

Horse Riding & Camping in Banff



Highlights

Get a feel for the great (and we do mean great!) outdoors and go horse riding and camping in Banff National Park, deep in the Canadian outback. You can opt for a fully guided six-day adventure which requires no previous riding experience, making this a great opportunity for any nature enthusiast.

The second oldest national park in the North American continent (after Yellowstone) and the first in Canada, Banff National Park encompasses over 2,500 square miles of rugged Canadian countryside. The geological features, including serene lakes and the dizzying scale of the ever-present mountains, inspire and astound everyone who visits. Sat on horseback with the entirety of the park spread before you, it can be difficult to know where to start - since this is a guided tour however, you won't waste any time planning as your expert guide knows the park's highlights like the back of his hand!

When it comes to camping in Banff, the scenery does offer an experience a few steps up from a soggy tent in an English field! What's even better is that all of the hard work will be done for you, with the tents already set up by your guides and a hot meal waiting for you after you're done exploring with the horses for the day.

Bog standard, self-guided hiking trips in the park are ten to the dozen. This activity packed, authentic outdoor odyssey is the cream of the crop. If you leave at the end of this tour without a deep-seated sense of awe, it is entirely possible that you're not human. Two of the best activities to get up to in Banff are camping and horse riding, and this tour is a great combination of both. What's more is that you'll be accompanied by guides who are as knowledgeable as they are passionate, having impressed travellers under their care for many years.

Is it for me?

Get the best of both worlds - all the enjoyment of staying out in the Canadian wilderness with none of the hassle associated with setting up camp.

There are no specific requirements to the tour other than a level of fitness commensurate to beginner's horse riding, spending around six to eight hours a day in the saddle riding at a walking pace. All guests are recommended to do a few hours in the saddle before your trip to get your body used to a horse's movement. A good mountain morning stretch also helps!

Travellers are able to leave excess luggage at the tour office at the start of the week but are limited to taking no more than 30lb of luggage per person on the tour itself, and packed in a soft-sided bag. The reason for this is that your day gear will be transported by mules along with supplies to each camp.

Bringing a saddle bag is a good idea to store things like sunglasses, sun cream, cameras etc. while you're riding. Saddle bags are for hire at the tour office, please reserve. Rucksacks are not permitted, since they are uncomfortable for horse and rider.

Accommodation

During your week of exploration you'll stay in three different campsites - Stoney Creek, Flints Park and Mystic - which are spread out to give you a feel for the varying areas making up Banff National Park.

All three of the camps are kept to high standards and feature hot water for washing up, treated drinking water,

Prices from

851 GBP (6 days) per person

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fire pits, 2 person canvas tents with a raised wooden floor and a dedicated kitchen tent for eating and socialising. Wildlife sightings are all a game of luck and there are many creatures wondering around the Park. But these are of no concern whilst camping as each overnight area is protected by electrified fencing.

All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) are included in the cost of the tour. Food is homecooked hearty western meals which fuel you for days filled with riding and experiencing the backcountry. Coffee and hot water for tea are always on in the kitchen tent.

Itinerary

This is the itinerary for the 6 day trip. Shorter stays are possible - please contact us for more details.

Day 1: The group will meet at 8:30am before being transported by van to the trailhead corral at Mount Norquay. Here you'll meet your horse and guides for some riding tuition, then mount up for the gentle eleven-mile ride over Elk Lake Summit between Brewster and Cascade Mountains and down into Stoney Creek Camp.

Day 2: Today's riding will take you towards the headwaters of Stoney Creek, returning to camp for the night. This area is a favourite haunt of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, who are often grazing in the high meadows, with plenty of other wildlife and stunning vistas providing ample photo opportunities.

Day 3: Leaving Stoney Creek after a ranch-style breakfast, you'll mount up and ride the ten miles to Flint's Park Camp. This camp, located in the centre of open, grassy ridges topped with high peaks, has become a favourite of many riders. There are hot showers at Flint's Park, which will be a welcome luxury after a day in the sun!

Day 4: Today is filled with options, with rides leading to Block Mountain, Cuthead Viewpoint and other attractions. There are many activities to get up to in these locations including photography, hiking, swimming and fishing - feel free to spend the day at your leisure with the guides at hand before heading back to camp for a well deserved dinner.

Day 5: The morning will be spent preparing for the epic ride to the Mystic Valley Camp, and you'll get the chance to observe the historic art of horse packing using the age-old diamond hitch method. With everything securely in place, the group will mount up and ride into Mystic Valley for the final night. It's traditional to indulge in a mammoth western dinner for the last night - by now everyone will have become good friends and will all be ready for a good knees-up together.

Day 6: Unfortunately every trip has a last day, but what better way to end the trip than with the scenic nine-mile ride from Mystic Valley to the Mount Norquay Corral. On arrival at Norquay the circular tour has been completed, and you'll return to Banff at approximately 5:00pm.

Details

Getting there

Banff is located 80 miles west of Calgary International Airport and is accessible by regular shuttle bus or rental car.

Price includes

Professional guides, use of horses/pack mules, 5 nights tent accommodation, all meals for the duration of tour, luggage storage, transfer from the office to the trail head on Mount Norquay.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed