

Bow Summit Lookout

A short climb to the alpine

Length: 3.1 km (1.9 mi) one way

Elevation gain: 230 m (760 ft)

Walking time: 1 hour one way

Starting point: Bow Summit, 41 km (25.5 mi) north along the Icefields Parkway from the Trans-Canada Hwy.

Origin of the name: Reeds along the Bow River were used by native people to make bows

SHORT HIKE

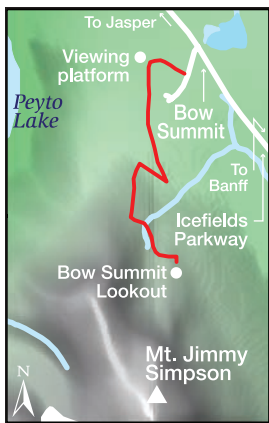


Many thousands of people walk the paved nature trail to the Peyto Lake viewing platform every summer. This short, uphill trek provides Icefields Parkway travellers with an excuse to stretch their legs and take turns photographing the turquoise waters of Peyto Lake, which lie 250 vertical metres (820 feet) below. However, we recommend continuing past this teeming overlook and climbing another 2.5

one of the park's most famous vistas—Peyto Lake



124 Icefields Parkway



looking north from Bow Summit Lookout

kilometres (1.5 miles) to Bow Summit Lookout in search of solitude, sublime alpine meadows, and lofty views.

Beyond the viewing platform, head uphill on the right fork of two paved trails. At a three-way junction, continue on the middle branch, which angles uphill to the left of the interpretive panel. Where the paved trail turns sharply to the right, continue straight ahead on an old roadbed. The road soon switchbacks over a rise, turns southeast, and climbs steadily along the mountain slope. Wildflowers bloom in profusion along this slope in July and early August, including white-flowered valerian and white, pink, and magenta varieties of Indian paintbrush; higher up the lush growth is replaced by fields of ground-hugging white mountain avens and white and pink heather. At km 2.4 (mi 1.5) the trail drops into a basin and crosses a small stream beneath a huge rockslide—a home to marmots. A steady but brief climb beside this wall of boulders brings you to Bow Summit Lookout—a tiny alpine knoll that was once occupied by a fire lookout. From the summit, views extend north along the Mistaya Valley to Waterfowl Lakes. By following a faint, steep uphill path for another 200 metres (660 feet), you reach the best viewpoint for Bow Lake and the glaciated peaks to the south.

Icefields Parkway 125