**Lake Louise**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Snow reliability

Environmental awareness

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

17

**Intermediate Runs**

26

**Advanced Runs**

96

**Total Runs**

139

**Lifts**

9

**Chairs**

5

**Drags**

4

**Gondola Cable Cars**

1

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

4.27m (14ft).

**Overview**

Lake Louise ski resort is an ideal choice for those looking for a quieter location but still seeking top-notch facilities and service. The village itself is small, but the skiing and scenery is among the best in the world. First-time visitors to Canada who are expecting mountains, forests, lakes and wildlife, will find exactly what they had pictured while skiing within the vast Banff National Park.

The slopes here look out across the valley to Lake Louise itself – which is frozen in winter – and are served by efficient, mostly high-speed lifts. These provide access to wide-open runs, powder bowls and steep chutes.

Lake Louise is the first North American stop on the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup tour at the start of the resort’s season each November, and the reliable snow and cold temperatures mean it usually lasts about six months until early May.

**Location**

Lake Louise is situated in the western Canadian province of Alberta, 184km (115 miles) west of Calgary and 60km (36 miles) west of Banff. The resort lies in the heart of Banff National Park in the Rocky Mountains.

**Website**

http://www.skibig3.com

http://www.skilouise.com

http://www.banfflakelouise.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.skilouise.com/the-mountain/guides-and-maps/trail-maps.php

**Hit The Slopes**

The ski season in Lake Louise is one of the longest in North America, and indeed the whole world, with runs open from late November until early May. During this time the ski and snowboard school provides private and group lessons for all levels, while equipment hire is available at the base.

Despite being one of the largest ski areas in North America with one of the continent's biggest lift-served verticals, the altitude at the top of the lifts is not that high. This means there isn't the risk of altitude-related health issues that sometimes affect visitors to ski areas in the Rockies further south; in Colorado for example.

Lake Louise's slopes are spread over four mountain faces, with a large proportion of the skiing below the treeline. On the main south face, there are some wonderful wide, fast runs that intermediates will love, as well as the beginners-only Wiwaxy run. More advanced skiers and boarders can follow in the tracks of champions on the Men's Downhill or Ladies' Downhill courses.

Take the Top of the World six-seater chairlift, the Grizzly Express gondola or the Summit Platter to the back bowls. Peering over the ridges here reveals a multitude of thigh-burning vertiginous black and double-black runs. But less confident skiers need not fear, as there are a handful of easy routes down too. Alternatively, continue over to the Larch area for some fine cruisers and gladed runs.

Among the other activities on the slopes is heli-skiing, which is popular in the area. There are a number of heli-ski companies operating within an hour of Lake Louise with various packages to try.

Freestylers and boarders, meanwhile, have a huge terrain park under the Glacier Express chairlift to explore. Among the 30 features are massive jumps and a ski and boardercross circuit.

The Banff resorts of Sunshine Village and the smaller Mt. Norquay are also nearby (45 minutes and 50 minutes respectively), and are available along with Lake Louise on the Tri-area lift ticket.

**Lake Louise**

**Resort**

1540

**Base**

1646

**Top**

2637

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

The most magical experience here is ice skating on Lake Louise itself; while part of the lake is also cleared for hockey. Another memorable activity is the famous torchlight parade and dinner, held several times throughout the season.

On the snow, there are snowshoe walks from the top of the Grizzly Express Gondola, cross-country skiing trails, dog sledding, snowmobiling excursions and a snow-tubing park (open from January to April).

The charming town of Banff, with its shops, restaurants and natural hot-springs, is about 45 minutes away.

**Family Fun**

Childcare is available at the daycare centre next to the main lodge for ages 18 days to six years; tots can also try a little skiing. Then, from age five (or seven for snowboarders) to 12 years, children can join ‘Kidski and Shreddies' classes, meeting at the Wilderness Adventure Park.

**Retail Therapy**

Shopaholics are better off in Banff, but there are a few places to flex the plastic. Shopping in Lake Louise is mostly limited to ski stores, boutiques and gift shops – the majority of these shops are either in the Samson Mall in the village or at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise (111 Lake Louise Drive; tel: (403) 522 3511; [www.fairmont.com/lakelouise](http://www.fairmont.com/lakelouise)).

**Splashing Out**

Stay in a luxurious secluded wilderness cabin at Emerald Lake Lodge (tel; 1 800 663 6336; [www.crmr.com/emerald](http://www.crmr.com/emerald)) in Yoho National Park, 40km (25 miles) west of Lake Louise. The first lodge was built here by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1902. Visitors can follow the cross-country skiing trails around the lake, ice skate, or try the more adventurous pursuit of waterfall ice climbing.

**Apres Ski**

Lake Louise is not the place for wild partying, but there are a few options for fun après-ski. The Kokanee Kabin at the mountain base is a lively spot at the end of the day with cold beer, hot drinks, barbecue and live music. Otherwise, the best bet is to head to one of the hotel bars for a quiet drink.

For an après-ski activity with an Albertan twist, Brewster Lake Louise Stables (tel: (403) 762 5454; [www.brewsteradventures.com](http://www.brewsteradventures.com/)) transfers customers in a horse-drawn sleigh and whisks them to a cowboy barbecue, complete with live country and western music and line dancing (departs from the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise).

**Eating Out**

Most dining options beyond the slopes are in hotels, with about 20 places from which to choose. The Mount Fairview Dining Room in Deer Lodge (Lake Louise Drive; tel: (403) 522 3991; [www.crmr.com/deer](http://www.crmr.com/deer)) serves up such treats as buffalo and caribou. Timberwolf Pizza and Pasta Café in the Lake Louise Inn (210 Village Road; tel: (403) 522 3791; [www.lakelouiseinn.com](http://www.lakelouiseinn.com/)) is a good choice for families. For a break from hotel cuisine, try the Friday-night torchlight dinner at Whitehorn Lodge on the mountain.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Calgary International Airport (YYC).

Distance to resort: 196km (122 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours.

**Getting Around**

A free bus service connects the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Lake Louise Inn and Post Hotel with the ski area. Shuttles also run between Lake Louise and the nearby ski areas of Sunshine Village and Mt Norquay. Taxis are also available within the resort.

Those with a car can drive over to Kicking Horse ski resort in British Columbia, which makes a perfect day trip.

**Hotels**

There are a number of different accommodation options in Lake Louise to suit every budget. For those looking for self-catering facilities, Lake Louise has plenty of rustic cabins and chalets in quiet, secluded locations. Alternatively, the various lodges suit larger groups and often boast great amenities and communal relaxation areas. There are also numerous hotels in Lake Louise, from luxury 5-star offerings to cheap and cheerful motels.

**Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise**

The historic Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise is set in a stunning location on the shores of Lake Louise. This luxury option boasts a choice of restaurants and a spa.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

111 Lake Louise Drive

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Lake Louise

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(403) 522 3511.

**Website**

www.fairmont.com

**Lake Louise Inn**

This modern and comfortable hotel features several room types catering to different budgets, and it has an indoor pool, hot tub and regular shuttle service to the slopes.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

210 Village Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Lake Louise

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(403) 522 3791.

**Website**

http://www.lakelouiseinn.com

**HI Lake Louise Alpine Centre**

This clean and airy Hostelling International accommodation offers low-cost private and shared rooms. Amenities here include free Wi-Fi, a well-equipped kitchen and an on-site café.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

203 Village Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Lake Louise

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(403) 522 2201.

**Website**

http://www.hihostels.ca