



nature's artistry

BANFF, ALBERTA

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There's a magic to Banff, Alberta that's undeniable. But come autumn, Mother Nature's masterpieces intensify. As the summer crowds fade, Banff National Park transforms into a wilderness of golden larch trees, frost-kissed mountain peaks, and hushed trails that seem made just for you.



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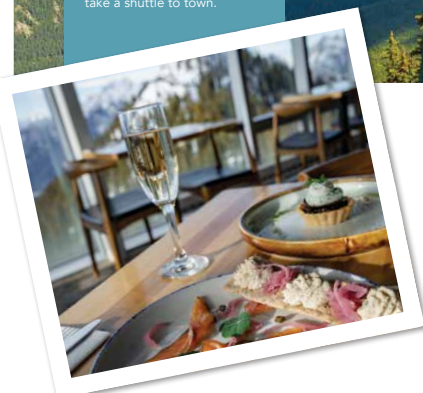
when to visit & top tips

Visit late September through early October for brilliant foliage or early November for light skiing and snowy serenity.

Fall weather can swing wildly, so pack layers of clothing appropriate for sun, rain, and snow.

Grab your National Park Pass online (or in person) for access to the area parks and scenic drives.

To get there, fly into Calgary International Airport (YYC)—roughly 90 miles from Banff—then drive or take a shuttle to town.



Photography provided by (opening spread) Marmemores/Getty Images, (these pages, from left) Lisa Marie/Stock/Getty Images, SL Photography/Stock/Getty Images, Sky Bianco by Pursuit

THESE PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Downtown Banff framed by the Rockies. Rise above it all—Banff Gondola to Sulphur Mountain offers views that lift your spirits. Fine wine, fresh bites, and a view that steals the spotlight.



Located in the Canadian Rockies, Banff is a four-season playground, but its shoulder season—spanning late September to early November—is arguably the most captivating. Alpine lakes mirror brilliant forests, and the buzz of the summer months gives way to serene solitude.

Autumn in Banff is defined by its larch trees—deciduous conifers that flash gold before shedding their needles. For photographers and hikers alike, this narrow seasonal window captures the Rockies at their most photogenic. One of the best places to experience this is Larch Valley, a breathtaking hike near Moraine Lake. The five-mile trail winds through a fairy-tale forest, where golden treetops contrast sharply with rugged peaks.

Another great hike for all levels is Johnson Canyon, which features multiple waterfalls without large elevation gain. Roundtrip to lower and upper falls is one to two hours for a three-mile hike.

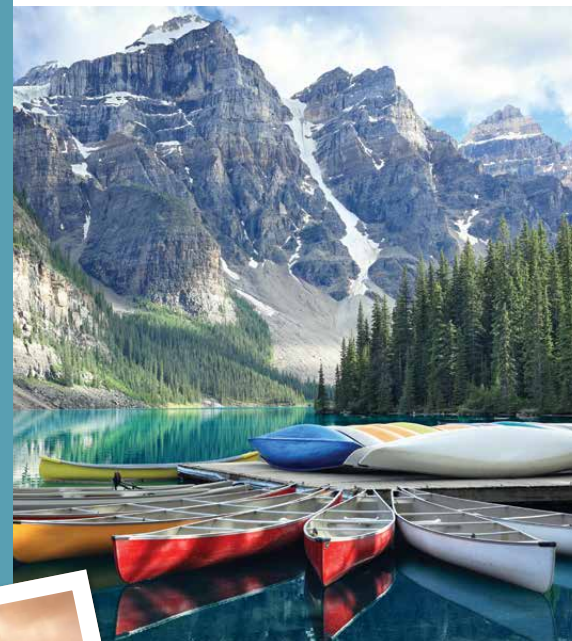
The Banff Gondola—just a five-minute shuttle ride from the town of Banff—lifts you to the summit of Sulphur Mountain for once-in-a-lifetime aerial views. Once you're at the top, stroll the boardwalk to capture



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outdoor adventures

Looking for more outdoor experiences to add to your itinerary? Grab a set of binoculars and do some wildlife watching; elk, sheep, and eagles are active in the cooler months. For a full-day scenic drive, head to the Icefield Parkway; get gas and download maps before departing as there is no cell service on the parkway. Move from land to water to canoe Lake Louise; enjoy a peaceful paddle before winter freezes the glacial waters.



Photography provided by Getty Images, these pages, from left: Lisa Marie/Stock, Brian Aikison/Stock, Andrew Bondaragan/Stock

THESE PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A quiet spot for reflection. Paddle into a postcard with the turquoise waters and alpine surroundings of Lake Louise. Wildflowers bloom beneath the towering peaks of Banff's Canadian Rockies.

dramatic panoramic shots for your social media or holiday card. Before returning to base camp, fuel up on grab-and-go fare at Castle Mountain Coffee or enjoy an elegant meal at the award-winning Sky Bistro.

As temperatures dip in November, Banff gently shifts into early winter. Snow begins to blanket the higher elevations, ski resorts like Mount Norquay start prepping their lifts, and the town of Banff settles into cozy mode.

Ready for a soul-warming reward after a day exploring hiking trails or paddling on postcard-worthy Lake Louise? There's nothing quite like soaking in Banff Upper Hot Springs with steam swirling around alpine vistas. This hot spot brings the crowds, so plan accordingly outside of peak hours and during the week.

Banff is where nature's artistry is on full display—each season brushing the landscape with bold strokes of wonder. Whether wrapped in golden autumn hues or winter's snow-covered slopes, Banff reminds us that beauty is always in season. ①