

Day 1: Arrive, Ascend, Unwind

Three Days of Summer

A classic first-visit blend – iconic viewpoints, a riverside day, and the Willmore Wilderness gateway.

3 Days - May - September - Moderate Pace

Trip Snapshot

BEST FOR First time visitors

LENGTH 3 days, 2 nights

SEASON Late May - September

PACE Moderate

HOME BASE Grande Cache

Day 1: Arrive, Ascend, Unwind

Afternoon – Settle in on the plateau.

Roll into town and head straight for the Tourism & Interpretive Centre on Highway 40. Staff know every trail and river crossing worth knowing about. The on-site museum covers ice-age fossils, dinosaur trackways, and the fur-trade history that gave the area its name. Outside, the Bird's Eye View Interpretive Park has trails, murals, and a life-size replica of the elevated cache Ignace Giasson built between 1818 and 1821.

Late afternoon – Lakes Trail warm-up.

The 5-km route drops from the edge of town to Victor Lake, follows the canal across to Grande Cache Lake, and ends at a quiet beach with the Rockies reflected in the water.

Evening – The prime rib tradition.

Grande Cache has built a quiet reputation among Alberta locals for serving a standout prime rib. A celebratory dinner at High Country Steak & Ale (inside the Grande Cache Hotel) is the right way to start a mountain trip. Book ahead on weekends.

Day 2: The Big Views Day

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Day 2: The Big Views Day

Morning – Sulphur Gates & the Crack of Doom.

A short drive north of town brings you to the Sulphur Gates staging area, the main gateway to Willmore Wilderness Park. The main lookout delivers four cliff-top viewing platforms above the confluence of the Smoky and Sulphur rivers. Continue to Eaton Falls (3.5 km one way), or tackle the dramatically named Crack of Doom – a narrow cleft in the rock that's become a local icon.

Midday – Lunch in town & the Labyrinth.

Casual lunch at a cafe or Mountainview Family Restaurant, then walk off the meal at Labyrinth Park – a contemplative stone labyrinth near the edge of the hamlet.

Afternoon – Summit Mount Louie.

Of the summits within reach of town, Mount Louie (1,844 m) is the friendliest first peak – 5.5 km one way up a northwest ridge, four to six hours return. Bring layers, water, and bear spray; you're in grizzly country.

Evening – Golf Course Sunset.

Wind down on the patio at Grande Cache Golf and Country Club.

Insider Tip:

Sulphur Gates & Crack of Doom

Go early. The light hits the canyon walls best before 10 a.m. Parking is easier, and you'll often have the lookouts to yourself.

Day 3: Quiet Day, Slow Departure

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Day 3: Quiet Day, Slow Departure

Morning – Lake Trail

Ease into the last day with the Lakes Trail to Victor Lake and Grande Cache Lake. Small-town quiet, with locals walking dogs and the occasional morning paddler.

Midday – Central Park & Labyrinth.

Stop at Central Park (Hoppe Avenue and Shand Avenue), then a final walk at Labyrinth Park. If you have a few hours to spare, pick up the One Day Historical Driving Tour brochure at the Interpretive Centre – a nine stop self-guided route through the area's fur trade and coal mining past.