

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



CANADIAN ROCKIES EXPLORER

AUGUST 31–SEPTEMBER 10, 2022

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS: Glacier National Park, Banff National Park, Lake Louise

- Ride in Glacier National Park's famed Red Jammers and experience breathtaking views along the Going-to-the-Sun Road
- Visit the world-renowned Lake Louise in Banff National Park
- View Maligne Canyon, a geological marvel where the limestone bedrock has been eroded by several underground rivers
- Board the *Ice Explorer* all-terrain vehicle for the ride to Athabasca Glacier – the most-visited glacier in North America

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Level 3

STUDY LEADER: To be announced

ACCOMMODATES: 24 guests. *This is a Harvard exclusive program.*

PRICING:

Air inclusive (including airline taxes and fees):

From Seattle:

\$6,541 per person double occupancy

\$8,236 single occupancy

From Boston:

\$7,141 per person double occupancy

\$8,836 single occupancy

Land Only:

\$6,245 per person double occupancy

\$7,940 single occupancy

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 DEPART FROM HOME CITY

We depart the United States today for our flight to Calgary. Upon arrival, we check in to our centrally located hotel, then gather for a briefing on the journey ahead followed by dinner at our hotel.

Overnight at *Hyatt Regency Calgary* (D)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 CALGARY/WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK/GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

We leave Calgary by coach this morning for the scenic drive to Glacier National Park in northern Montana. For lunch we stop at the famed Prince of Wales Hotel along the shores of Upper Waterton Lake, the deepest lake in the Canadian Rockies. Canada's Waterton Lakes National Park is known as the place where the prairies meet the mountains, and it's easy to see why, as soaring mountain peaks surround the lake. Waterton adjoins Montana's Glacier National Park, and the two together were designated as Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in 1932 to celebrate the enduring peace between the two countries.

After time to take in the splendid lake views here, we cross the 49th parallel and enter to the United States. We arrive at our lodge late this afternoon and enjoy an included dinner on our own time here tonight.

Overnight at *St. Mary Village* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Today we get our first look at Glacier National Park, a 1,583-square-mile swath of wilderness in Montana's Rocky Mountains encompassing

rugged mountains, thunderous waterfalls, still lakes, and glacial valleys stretching to the Canadian border. From our lodge on the eastern side of the park, we travel into the park and begin with a morning cruise on St. Mary Lake for panoramic views of the water and its lovely surroundings. Pine forests cover the shoreline here, rising up to rugged rock bluffs that create a natural amphitheater around the lake. Movie buffs may recognize the lake from the iconic opening shot of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*.

We return to our lodge and have the afternoon at leisure amidst the majesty of America's 10th national park. Dinner tonight is at our lodge.

Overnight at *St. Mary Village* (B, D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 GLACIER NATIONAL PARK/WHITEFISH

We enjoy a travel highlight today as we step back in time and board one of Glacier National Park's legendary sightseeing buses: the Red Jammers, in use here since the 1930s. With roll-back canvas convertible tops, these buses take their name from the sound of the early drivers jamming the manual transmission into low gear to negotiate steep roads. Our ride this morning takes us along the fabled Going-to-the-Sun Road, a twisting, winding mountain pass that offers breathtaking views and hair-raising turns. This 50-mile road crosses the park from east to west, and was the first to be recognized on the National Historic Registers as a Place, Landmark, and Civil Engineering Landmark.

Please note: The alpine portion of the Going-to-the-Sun Road opens each year depending on the snowmelt – there is no set date for the road to open, though typically, it is fully open in late June or early July. Note also that while the road generally remains open into October, weather conditions may cause authorities to close earlier.

After time for lunch on our own, we meet up with our motorcoach at Lake McDonald Lodge, then continue southwest across the

Continental Divide. The divide marks the border between the eastern and western portions of North America: all rivers originating east of the divide flow into the Atlantic Ocean, while rivers with headwaters west of the divide flow to the Pacific. After crossing this continental high point, we arrive late this afternoon in the resort town of Whitefish, Montana on the western edge of the park. We enjoy a leisurely dinner tonight at our lodge.

Overnight at *Grouse Mountain Lodge* (B, D)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 WHITEFISH, MT

We head into the forest this morning for a leisurely hike within the Whitefish Trail system, starting at Swift Creek Trailhead just outside of town. A network of more than 36 miles of paths through forests, prime wildlife habitats, and pristine lakes, the trail is an outdoor lover's dream. Swift Creek Trail is the network's only path that meanders through old-growth, mature trees, and also includes a lookout over Swift Creek.

Then we continue on to the popular ski area of Whitefish Mountain Resort, where we board chairlifts bound for the mountain's summit. Rising to an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet, the "Big Mountain," as it is known, hosted the 2001 U.S. Alpine Skiing Championships. After taking time to enjoy the 360-degree mountain views and crisp summit air, we visit the Summit Nature Center to learn more about the mountain and its local environment.

We return to our lodge in time for lunch on our own and an afternoon and evening at leisure. An authentic mountain town, Whitefish boasts an abundance of diversions. Outdoor lovers may wish to venture out on another hike, while foodies will find a variety of different culinary options for dinner tonight.

Overnight at *Grouse Mountain Lodge* (B)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 WHITEFISH/LAKE LOUISE – BANFF NATIONAL PARK

Today's full day of travel presents some of the most striking scenery of the tour. We begin the day passing through forests, by lakes, and across high plains before crossing from the U.S. back into Canada – this time, into Canada's westernmost province of British Columbia. After a stop for lunch and a drive along the western edge of the Canadian Rockies, we enter world-famous Banff National Park and ascend to Lake Louise, and our hotel, late this afternoon. Lake Louise is world-renowned for its alpine beauty and aquamarine color, which comes from the rock flour runoff of nearby glaciers.

Before dinner here, we coach to the lake front and take an easy walk for our first view of this postcard-worthy body of water, originally named Emerald Lake for its brilliant hue.

Overnight at *Lake Louise Inn* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 LAKE LOUISE/JASPER

This morning we revisit the viewing area to see the lake catch the early morning light. Then we depart via the Columbia Icefields Parkway for the drive to the Columbia Icefield in Banff National Park, a UNESCO site. At an elevation of nearly 10,000 feet, this 125-square-mile tract of snow and ice is the largest ice field in the Rocky Mountains. Interestingly, the Columbia Icefield marks a triple Continental Divide point – meaning waters originating here ultimately flow into the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans.

Here we bundle up for a tour highlight as we board the *Ice Explorer* all-terrain vehicle for the ride to Athabasca Glacier – the most-visited glacier in North America. Equipped to drive right onto the glacier itself, the massive *Ice Explorer* boasts super-sized tires specially designed for glacier travel. Upon reaching Athabasca, we disembark to explore, take photos, and fill our water bottles with the pure water of the glacier.

Then we descend to the base station for lunch before we begin our drive northward again,

arriving at our hotel centrally located in the town of Jasper, which is within Jasper National Park (also a UNESCO site). We enjoy dinner tonight at our hotel.

Overnight at *Whistler's Inn* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 JASPER

The scenery on display today is nothing short of breathtaking. First we view Maligne Canyon, a geological marvel where the limestone bedrock has been eroded by several underground rivers (including the namesake Maligne) to a depth of 160 feet. Only six feet wide at some points, the plunging canyon offers a dramatic (and heady) view from the top. We continue on to cerulean Maligne Lake, the largest glacially formed lake in the Canadian Rockies. Maligne Lake, River, and Canyon all took their names from early French explorers describing the turbulent spring meltwaters as malignant or wicked. Our lake cruise today is placid, however, as we take in the sky-scraping mountain peaks, dark green forests, and three glaciers all visible from the lake. We cruise to Spirit Island, a tiny yet acclaimed islet of a few trees which makes for a wonderful – and uniquely Canadian – photo opportunity.

After our cruise, we return to Jasper, where we have the rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight at *Whistler's Inn* (B)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 JASPER/BANFF

We return today to the Columbia Icefields Parkway (*Promenade des Glaciers* in French) for more scenic views, and a thrilling expedition. This dramatic road parallels the Continental Divide and runs through the heart of both Jasper and Banff National Parks. Mid-day we enjoy an exhilarating experience as we tiptoe across the Glacier Skywalk. One of the most unique ways to experience the majesty of the Canadian Rockies, this cliff-edge walkway leads to a semicircular glass-

bottomed observation deck suspended nearly 1,000 feet above the valley floor. Exhibits along the walkway feature the waterfalls, fossils, and wildlife of the area, but the observation deck steals the show. Here, where eagles and other mountain birds soar, the vast glaciers, snowcapped mountain peaks, and thundering waterfalls stand out in stark relief.

Later we enjoy a picnic lunch then continue on to our hotel in lower Banff National Park. Set amidst pine forests on the side of a mountain, our hotel offers an authentic alpine atmosphere where we enjoy dinner tonight.

Overnight at *Rimrock Resort* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 BANFF

Our last full day in the Canadian Rockies begins with a ride aboard the Banff Gondola to the top of Sulphur Mountain, so named for the hot springs on its lower flank. This 8,000-foot peak overlooking the town of Banff was the site of two research facilities, including the meteorological observatory built in 1903 which still stands atop Sanson Peak. Both our ride and the time we spend atop Sulphur Mountain afford stunning mountain views in every direction; indeed, we can see six mountain ranges during this excursion. It's a truly breathtaking vista.

Then we visit Bow Falls, a wide waterfall just outside of the town of Banff, before traveling Tunnel Mountain Road to visit the Hoodoos, a collection of eroded limestone spires strung along a wooded hillside. Along our drive, we're on the lookout for some of the park's many species of mammals, including elk, white-tailed deer, cougar, and red fox.

The afternoon is free to explore Banff before we celebrate our outdoor adventures with a farewell dinner at our hotel.

Overnight at *Rimrock Resort* (B, D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 BANFF/DEPARTURES

We transfer this morning to the Calgary airport for our flights home. (B)