



## **Private Ski Guiding & Instruction**

### **Program Details**

Organizing your own ski programs on a private basis can be extremely rewarding in terms of what you achieve. This is because the pace of the activity depends on you and your group, there is no compromise involved as the sole aim is to satisfy your goals.

#### **Why choose a private program?**

You would typically choose a private or custom program when your objectives, schedule and expectations are not matched by those offered on our scheduled programs.

You can hire a guide/instructor to do any of the activities in which we specialize. In addition to backcountry skiing, ski mountaineering and avalanche awareness we offer ice climbing, mountaineering, rock climbing and hiking / trekking.

Yamnuska guides and instructors are certified by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides. In addition to certification, which only relates to a guide's technical competence, all of our guides have access to Yamnuska's staff training and guide mentoring programs which help to develop many other key qualities required of a professional guide. They need to be endowed with patience, empathy, and a sense of humor as well as being effective communicators and great coaches.

#### **How does it work?**

If you would like to consider a private or custom program you would contact us directly, by email or by phone, to discuss what it is you are interested in doing. We would discuss your objectives, experience and expectations and in turn outline a program or itinerary that would meet your needs. You may already know what you want to do or we may suggest suitable options to you. We would confirm a price and itinerary to you at which point you would confirm your booking by making a deposit.

Read on for an explanation of costs, booking procedures and for some ideas as to the types of programs we can offer.

#### **Costs**

Yamnuska guides are some of the best in the industry. Our standards are very high and we are totally committed to providing you with the best possible experience. Our guiding team benefits from staff training, peer and client review, daily conditions reports, and support from senior guides. We back up all of our programs with a full time, on-call Duty Manager and support network ready to help in any situation. We also have cutting edge, modern equipment ready to rent or borrow on all of our programs.

When you arrange a private or custom program you will be paying a guide fee plus the expenses incurred in running the program. It is important to understand that should you wish to shorten your

**Program Details, page 1 of 6**

#### **Yamnuska Mountain Adventures**

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trip due to weather or personal reasons you will still be paying for the entire duration that you registered for.

This is an outline of the typical costs involved.

**Backcountry Skiing Day Trips:** This would include local day trips or avalanche training field days to locations in Kananaskis Country, Banff, and Yoho Parks. Typical destinations include Bow Summit, Black Prince, Burstall Pass, Tent Ridge, Tryst Lake, and Observation Peak. Avalanche safety equipment can be provided for an extra \$18/day (Beacon, Probe, and Shovel).

Number in group	Cost / person (Cdn)
1	\$400
2	\$220
3	\$165
4 or more	\$135

**Ski Mountaineering & Advanced Ski Trips:** This would include more advanced ski destinations such as Rogers Pass and multi-day Ski Mountaineering or Traverse trips such as a private Wapta Traverse. Avalanche safety equipment can be provided for an extra \$18/day (Beacon, Probe, and Shovel).

Number in group	Cost / person (Cdn)
1	\$450
2	\$255
3	\$190
4 or more	\$158

These costs do not include Goods & Services Tax (GST) which is 5%. If you are from out of Canada and your private package includes accommodation then the GST is 2.5%. Gratuities are not included.

Before booking your private program we will give you a final quote as to cost.

### **Transportation**

You will either need to provide the transportation for you and the guide or, should the guide need to drive him/herself to the program area then a charge, based on distance will apply. This ranges from \$20 on up depending upon where you go. Once we know whether you will be able to drive the guide or where you will be going we will include transport costs in your quote.

Yamnuska has several 15 passenger vans and we can supply transportation for your group using these. We can quote you a cost for this which will also depend upon how far you are driving and how much the vehicle will be used.

### **Accommodation**

For accommodation before and after a program or during a program involving day trips from either Canmore, Banff or Lake Louise, please refer to our LINKS page for recommendations. The cost of backcountry and mountain huts varies. The simplest huts are those operated by the Alpine Club of Canada, their hut fees average \$25/night/person. More elaborate private huts cost proportionately more. In constructing your private program we will include the cost of these huts for you. The actual costs will be outlined in the quote.

### **Meals**

Yamnuska can supply all your out-trip meals. Should you choose to supply your own we charge you only for the cost of your guide's food.

In planning your menu we will need to know of any special dietary restrictions or preferences you may have (e.g. vegetarian) and of any allergies you may have (e.g. shellfish).

The following daily rates (GST not included) apply:

Guide only: \$25/day  
Guide plus 1 person: \$80/day  
Guide plus 2 persons: \$120/day  
Guide plus 3 persons: \$160/day  
Guide plus 4 persons: \$200/day  
Thereafter an extra \$40/day/extra person.

Food charges will be prorated where less than 3 meals are supplied in a day. Included in the charge is supply of group cooking gear (stoves, pots & pans).

For larger groups we can also arrange for a cook when requested and appropriate (backcountry huts).

### **Gear**

Group safety & technical gear (e.g. ropes, rescue gear) is included in the guide fee. You will need to supply personal clothing and gear (e.g. skis, avalanche beacons), see Gear & Clothing Lists for an idea of what you'll need to bring. Some of these items can be rented and the cost included in your package price.

Yamnuska has these items for rent: avalanche beacons, probes, snow shovels, back packs, daypacks, harnesses, sleeping bags, sleeping mats ('Thermarest') & tents.

Skis, boots, skins, poles & snowboards can be rented locally. See Rental Gear for more info.

### **Guide's Expenses**

You are also responsible for your guide's expenses during your program. These include driving costs (unless you drive the guide), accommodation & meals (doesn't apply to day tours), helicopter costs etc.

### **Miscellaneous Expenses**

Other charges that may apply to a private program are:

**National Park Fees:** If we ski in Banff or the other National Parks entry fees apply (c. \$9/day/person) and if we overnight in a hut or camp a further \$9.90/night/person Wilderness Fee applies.

**Helicopter Access:** Some backcountry huts (e.g. Fairy Meadows) or areas (Assiniboine) are accessed by helicopter. Where the fee is fixed we can include that in our package price, where it may vary we will give you our best estimate and arrange for you to pay the helicopter pilot directly.

**Porters:** We can arrange for a porter to help on the climb up to a hut to lessen your loads. The charge for a porter is \$200/day plus the porter's gas costs. We often do this when accessing Bow Hut in the Wapta Icefields.

### **Definitions**

**Backcountry Skiing** we think of as mainly happening in the zone just above treeline and below. Objectives tend towards making interesting tours and in finding good quality skiing. The challenges tend to be in the areas of route finding and in avoiding avalanche hazard. We can adjust the focus of your program towards finding good snow and making lots of turns at whatever level of difficulty you prefer or towards making tours that cover lots of distance and interesting scenery. We can do this in day trips from the highway or we can base ourselves in backcountry huts or we can even camp.

**Ski Mountaineering** happens on the glaciers at higher elevations and is often oriented to climbing suitable peaks. To our challenges are added safe glacier travel, whiteout navigation and occasionally, basic mountaineering skills. Because we need to get higher up we tend to base our selves in high huts (e.g. those on the Wapta Icefields) or camps. It is also possible to do high ski mountaineering traverses that go hut to hut or camp to camp.

**Avalanche Awareness** programs focus on teaching you the knowledge and practical skills to avoid avalanche hazard and deal with emergencies. Instruction combines class room sessions with backcountry field trips.

### **What is the season?**

Backcountry skiing can happen any time from when the snow first begins to settle (typically early December right through to late April). When the weather is bad the skiing is often great in the trees. When good we can often get into the open bowls above treeline.

Ski Mountaineering is best done later in the winter and in spring when the crevasses on the glacier are largely filled in and covered by snow. In March, April and early May the days are longer, warmer and the weather often better. These are the best months for Ski Mountaineering. Avalanche Awareness is best taught in the winter months, December through February when the snowpack is less stable and there is more instability to see.

### **What Gear To Use?**

Alpine Touring or Telemark? Snowboards?

#### **Skis**

There are two ski systems you can use:

System: 1 'Alpine Touring' skis are essentially 'downhill skis' with a special touring binding which allows the heel to lift whilst going uphill or across the flats and then 'locks down' to become a regular downhill safety binding. We recommend this system to anyone with a background of downhill skiing who is not already an advanced telemark skier.

System 2: 'Telemark' skis. These should only be used for this program if you are at least an advanced-intermediate telemark skier with some backcountry experience. This system is more difficult and less forgiving than the other.

Which should you use? If you are a downhill skier then you should use 'Alpine Touring' gear. Only if you are already an advanced 'Telemark' skier should you bring 'Telemark' gear.

#### **Snow Boards**

Often used in the backcountry or for "board mountaineering". It is important though to choose an area with terrain that is board friendly: reasonably steep with not too many flat areas and with easy access.

If 'boarding' you need to be an advanced boarder and you need to be on a split board. Don't bring a board if you've never boarded in the backcountry before. You can use snowshoes for access and carry your board uphill but this tends to be quite a bit harder.

### **Options & Program Ideas**

#### **Day tours in the Rockies:**

The highways that traverse the Rockies ease access to a wonderful variety of terrain and make rewarding day tours possible. From Canmore, Banff & Lake Louise you can book ski tours for one day or several. Kananaskis Country and the Rocky Mountain National Parks (Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho) are all possible day destinations (Jasper is further away and you may be better staying at one of the hotels or hostels along the Banff-Jasper Parkway).

Private Day tours are easiest to organize and involve the fewest costs, typically just guide fee plus gear rentals, if you are supplying transport.

#### **Rogers Pass in the Selkirks (Glacier National Park)**

Due to its high snowfall, challenging terrain and easy access from the Trans Canada Highway, Rogers Pass has justifiably become a Mecca for backcountry skiers. If you are looking for steep treed terrain and lots of powder this is probably your best option December to early March. Due to the travel time involved in getting there (3 hours from Canmore) we suggest you book for at least 2 days. You can stay at the Best Western Glacier Park Lodge (skier packages available) and ski right from the Hotel, or you can stay in the Alpine Club's historic Wheeler Hut which is located 2 flat kilometers from the road. You can even daytrip from Golden and include a day touring from Golden's fabulous Kicking Horse Resort.

#### **Backcountry Ski & Board Options**

##### **Alpine Huts**

There are several huts which we can use on private programs. Some are Alpine Club Huts with basic facilities and others are well-appointed chalets with running water, saunas etc. Let us discuss possibilities with you. These cabins are often booked months in advance so must be booked very early. We would suggest this option for larger groups.

#### **Day Tours**

In late March, April & early May it is possible to ski high into the alpine zone in Kananaskis Country and off the highway near Lake Louise and Bow Lake.

#### **Wapta Icefields**

With its linked huts this area is one of the best for glacier ski mountaineering in North America. Using these huts we can organize programs where you either stay based in the same hut or move between huts. We can organize a private Wapta Traverse for you and your group (see Wapta Traverse). This is perhaps one of the most popular private options and best for beginners.

#### **Clemenceau Glacier**

Remote and accessed by helicopter or skiplane this area is fabulous for ski mountaineering. You can base from the Alpine Club's Lawrence Grassi Hut or you can camp and move around onto the other nearby glaciers (Apex & Chaba Icefield).

#### **Columbia Icefields**

Easily reached from the Banff-Jasper Parkway or by helicopter, these vast icefields offer the possibility of high ascents of peaks such as Mount Columbia (2nd highest in the Rockies), Kitchener, Snow Dome, Castleguard and the Twins. High camps only.

#### **Ski Traverses**

There are several major multi-day traverses in the Rockies and Interior Mountains of B.C. that we can organize on a private basis. They include the Cariboo Traverse, the Bugaboos to Rogers Pass Traverse and the Clemenceau to Columbia Icefields Traverse. High camps only.

### **Avalanche Awareness**

Avalanche awareness training can be incorporated into any of the other ski or board based programs. We suggest basing an avalanche program in either Canmore or Lake Louise where we can use classroom facilities with field trips to nearby mountains. This type of program lends itself to private groups.

### **Equipment & Clothing Lists**

You will need to bring your own clothing and personal gear (skis, poles, climbing skins, backpack, sleeping bag, etc). We have many of these items available to rent and if not can pre-arrange them for you.

Please visit our website to view equipment lists based on the activity and program you will be doing.

### **Insurance**

In most areas there is no fee for rescue. In the National Parks you must have a valid entry pass to qualify for free rescue. You can obtain this on entry to the Parks. In Assiniboine and other British Columbia Parks you may be liable for the cost of rescue. In this case you need insurance to cover rescue. If in doubt consult us to check whether or not you will need this.

Whilst Canadians are covered for costs associated with medical treatment following accident or illness, overseas visitors should obtain appropriate medical insurance.

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**

We will supply you with a quote which will include all expenses such as meals, accommodation and rental gear when we know your requirements. Registration requires a deposit of 35% of the quote or, for trips of three days or less, full payment. All guests must fill in an application form and an experience questionnaire.

Balance of payment is required eight weeks before trip commencement. Should you cancel more than eight weeks in advance of trip, a \$105 cancellation fee will apply. Cancellation between six and eight weeks before trip commencement will mean a loss of your deposit. Cancellation less than six weeks before trip commencement will result in a loss of all payments made.

We suggest you take cancellation insurance, this is available on booking and will cost 5% of total fee quoted.

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 booking a private program.