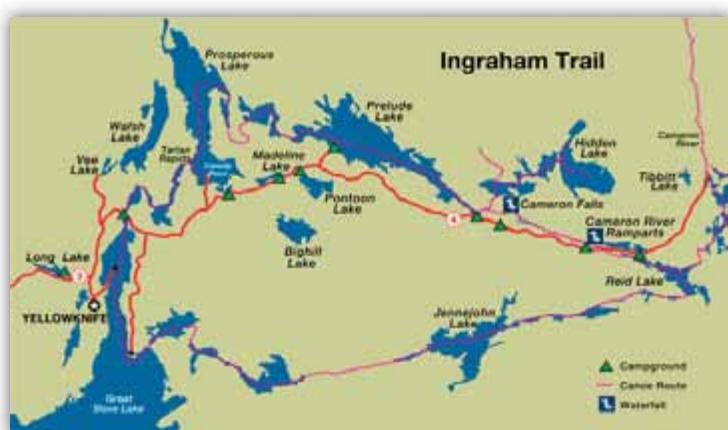
Location: Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Length: 0.7 to 3 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆

summit of a pink-granite dome. Prelude Lake Nature Trail, located 30 kilometres east of Yellowknife, is a three-kilometre jaunt through Canadian Shield granite and vibrant woodlands. Reid Lake Trail is near the terminus of Ingraham Trail and is less than one kilometre in length, but the glacial-scarred rocks and serene lake are worth the interlude; a campsite is located here. Beyond this, the road ends—and, in winter, the famous Ice Road begins.

Rather than a single route, this is a series of hikes found on the Ingraham Trail—an all-season road leading east from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The highway, covering a length of 70 kilometres (each way) is home to true northern wilderness—more than a dozen lakes, plus picnic spots, campgrounds, canoe routes and hiking trails. Ranney Hill-Martin Lake Trail, seven kilometres from Yellowknife, will work up a sweat with its 2.5-kilometre route that culminates with a short climb to the



Map: Visit Yellowknife



 flickr.com/photos/31856336@N03/

Hike
35

Akshayuk Pass

Location: Auyittuq National Park, Nunavut

Length: 97 km

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆



Though Auyittuq is Inuktitut for “the land that never melts,” during the short summer season there is plenty of snow-free hiking to be found within Auyittuq National Park’s 19,000-square-kilometres of Arctic terrain. Akshayuk Pass is the most popular route in the park—if the word “popular” can be applied to this 10-day, 97-kilometre trek that carves between imposing peaks and permanent icefields. Rising sharply from the tundra, mountains such as Overlord, Asgard and Thor appear, well, godlike. Best news: unlike some of Nunavut’s other parks, Akshayuk Pass doesn’t require a charter flight. Just catch a scheduled flight to Pangnirtung then arrange a boat ride into the park.



Map: Trail Dino