

Valley of the Five Lakes



NEED TO KNOW

LENGTH: 4 km (2.5 miles) roundtrip

ELEVATION GAIN: 30 metres (100 feet)

WALKING TIME: 1-1.5 hours roundtrip

RATING: easy

TRAILHEAD: Icefields Parkway, 10 km (6.2 miles) south of the town of Jasper
(N52°48.507' W118°01.402')

These five lakes on the floor of the Athabasca Valley south of Jasper vary in size from just over one kilometre in length to the tiny pond of Third Lake. While the hike to the

valley and back can be completed in less than two hours, you can easily spend a half-day or more wandering about the lakes' circuit.

THE HIKE: From the parking area beside the Icefields Parkway, the first 500 metres of the Valley of the Five Lakes trail is mainly flat through a forest of lodgepole pine. At km 0.8 the trail descends to a meadow and a boardwalk across Wabasso Creek. This is followed by a brief climb to open meadow and a junction with trail #9—the trail running from Old Fort Point to Wabasso Lake. Continue ahead on #9a to a split, where you begin the circuit that loops around the five lakes (you can go right on #9a or left on #9b, which is our preference).

By staying on #9b you descend from the ridge and pass between First and Second Lake, where you are reunited with #9a. Turn right and follow it along the northeast shore of Second and Fourth Lakes to the northwest end of Fifth Lake. Stay right on #9a to complete the loop.

OPTION: Ambitious hikers can travel southeast to Wabasso Lake or northwest to Old Fort Point via trail #9—both trips ideally completed by arranging transportation at those trailheads.

VALLEY OF THE FIVE LAKES TRAIL OUTLINE

0.0 Trailhead (elevation 1,090 metres).

—Rolling forested terrain.

0.8 Wabasso Creek crossing.

1.0 Junction. Trail split for loop. Keep right.

1.7 Fifth Lake.

1.8 Fourth Lake.

2.2 Junction. Continue straight ahead.

—We didn't forget Third Lake; it's a very small pond along the side trail at the 2.2-km junction.

2.3 Second Lake.

2.6 Junction and First Lake. Turn left to return to trailhead.

3.0 Junction at beginning of loop.

4.0 Trailhead.

VALLEY OF THE FIVE LAKES

