

HIKING IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

YOHO VALLEY TRAILS

Trails in the Yoho Valley area depart from the Takakkaw Falls parking lot, roughly 12 km past Cathedral Mountain Lodge via Yoho Valley Road. This section of Yoho Valley Road is only open seasonally from mid-June to mid-October, and due to tight switchbacks, RVs and trailers are not permitted. Next to the parking lot is a picnic area and outhouse washrooms.

TAKKAKAW FALLS



Distance Roundtrip:
1.4 km (0.9 mi)



Difficulty:
Easy



Time Roundtrip:
15 minutes



Elevation Gain:
40 m (131 ft)

Takakkaw Falls, deriving from the Cree word for “wonderful”, is one of the most prominent waterfalls in the Canadian Rockies. Standing at a total of 373 metres in height, it is the 2nd tallest waterfall in Canada. The short trail from the parking lot is paved and mostly flat, making it easily accessible and a pleasant walk if you are short on time. Please stay on the trail and exercise caution as the rocks near the base of the falls are slippery.

LAUGHING FALLS



Distance Roundtrip:
8.8 km (5.5 mi)



Difficulty:
Easy



Time Roundtrip:
3 hours



Elevation Gain:
125 m (410 ft)

Laughing Falls is a stunning waterfall located at the end of a forested trail. From the Takakkaw Falls parking lot, walk through the campground to access the trailhead. The trail follows the course of the river for most of the way before encountering several small inclines to reach the base of the falls. Laughing Falls is located to the left of the trail just before crossing a bridge.

TWIN FALLS



Distance Roundtrip:
16.4 km (10 mi)



Difficulty:
Moderate



Time Roundtrip:
5-6 hours



Elevation Gain:
300 m (984 ft)

Hikers can continue along the trail from Laughing Falls to Twin Falls, where the trail gets slightly narrower and quieter but remains largely level. The Twin Falls are an impressive sight, with a nearby teahouse a short walk from the base of the waterfall. For the energetic, it is possible to continue along the steep and narrow trail from here to the top of the falls. The top of the falls offer panoramic views over this section of the Yoho Valley. From here you can turn around and follow your original trail back, or you can choose to extend your hike by heading towards the Iceline trail.

YOHO LAKE LOOP



Distance Roundtrip:
8.9 km (5.5 mi)



Difficulty:
Difficult



Time Roundtrip:
3-4 hours



Elevation Gain:
560 m (1837 ft)

The trailhead to access Yoho Lake is located behind the Whisky Jack Hostel. Parking is prohibited at the Hostel, so hikers are asked to park at the main Takakkaw Falls parking lot, roughly 200m up the road. The trail leads upwards through steep wooded terrain. We recommend completing this loop counterclockwise. To do so, keep to the right, following signs for Iceline Trail; as you continue to ascend above the treeline, you will enjoy outstanding views looking back to Takakkaw Falls. When you reach the Highline trail junction, cut left back into the forest and down toward Yoho Lake. After enjoying views of the small alpine lake, the loop continues left through the campground towards the end of the lake. After closing the loop, follow the trail back towards the trailhead.

ICELINE TRAIL VIA CELESTE LAKE LOOP



Distance Roundtrip:
16.5 km (10.2 mi)



Difficulty:
Difficult



Time Roundtrip:
7-8 hours



Elevation Gain:
710 m (2329 ft)

A slightly shorter descent from the classic Iceline circuit, bypassing the Little Yoho Valley but taking in Celeste Lake, alpine meadows and sub-alpine forest. A signature circuit climbing to a high bench with spectacular glacier views, descending to meadows in the Little Yoho Valley and returning past Laughing Falls in the Yoho Valley.

EMERALD LAKE TRAILS





Emerald Lake is located roughly 10 km west of Field, B.C. via the Trans-Canada Highway and Emerald Lake Road. Only a short drive from Cathedral Mountain Lodge Emerald Lake, this area offers a variety of trail options for all skill levels and ages.

EMERALD LAKE LOOP

			
Distance Roundtrip: 5.2 km (3.2 mi)	Difficulty: Easy	Time Roundtrip: 2 hours	Elevation Gain: 115 m (377 ft)

The Emerald Lake Loop trail follows the shore of the lake and offers continuous views of the characteristic coloured lake as well as the surrounding mountain peaks. Starting from the main parking turn left to follow the trail clock-wise around the lake. The first half of the trail is wide and well maintained, making it accessible in any weather. Once you reach the far side of the lake the trail becomes narrow, rougher, and if the weather has been wet, muddy.

EMERALD BASIN

			
Distance Roundtrip: 9.2 km (5.7 mi)	Difficulty: Moderate	Time Roundtrip: 3.5 hours	Elevation Gain: 225 m (738 ft)

This trail, which branches off from the Emerald Lake Loop trail, takes you up to an alpine meadow with many native wildflowers, small waterfalls, and imposing mountain views. An excellent option to extend a day at Emerald Lake.

HAMILTON FALLS

			
Distance Roundtrip: 1.6 km (1 mi)	Difficulty: Easy	Time Roundtrip: 45 minutes	Elevation Gain: 114 m (374 ft)

Nestled in a rock-cut gorge, this thin-flowing waterfall is best viewed during the peak runoff period of June to early July. Starting directly from the main parking lot at Emerald Lake, this trail takes hikers up through dense sub-alpine, eventually joining up with Hamilton Creek. From here, follow the trail up the short switchbacks to view the upper tiers of the falls and admire the deep rock-cut gorge.

HAMILTON LAKE



Distance Roundtrip:
11 km (6.8 mi)



Difficulty:
Moderate



Time Roundtrip:
4-5 hours



Elevation Gain:
850 m (2789 ft)

Hikers can continue from Hamilton Falls to Hamilton Lake. The trail is similar to the section between the lower and upper falls in that it is a series of moderate to steep switchbacks in dense wooded terrain. Views on this trail are few and far between but are excellent once found comprising of the entire Emerald Lake Valley over to Yoho and Burgess Passes.

Eventually the trail will level out and begin traversing along the mountainside as you approach the lake itself. Hamilton Lake is set in a dramatic basin surrounded by three impressive peaks Carnarvon, Top-Hat, and Emerald Peak (Left to right). This area is true alpine terrain and a small trail leads off to the right of the lakeshore to the top of a small hill.

From here you can see panoramic views of the Lake as well as the meadows around it.

EMERALD TRIANGLE



Distance Roundtrip:
19.7 km (12.2 mi)



Difficulty:
Difficult



Time Roundtrip:
6-7 hours



Elevation Gain:
880 m (2887 ft)

Departing from Emerald Lake, This composite hike is the premier walk in the Emerald Lake area. Start along the Emerald Lake Loop heading right or counter-clock-wise around the lake.

Watch for the branch in the trail signed for Burgess Pass and ascend the steep switchbacks through wooded terrain that leads to top of this promontory made famous by the shale fossil beds scattered throughout. At the top of the pass you are rewarded with expansive views over the Emerald Lake Area as well as into the Kicking Horse Valley on the other side of the pass.

At the trail junction follow the signs for Yoho Pass/Lake along the Highline Trail. This is a fantastic section of the trail as you largely remain level skirting along the mountainside, the trail is open and you have continuous views of the peaks and glaciers of the area. This trail will take you to Yoho Pass where you can turn left at the junction signed for Emerald Lake. A smooth descent delivers you back onto the Emerald Lake Loop and then to the main parking lot.

OTHER TRAILS IN THE YOHO AREA

Though the two main trailheads in Yoho National Park are Emerald Lake and Takkakaw Falls, there are some other excellent trails with scenic views are located a short drive from Cathedral Mountain Lodge. A trailhead for both Sherbrooke Lake and Paget Lookout is located in the public parking lot on the north side of the Trans-Canada Highway, 10 km east of the Lodge, across from Wapta Lake. The trailhead for Wapta Falls, however, is located in the other direction, 25 km west of the Lodge, just before the town of Golden.

SHERBROOKE LAKE



Distance Roundtrip:
6.2 km (3.9 mi)



Difficulty:
Easy



Time Roundtrip:
3 hours



Elevation Gain:
165 m (541 ft)

Sherbrooke Lake is a beautiful spot, excellent for a quiet picnic or fishing and less crowded than other major destinations. The trails starts in dense wooded forest, gaining a small amount of elevation. At the junction, follow signs for the lake while keeping an eye out for many of the local wildflowers. You will eventually reach a series of boardwalks which will lead you towards the long narrow lake. The lake is hemmed in by Mt. Ogden on the left hand side and Paget Peak on the right.

PAGET LOOKOUT



Distance Roundtrip:
7 km (4.3 mi)



Difficulty:
Moderate



Time Roundtrip:
3 hours



Elevation Gain:
520 m (1706 ft)

This trail is a moderate hike leading up to a decommissioned fire lookout, offering stunning mountain views. Starting from the same trailhead as Sherbrooke Lake, continue along the wooded trail to the junction, and turn right following the signs for Paget Lookout. From here, the trail starts to ascend more rapidly and offers the occasional viewpoint out across the valley at the impressive mountain range. After a section with intermittent switchbacks, the trail slowly levels out and reaches a small white hut which once served as a fire lookout for the area. This viewpoint offers a unique view up the Bow, Kicking Horse, and O'Hara Valleys.

WAPTA FALLS



Distance Roundtrip:
4.6 km (2.9 mi)



Difficulty:
Easy



Time Roundtrip:
1.5 hours



Elevation Gain:
30 m (98 ft)

The trailhead for Wapta Falls is located just before the town of Golden. If you are headed westbound on the Trans Canada Highway, the trailhead is not marked and there is no left turn lane - you will need to continue 3km up the highway for a safe place to turn around and access the entrance as you drive back eastbound. This short, well travelled trail offers a beautiful view of Wapta falls. For most of the trail there is very little incline, however towards the end of the hike there is a steep section to get to the bottom of the falls.