



Assiniboine Ascents

Program Details

Mount Assiniboine is one of the finest peaks in the Canadian Rockies. It is often compared to the Matterhorn and whilst there is a similarity with that famous peak Assiniboine's beautiful isolation, high above Lake Magog give it a character that is entirely unique.

A climb of Assiniboine with a certified Yamnuska mountain guide can be the experience of a lifetime. If you'd like to climb Assiniboine with a Yamnuska guide this prospectus will tell you what its all about. Once decided let us know so that we can confirm arrangements for this terrific adventure.

Mount Assiniboine is located 30 km SW of Canmore on the main divide of the Canadian Rockies. It sits on the border of Banff National Park and British Columbia's Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. The southern most of the major peaks in the Canadian Rockies, the triangular pyramid of Assiniboine dominates this section of the divide. It is 11,876 feet high (3618m).

The Peak

Mount Assiniboine is a serious and often difficult climb. It is frequently underestimated. There is substantial exposure and rock fall hazard. In dry conditions it is technically straight forward. More likely though, it will be snowed or iced up and the climbing very challenging. This is not a peak for beginners!

The most popular route on this 11,867ft. (3618m) peak is the North Ridge. This 3,000ft. ridge is steep and exposed without being too technically difficult. Initially you will move together up a series of gullies and climb a rock band before reaching the ridge crest which is followed to the 'Red Band'. Once there you will be climbing fifth class rock for several hundred feet to the corniced summit. The view from the summit is just incredible.

Climbing time is anywhere from 8 to 14 hours return from the Hind Hut.

Time Needed

The minimum time it will take is three days. One day to fly to Assiniboine Meadows and to climb to the Hind Hut, the next day for the ascent and the final day to descend to the Meadows from where you can fly or walk out. The problem with such a short time is that weather may be bad on your climbing day leaving you with no spare days. We suggest you take a guide for at least four if not five days so as to allow extra time for the ascent. In the event of being able to do the climb on the first available day then there are several other peaks in the area you can climb as well.

Season

Assiniboine can be climbed anytime June through September but remember that conditions may prevent climbing on the peak at any time in those months. The best time seems to be from mid-July to late August. In some years heavy spring snows may result in the peak being a snow climb

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through most of the summer. Summer snowstorms can put the peak 'out of condition' at any time. We must emphasize that bad weather and conditions are possible at any time and consequently we cannot guarantee a summit climb or easy conditions. Many of the pictures on this page were taken on a snowy day in August 2002.

Guides and Guide Ratios

Our guides are certified by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides and by Parks Canada (Athabasca is on the border between Banff and Jasper National Parks) and we operate within the 'terrain guidelines' of the ACMG. The lead guide will be an internationally qualified (UIAGM/ACMG) mountain guide. Other guides will be at least qualified assistant guides (ACMG). It is vastly preferable to have a one-on-one guide ratio. We will take two with one guide on the North Ridge only and then only if your experience makes it appropriate.

Experience Needed

Assiniboine is not a climb for beginners. We require that you have recent alpine mountaineering experience (or extensive multi-pitch rock experience) beforehand and we will require that you complete our experience questionnaire on booking. When making your booking we can advise you as to the feasibility of your attempting this peak.

This is one of the most expensive objectives in the Rockies, there are lots of other great climbs in our region which you can attempt with us at much less expense. If you have any doubts as to the suitability of this objective then it may be wise to take a guide for another climb first.

Accommodation & Food

We climb from the Hind Hut located at the very base of Assiniboine's North Ridge at an elevation of c. 8,700 ft. The hut is a basic sheet metal mountain shelter equipped with sleeping platforms, stove and 'foamies', we bring food and sleeping bags. Hut fees and out trip meals are included in our price.

For accommodation before and after the trip, please refer to our LINKS page for recommendations. Afterwards you may like to stay on and enjoy the great hiking in the Assiniboine Meadows area. This is a terrific area to enjoy with family and friends. Camping is available at the Lake Magog campground or, if you book very far in advance, stay at world-famous Mt. Assiniboine Lodge.

Getting to Canmore & Mount Assiniboine

Canmore is the nearest town to the heli and hiking staging points for Assiniboine. It is 100km west of Calgary on the Trans Canada Highway. Frequent shuttles connect Calgary International Airport and Canmore. Greyhound Bus Lines (1 800 661 8747) serves Canmore from points east and west along the Trans-Canada Highway. Call 609 0300, 609 1490 or 609 8897 for taxis in Canmore.

To get to Mount Assiniboine it is more cost effective to fly to Assiniboine Meadows at the base of the peak. Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays (Mondays on holiday weekends) a helicopter shuttle service operates from Canmore and Shark Mountain (45 minutes drive S.W. of Canmore towards the peak). Please note that there may be an extra charge for transport to Shark Mountain if required. The cost of the helicopter shuttle is included in our charge.

Once at Assiniboine Meadows it is a further 4 hours hike and scramble to reach the Hind Hut, our base for the summit climb.

Price

The following package costs include guide fees, hut fees, out trip meals and helicopter flights. Should it be necessary to drive to Shark Mountain Helipad from Canmore an extra charge may apply if you do not have your own vehicle.

5% Sales Tax (GST) is not included. It is possible to hike out and not use the helicopter, which will reduce the price accordingly should you choose this option.

Three-day for one person: **\$2900**; for two: \$3600 or \$1800 Cdn. each. Friday to Sunday, Wednesday to Friday.

Four-day for one person: **\$3600**; for two: \$4300 or \$2150 Cdn. each. Sunday to Wednesday.

Five-day for one person: **\$4200**; for two: \$4950 or \$2475 Cdn. each. Wednesday to Sunday.

What If Assiniboine Is Out Of Condition?

Mount Assiniboine is very weather prone and may be completely out of condition at any time in the summer for days or weeks at a time. When this happens it is possible to climb on other peaks in the Rockies that remain in condition (lower rock peaks or snow and ice routes). In the event of Assiniboine being clearly out of condition we will organize an alternate climbing program for you and will use the helicopter fees included in the package to defray any new expenses with the balance being refunded to you.

Clothing and Gear Lists

Group safety & technical gear (e.g. ropes & rack) is included in the fee. You will need to supply personal clothing and gear (e.g. ice axe, crampons, helmet & harness). Some of these items can be rented and the cost included in your package price.

Yamnuska has a full range of climbing and camping gear for rent.

CLOTHING LIST

We suggest layers of light, easily carried clothing that allow for fast and easy adjustment to best suit fast changing temperature conditions. We discourage cotton clothing as it causes rapid heat loss when wet. Feel free to call us if you have any questions about what to bring. This list covers items needed for all likely conditions during the mountaineering season. Your guide will go through your clothing and gear with you prior to the climb.

You will need to bring:

- LONG UNDERWEAR, top and bottom, polypro, wool, capilene or fleece.
- WOOL/BLEND SOCKS (extra pairs).
- Warm LONG PANTS to climb in. These should be wool/nylon blend knickers, fleece pants, nylon exercise pants with light long johns or wool trousers.
- Light SHIRT or T-SHIRT.
- Wool or fleece LONG SLEEVE SHIRT with collar.
- FLEECE SWEATER (medium weight).
- Heavyweight fleece or insulated JACKET.
- Water proof OUTER JACKET with hood (Gore-Tex).
- Waterproof OUTER PANTS, preferably with sidezips on legs.
- Waterproof knee-length GAITERS that will fit over large boots .
- Waterproof mountaineering GLOVES or wool / fleece mitts /gloves plus waterproof overmitts.
- WARM HAT (that covers ears).
- SUNHAT with wide brim.
- NECK TUBE

EQUIPMENT LIST

You will need to bring: (Items in blue are available to rent from Yamnuska)

- SLEEPING BAG. In summer the huts don't get too cold so don't bring a winter bag. We suggest a bag rated down to 0 degrees Celsius (32 F.) but if your bag doesn't quite get down that far don't worry too much. Make sure you bring a stuff sac that will reduce your bag to its minimum size (i.e. one with compression straps) so you don't use up all the room in your pack.
- BACKPACK. Big enough to fit extra clothing, sleeping bag, share of food, and cooking gear. Internal frame packs are most comfortable.
- MOUNTAINEERING BOOTS. Ideally these should be proper leather mountaineering boots with either a semi-rigid or a rigid sole. It is possible to buy boots such as the La Sportiva "Trango" which is designed specifically for alpine rock and which can take a crampon. We suggest bringing a pair of comfortably fitting rock shoes as well. They will increase enjoyment on more technical rock. As always the most important feature of a mountaineering boot is comfort. Different brands seem to suit different feet. If buying try a few different pairs and if they are not comfortable don't buy them. There are many good brands. They include Asolo, Kayland, Koflach, la Sportiva and Scarpa.
- DAYPACK. Optional but good idea if backpack too unwieldy for advanced climbs. Large enough to carry spare clothing, lunch, water and climbing gear.
- ICE AXE. A regular glacier axe minimum 55cm length.
- CRAMPONS. Must fit your boots.
- HARNESS. Sit harness preferred.
- HELMET.
- SUNGLASSES with good UV protection, we suggest 'glacier glasses'.
- Extra Strength SUN CREAM.
- Lip Cream.
- HEADLAMP with fresh batteries.
- WATERBOTTLE (1L minimum).
- POCKET KNIFE.
- BLISTER KIT ('moleskin', 'Second Skin')
- FIRST-AID Items (band-aids, ibuprofen & aspirin / Tylenol is enough as guides have a kit also).
- CAMERA and spare film.
- TREKKING POLE (S) (optional).
- EAR PLUGS for dorm sleeping.
- WALKMAN & / or READING MATTER (optional of course)

OPTIONAL ITEMS

We supply the following items, but if you have your own, please feel free to bring along - Your rack, gear sling, nut pick, belay device, prussick slings, locking biners, your guide will go through this with you to decide exactly which items you should carry on the climb.

Insurance

Please ensure that you are covered for the cost of evacuation or rescue should you fall ill or be injured. Most health benefit plans (public and private) and some travel insurance policies do cover this. Otherwise, in the unlikely event that you need these services you may be liable for the cost (not astronomical). We can give you further information if necessary.

Should you take our optional cancellation penalty waiver cover you will be refunded in full or in part should you cancel this program due to illness/accident prior to or during the program.

Booking Information

Please book as early as practical to avoid disappointment. We require a deposit of 35% of the total program cost with the balance due 8 weeks before the program start date. To avoid

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unnecessary cancellation penalties we suggest you take our cancellation insurance which costs 5% of the package cost, this must accompany your deposit.

For detailed Booking Instructions and Conditions, please visit our website.

Please note that you will be required to sign our waiver before commencing the trip. A copy of the waiver can be viewed on our website.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need to know anything else about this program.

Map of Office Location:

