



**COAST**  
canmore hotel &  
conference centre™

## *explore canmore*

Your guide to local trails, lakes, and outdoor adventures.



# explore canmore safely

Canmore is known for its stunning trails and unforgettable outdoor experiences. As you head out to explore, we encourage everyone to come prepared and stay aware—so you can enjoy all this beautiful natural setting has to offer safely.

## Wildlife Awareness

You are visiting wildlife habitat. Bears, elk, cougars, and other animals are commonly seen in the area.

- Always carry bear spray and know how to use it
- Stay alert and make noise while hiking
- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife
- Never feed animals

## Be Prepared

Mountain conditions can change quickly—even on the same trail.

- Dress in layers and be ready for sudden weather changes
- Wear sturdy footwear and bring plenty of water
- Check trail conditions and closures before you go
- Plan your route and share your itinerary with someone

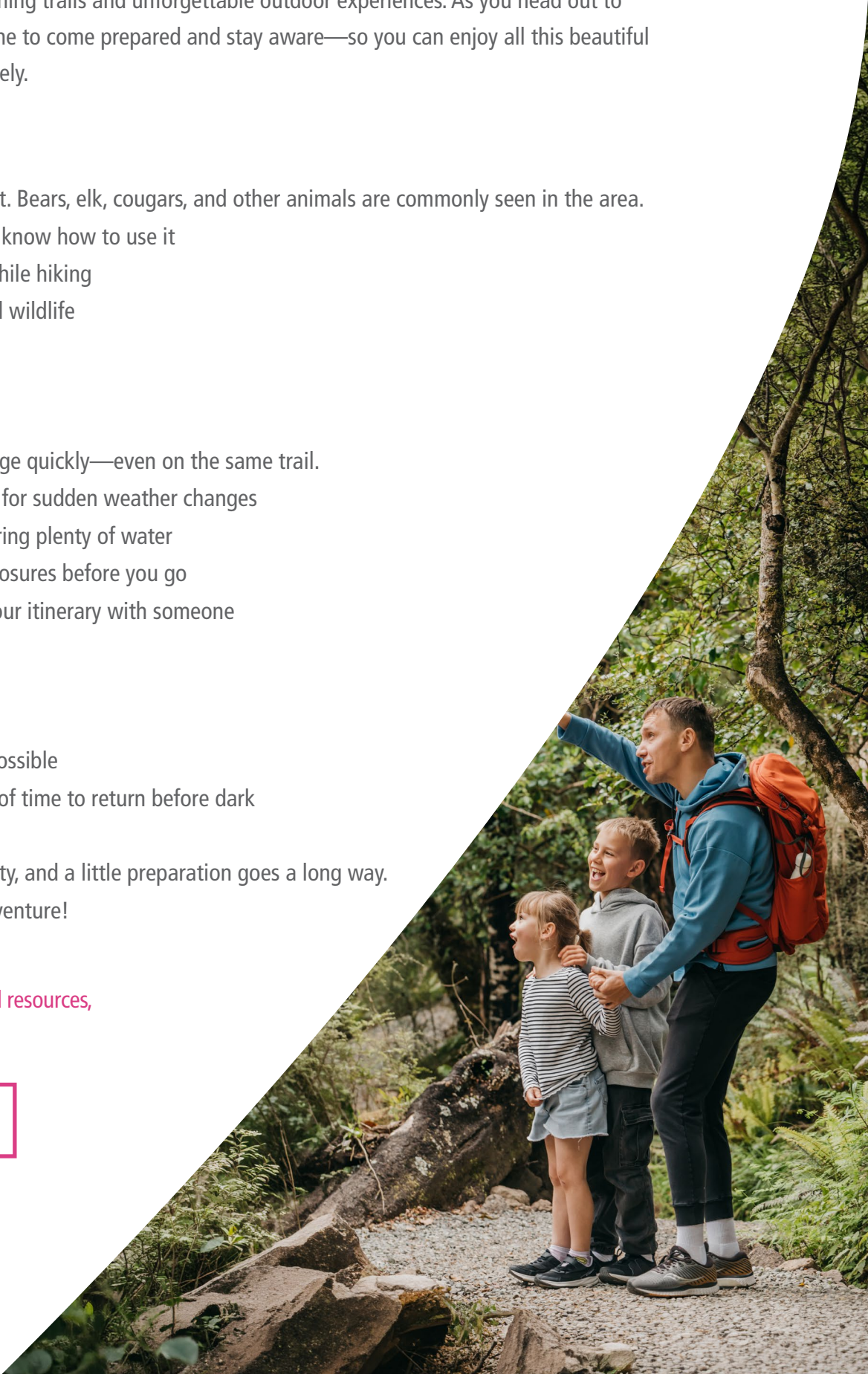
## Hike Smart

- Stay on marked trails
- Travel in groups whenever possible
- Start early and allow plenty of time to return before dark

Your safety is your responsibility, and a little preparation goes a long way. Have an amazing and safe adventure!

For more wildlife safety tips and resources, [click the button below.](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)



## BOW RIVER LOOP

**DISTANCE: 2.1 KM**

**TIME: 30–60 MINUTES**

**ROUTE TYPE: LOOP**

This scenic river walk follows a wide gravel path and is an easy, popular trail for all ages and experience levels.

This trail takes you across several pedestrian bridges, including the historical Canmore Engine Bridge which is great for photos, offering stunning mountain and river views.

It also passes Riverside Park, a great place to stop for a picnic, and can easily be combined with nearby trails for a longer walk. The trail is unpaved.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## BOW RIVER TRAIL

**DISTANCE: 6.1 KM**

**TIME: 60–120 MINUTES**

**ROUTE TYPE: OUT-AND-BACK**

This multi-use trail follows the Bow River through Canmore and can be accessed from multiple points along the route.

The trail is a mix of paved sections and single track, while remaining mostly flat and easy to navigate. Open views of the Bow River and surrounding mountains are present throughout the journey.

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## POLICEMAN'S CREEK BOARDWALK TRAIL

**DISTANCE:** 4.2 KM

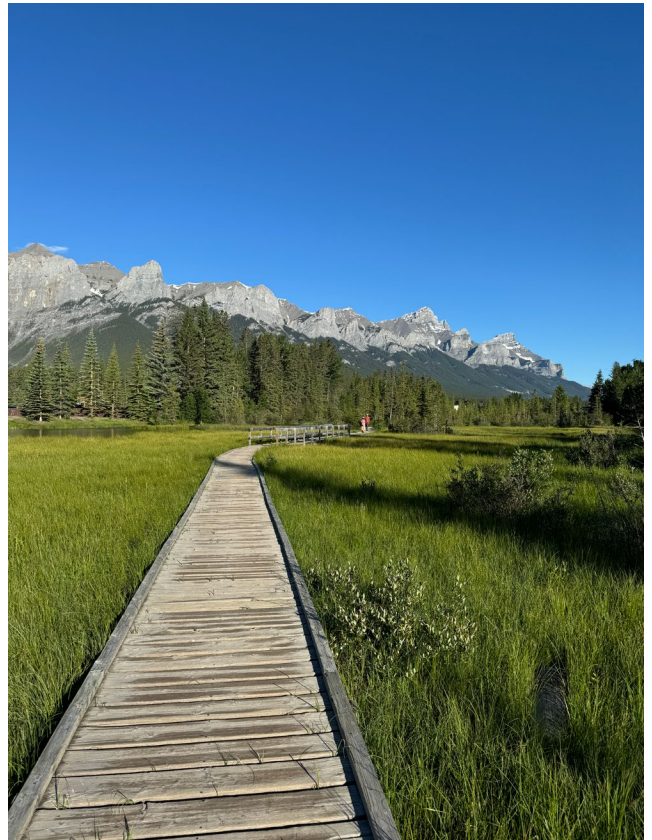
**TIME:** 1–1.5 HOURS

**ROUTE TYPE:** OUT-AND-BACK

Wooden boardwalks and paved pathways guide you past wetlands, open meadows, and mountain-framed views, making it feel surprisingly peaceful for something so central.

The path is flat, well-maintained, and ideal for birdwatching. While it can be busy at times, it offers beautiful views of the Three Sisters and Mount Rundle along the way.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## THREE SISTERS VIEWPOINT

**DISTANCE:** 1 KM

**TIME:** 30–60 MINUTES

**ROUTE TYPE:** LOOP

This short walk leads to a scenic viewpoint of the iconic Three Sisters peaks. Parking is available across from the dog park.

Cross the road and railroad tracks for a short hike down the Cougar Creek bed. The path leads to a small pond with great reflections of the Three Sisters, while Ha Ling Peak can be seen from the left side.

There are several smaller paths to explore beyond the lookout.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# hikes with elevation gain

## UPPER GRASSI LAKES TRAIL

**DISTANCE:** 3.5 KM

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 149 M

**TIME:** 1–1.5 HOURS

**ROUTE TYPE:** OUT-AND-BACK

Hikers should note that approximately 100 metres from the trailhead there is a fork with signage indicating an easier and more difficult route.

The more accessible trail to the right follows an old road through dense forest and is well suited for families. The more difficult route to the left, the Grassi Lakes Interpretive Trail, climbs gradually through forested terrain before reaching a steeper section with views of a waterfall and the town of Canmore.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## CANMORE HOODOOS LOOP

**DISTANCE:** 5.1 KM

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 263 M

**TIME:** 2–2.5 HOURS

**ROUTE TYPE:** LOOP

This is an easy trail and a great alternative to the busy Grassi Lakes Trail. While not difficult overall, there are several moderate inclines throughout the route.

The hoodoos are one of the highlights of the hike, along with panoramic mountain views along the way. The trail also travels near the golf course and follows several connecting pathways throughout the area.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## GROTTO CANYON TRAIL

**DISTANCE: 7.4 KM**

**ELEVATION GAIN: 404 M**

**TIME: APPROX. 2.5–3.5 HOURS**

**ROUTE TYPE: OUT-AND-BACK**

Grotto Canyon Trail is a great short hike with incredible views and a rewarding canyon experience.

The trail begins near power lines and an industrial facility before entering the canyon. As the trail continues, canyon walls begin to appear and the terrain becomes increasingly scenic.

Along the way, hikers can enjoy waterfalls, a cave, and ancient pictographs painted on the canyon walls.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## HORSESHOE LOOP

**DISTANCE: 5.6 KM**

**ELEVATION GAIN: 245 M**

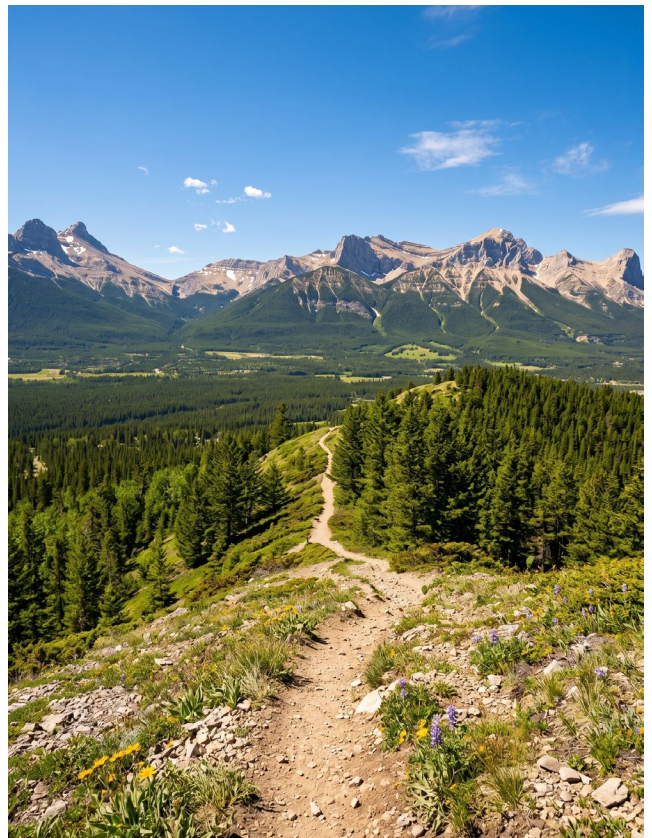
**TIME: 2–2.5 HOURS**

**ROUTE TYPE: LOOP**

Horseshoe Loop is located at the base of Grotto Mountain where several hiking and mountain biking trails connect throughout the area.

This region is popular with equestrians, so dogs should remain on leash. Navigation can also become tricky in certain sections due to the number of intersecting trails.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## PTARMIGAN CIRQUE

**DISTANCE:** 3.5 KM

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 263 M

**TIME:** 1.5–2 HOURS

**ROUTE TYPE:** OUT-AND-BACK

The trailhead for this route is located at the Highwood Meadows Day Use Area.

The trail begins on a wide pathway before crossing the highway and climbing through a series of forested switchbacks. After the initial climb, the trail opens into alpine meadows and rocky terrain with stunning mountain views.

Conditions at the summit can be windy and significantly cooler than at the trailhead, so dressing in layers is recommended. This hike is located within Kananaskis Country, and a valid Kananaskis Conservation Pass is required for parking and access.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# swimming & wading spots

**PLEASE NOTE: Mountain water remains extremely cold year-round, even during summer months.**

## QUARRY LAKE

 5 minutes from downtown Canmore

One of Canmore’s most popular natural swimming spots, set against stunning Rocky Mountain views just minutes from downtown.

Once an open-pit coal mine, it has been carefully reclaimed into a beloved day-use park managed by the Town of Canmore and the Rocky Mountain Heritage Foundation.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Swimming permitted
- Cold, spring-fed water
- Small sandy beach and shallow entry
- No lifeguards on duty
- Paid parking for visitors



## BOW RIVER – RIVERSIDE PARK & POLICEMAN’S CREEK AREA

 Located in downtown Canmore

A refreshing spot to cool off along the Bow River, located near Riverside Park and the Policeman’s Creek pathways in Canmore.

While not ideal for long swims, this area is popular for short dips and wading during warm summer days. The surrounding pathways and mountain views also make it a scenic place to relax and explore nearby.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Wading and short dips only
- Extremely cold and fast-moving water
- Water levels can change daily
- Not suitable for children or weak swimmers



# swimming & wading spots

**PLEASE NOTE: Mountain water remains extremely cold year-round, even during summer months.**

## SPRAY LAKES RESERVOIR

 25 minutes south of Canmore via Spray Lakes Road

A scenic mountain reservoir popular for swimming and paddling. Surrounded by dramatic Rocky Mountain scenery, Spray Lakes Reservoir is a beautiful place for a refreshing dip or a relaxing afternoon near the water.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Swimming permitted
- Glacier-fed water
- Often windy conditions
- No lifeguards on duty



## CASCADE PONDS

 25 minutes west of Canmore

A family-friendly option with calm water and picnic areas near Banff.

The calm and shallow water makes Cascade Ponds a popular place for wading, relaxing, and enjoying a picnic during warmer summer months.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Wading and short swims
- Slightly warmer than larger lakes
- Calm water and picnic-friendly surroundings
- Can become busy during summer
- Banff National Park Pass required



# swimming & wading spots

**PLEASE NOTE: Mountain water remains extremely cold year-round, even during summer months.**

## JOHNSON LAKE

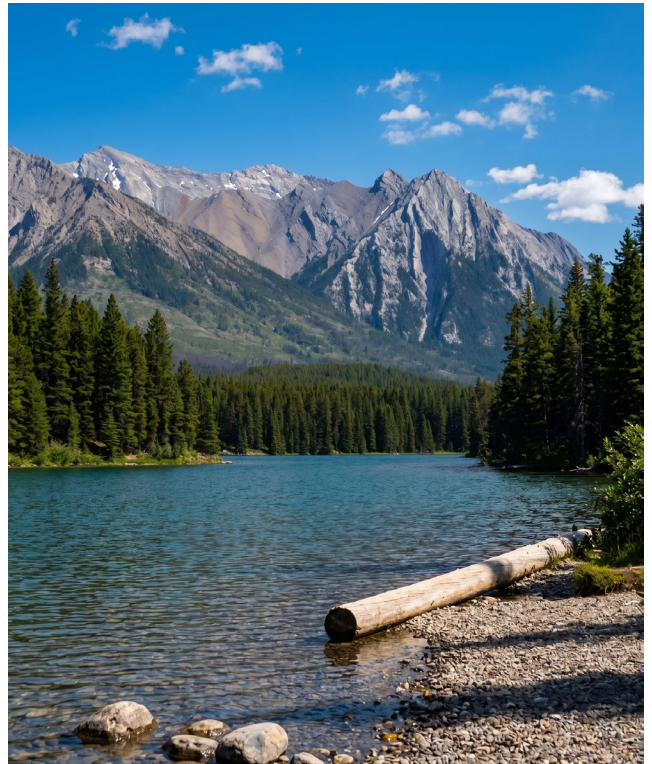
 30 minutes west of Canmore

One of the warmest nearby lakes and a favourite for summer swimming.

Johnson Lake features shallow shoreline areas, calm water, and scenic mountain surroundings, making it a popular option for families and casual swimmers.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Excellent for swimming
- Shallow areas with sunny exposure
- Small beach areas
- Banff National Park Pass required



## BARRIER LAKE

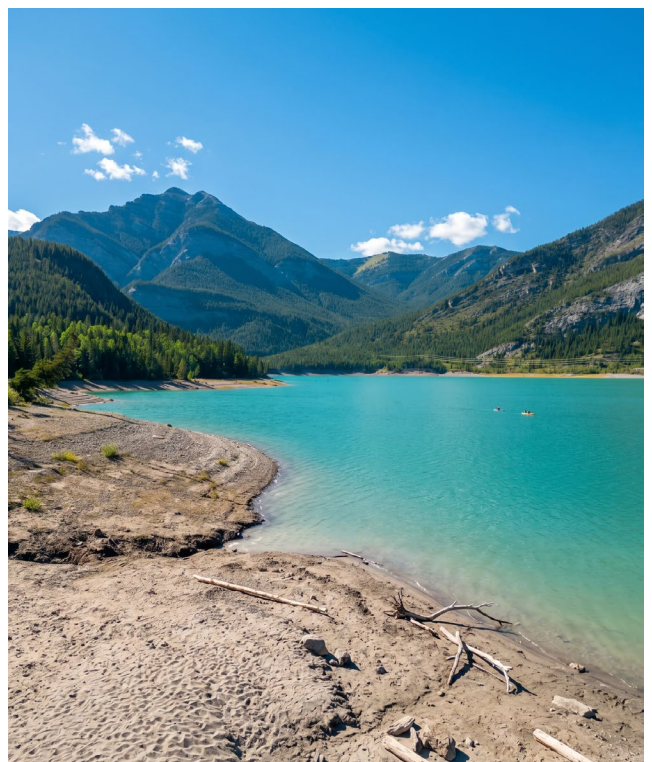
 35 minutes southeast of Canmore

A scenic but extremely cold mountain lake located in Kananaskis Country.

Barrier Lake is known for its beautiful mountain scenery and refreshing glacier-fed water, making it a popular stop during warmer months.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Swimming permitted
- Frigid glacier-fed water
- Wind and waves possible
- Kananaskis Pass required



## QUARRY LAKE

📍 5 minutes from downtown Canmore

Best overall paddleboarding spot with calm, sheltered water and incredible mountain views.

Quarry Lake is especially popular with beginner paddlers and those looking for a relaxing paddle close to downtown Canmore.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Great for beginners and casual paddles
- Views of Ha Ling Peak, Mount Rundle, and the Three Sisters
- Can become busy on hot summer afternoons
- Water remains cold year-round
- Mornings are typically calmer and quieter



## SPRAY LAKES RESERVOIR

📍 25 minutes south of Canmore via Spray Lakes Road

A stunning mountain paddling destination best enjoyed during calm weather.

The large open water and dramatic mountain scenery make Spray Lakes Reservoir a popular destination for longer paddleboarding routes and scenic paddles.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Huge open water with dramatic mountain scenery
- Popular for longer paddleboarding routes
- Best experienced early in the morning before winds increase
- Not ideal for beginners during windy conditions



## BARRIER LAKE

📍 35 minutes southeast of Canmore

A scenic lake with wide open water and mountain views.

Barrier Lake offers beautiful paddling opportunities with calm conditions during quieter times of the day and incredible mountain scenery throughout the area.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Great for exploration paddles
- Clear mountain water
- Can become very windy
- Staying close to shore is recommended if conditions change



## GHOST LAKE RESERVOIR

📍 45 minutes east of Canmore

A popular paddling spot east of Canmore.

Ghost Lake Reservoir is known for its beautiful scenery and flat water during calm mornings, making it popular with experienced paddlers.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Flat water during calm mornings
- Beautiful mountain scenery
- Open and exposed conditions
- Wind conditions can change quickly throughout the day



## JOHNSON LAKE

 30 minutes west of Canmore

One of the warmest and calmest nearby lakes.

Johnson Lake is ideal for beginner paddlers looking for calm water, easy access, and a relaxing paddle surrounded by mountain scenery.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Excellent for beginner paddlers
- Easy launch access
- Calm conditions compared to larger lakes
- Banff National Park Pass required



## TWO JACK LAKE

 35 minutes west of Canmore

A scenic lake known for calm water and incredible mountain reflections.

Two Jack Lake is especially beautiful during early mornings and evenings when the water is calm and Mount Rundle reflects across the lake.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Calm conditions during mornings and evenings
- Beautiful Mount Rundle reflections
- Quiet paddling experience
- Early mornings typically offer the calmest conditions
- Banff National Park Pass required



## CASCADE PONDS

 25 minutes west of Canmore

A sheltered and beginner-friendly paddling option near Banff. The small and calm ponds make this a great place for first-time paddlers or those looking for a short and relaxing paddle.

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Small, calm ponds
- Ideal for first-time paddlers
- Easy access and short paddling routes
- Space can be limited during peak summer months
- Banff National Park Pass required

