MY SAVVY TRAVELLER

A RELAXED ADVENTURE IN THE ALBERTA ROCKIES

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by Shannon Melnyk

Don't ski? You don't have to be an adrenaline junkie to get that famous Rocky Mountain high. For over 125 years, Banff National Park has been a mecca destination when it comes to breath-taking landscapes, sugar-coated majestic mountains and pristine emerald lakes. Our suggestions for some hard-core fun with a soft landing? Reconnect with your inner-explorer through lush forests, rugged peaks and ancient glaciers. Share the memories of paddling pristine lakes or soaring over the Rockies via helicopter. Take time to explore and rejuvenate your body and soul at your own pace in an unforgettable Canadian wonderland.

Five guided adventures in Banff National Park you don't want to miss:

Johnston Canyon Hike

Johnston Canyon. Credit: @propertfilms

Thousands of years of erosion carved deeply into limestone make Johnston Canyon a must-see. A network of steel catwalks built into the canyon allows for an immersive experience as you hike along the canyon walls, waterfalls, lush forest and the deep pools of Johnston Creek. All ages can enjoy this tour that's complete with a local guide with an eagle eye for wildlife and the historical lore of these ancient caverns. www.parkscan.com

Loving It all at Lake Louise

Spectacular Lake Louise. Credit: Shannon Melnyk

The Chateau Lake Louise sits on a glistening emerald lake surrounded by soaring mountain peaks and the majestic Victoria Glacier. The Chateau was built over 100 years ago for alpinists and today is the perfect host for adventures in and around the lake - whether you prefer solo, guided or privately guided activities. The Chateau's Mountain Heritage Program led by award-winning naturalists will help you choose from the many guided excursions – from a half day hike to a historic Tea House to a paddle on a canoe around the lake – the options are endless with a year round program to appeal to both summer and winter visitors. After an exhilarating day outdoors, don't forget to hit the Spa at Chateau Lake Louise for a Serenity Ritual or Lavender Dream signature treatment. Work up an appetite for a hearty meal? Head to The Walliser Stube for the black truffle Käse Fondue that features a melted blend of Gruyère, Emmental & Appenzeller cheese with a hint of Kirschwasser. https://www.fairmont.com/lake-louise/promotions/mountain-heritage-program-overview

Canoeing Lake Louise. Credit: @propertfilms

Forest Bathing at Moraine Lake

Moraine Lake. Credit: Shannon Melnyk

Seeking a natural prescription for all that ails you? Start with one of the most stunning lakes in the world, add a master forest therapy guide and sprinkle in the magical sights and sounds of a sacred space that lulls you into the present. Forest Fix specializes in guided meditative experiences meant to foster a sense of calm, peace and interconnectedness. Our favourite is Forest Bathing, a nod to the Japanese practice of Shinrin Yoku, or, "taking in the atmosphere of the forest". Inspired by scientists who demonstrated calming benefits from the organic chemical compounds called phytoncides given off in Japanese woods, Banff National Park based Forest Fix adapts the practice on the shores of Moraine Lake, offering a wellness-inspired journey surrounded by nature. www.forestfix.ca/

Brave a cave

A rare excursion into the undeveloped Rat's Nest Cave. Credit: @propertfilms

Looking for a little off-the-grid mountain cred? The folks at Canmore Cave Tours will get you suited up for an extraordinary dark day you won't soon forget. Destination: Grotto Mountain for a rare excursion into the undeveloped Rat's Nest Cave. Claustrophobics need not apply, but the experienced guides can assist those as young as ten. Your caving adventure starts with a scenic hike to the cave's location followed by gearing up with your suits, ropes and headlamps with instructions and support from expert guides. Be prepared to encounter spectacular rock stalactites, grotto, ancient bones, and challenging crevices – some of which are the size of manholes. The guides will assist and cheer you on for this challenge that includes both climbing and rappelling. www.canmorecavetours.com/

Eye in the sky

Alpine Helicopters provides an unforgettable bird's eye view of the Rockies. Credit: Shannon Melnyk

Why not take in an unforgettable bird's eye view of one of the most breathtaking National Parks in the world? Alpine helicopters will have you soaring past the Three Sisters Peaks and over the aqua-hued Spray Valley. Or, add to your flight the Matterhorn of the Canadian Rockies to Mount Assiniboine and take in the astounding glaciers and waterfalls 3600 meter along the Great Divide. Want a little more adventure? Try Heli-skiing or heli-hiking with their expert partners, CMH Heli-Skiing & Summer Adventures, who actually invented the concept of heli-skiing over 50 years ago. You'll be in good hands with these experienced mountaineers.
https://www.alpinehelicopter.com/

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