

Banff National Park

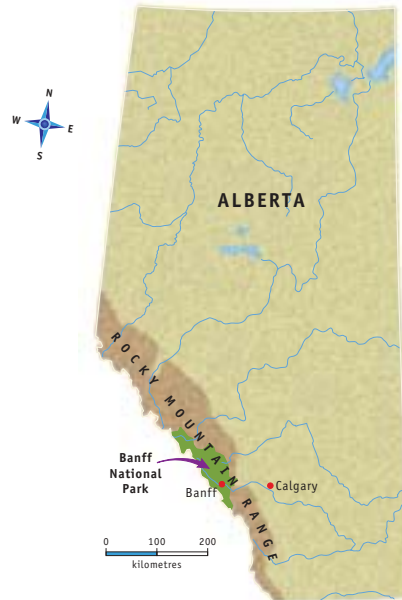
by Jill Bryant

A Place of Beauty

Banff National Park is one of the largest protected areas in the world. It is also one of the most beautiful. Every year, more than four million people visit Banff. They enjoy amazing views of high mountains, clear lakes, sparkling waterfalls, and colourful meadows.

Location

It takes less than two hours to drive to Banff from Calgary, Alberta. The park lies along part of the eastern side of the long Rocky Mountain range. Banff covers an area of 6641 square kilometres.



Wildlife

Many people like to camp and hike in the park. They can see elk, deer, snakes, and birds. At night, they may hear the howl of a coyote. Bears, wolves, moose, caribou, and cougars also live in the park. Park rangers warn visitors to keep a safe distance away from all wild animals and to never feed them.



People can cycle on special trails in the park. Hiking, climbing, horseback riding, and skiing are also popular.

Origin

In 1883, three men were working on the new railway line near Banff. They found a cave with hot springs inside. The First Nations people in the area had known about this cave for a long time. The three workers made a big fuss about it, though, and thought they could build a resort there and make a lot of money. However, the government of Canada decided the land would be national property. And so Banff became Canada's first national park.

The Banff Upper Hot Springs bathhouse and pool as they look today.

