



# Day hikes from Shadow Lake Lodge

## Shadow Lakeshore Trail

**Rating:** Easy. Distance: 3.0 km (1.9 mi) one way.  
**Elevation gain:** Negligible. **Allow:** 1 to 2 hours return.  
**The signed trailhead** is behind Gibbon and Lost Horse cabins.

Follow the well-trod path from the lodge southwest through forest. Take the signed **Lakeshore Trail** that branches upward to the right (north) about 15m (50 ft) before you reach Shadow Lake.



Paul Zizka Photography

This gently rolling path leads above the lake with occasional views down to the lake below. Near the west end of the lake, the trail descends to the shore, where the water is deep and coloured by incoming

glacial silt. To continue on the Waterfalls/Amphitheatre Trail, see the column to the right.

## Getting to Shadow Lake

### Redearth Creek access

**Rating:** Moderate.  
**Distance:** 12.9 km (8.0 mi) one way to Shadow Lake Lodge.  
**Elevation gain:** 440m (1,443 ft). **Allow:** 4 to 5 hours one way.  
**The trailhead** is 19.6 km (12.2 mi) west of Banff on Hwy 1 at the signed Redearth Creek parking lot.

This is the most popular and direct route to Shadow Lake Lodge. You can hike or bike the first 10.5 km (6.5 mi) of this easy-to-follow trail on a wide, tree-fringed old fireroad. Where the fireroad ends, turn right (northeast) toward Shadow Lake. (All bikes are to be locked at the bike rack here.) The path steepens briefly, then levels out for the last 2.4 km (1.5 mi) to the lodge. This last section of trail takes 30 to 40 minutes.

### Arnica/Twin Lakes access

**Rating:** Moderate to strenuous.  
**Distance:** 14 km (8.7 mi) one way to Shadow Lake Lodge.  
**Elevation gain:** 960m total (3,150 ft). **Allow:** 6 to 7 hours one way.  
**The trailhead** is at Vista Lake Viewpoint, 8.2 km (5.1 mi) south of Castle Junction on Hwy 93 South toward Radium Hot Springs.

This is a very scenic route with lots of up and down, but all of it at a moderate grade. You start with a 120m descent to Vista Lake, then climb 75m to a narrow pass on the east slope of Storm Mountain. From there you descend 160m to Upper Twin Lake, then descend another 50m to Lower Twin Lake. Cross the small bridge over the outflow of the lake, then start a 245m climb to Gibbon Pass. (Note: Do not take the trail to Lower Twin Lake to get to the lodge). From Gibbon Pass, the trail descends 460m to the lodge.

## Waterfalls/Amphitheatre

**Rating:** Easy. Distance: 5.5 km (3.4 mi) one way.  
**Elevation gain:** 230m (755 ft). **Allow:** 3 to 3½ hours return.

From the west end of **Shadow Lakeshore Trail** (see column to left), follow the flagged trail on the right (north) side of the creek through the avalanche slope. This section of trail is a little more difficult, as you need to work your way through downed trees and over rough terrain. After the avalanche slope, you arrive at two beautiful waterfalls. The route improves as the trail switchbacks away from the creek and leads through an alpine meadow. Once you reach the moraine, look for weathered stakes propped up by rocks to guide you to the tarn and on to the amphitheatre.



Paul Zizka Photography

Waterfalls/Amphitheatre Trail

## Gibbon Pass

**Rating:** Moderate. Distance: 3.1 km (1.9 mi) one way to the pass.  
**Elevation gain:** 460m (1,509 ft). **Allow:** 3 to 4 hours return.  
**The signed trailhead** is behind Gibbon and Lost Horse cabins.

Gibbon Pass is our favorite hike. It leads to stunning views, flower-filled alpine meadows and golden-coloured larch trees in September.

Heading north from the lodge, you start right in with a steady but well-graded climb through coniferous forest. The trail levels out briefly at about km 1.5, then begins its short ascent to the pass.

## Options from Gibbon Pass: Little Copper

**Rating:** Moderate to strenuous.  
**Distance:** 1.5 km (0.9 mi) one way from Gibbon Pass.  
**Elevation gain:** 480m (1,574 ft). **Allow:** 2½ hrs return from the pass.

If you are feeling energetic, you can scramble up to Little Copper for spectacular views of Shadow Lake to the south, Castle Mountain to the north and Mt. Temple to the west. (See photo to right.) Look for a game trail that crosses Gibbon Pass in the middle of the meadow and ascends the steep west slope of Copper Mountain. Make your way above treeline to a scree slope for a gentle scramble to the summit.

## Twin Lakes

**Rating:** Moderate.  
**Distance:** 2.8 km (1.7 mi) one way from Gibbon Pass to Lower Twin L.  
**Elevation loss:** 245m (804 ft). **Allow:** 3 to 3½ hrs return from the pass.

From Gibbon Pass, follow the path veering to the right (north) past the large cairn honouring John Murray Gibbon. The trail becomes more obvious as you enter forest. After descending 245m, you reach the stream draining from the lake. Turn left (south) for Lower Twin Lake, or cross the outlet stream at the bridge for Upper Twin Lake.

## Ball Pass

**Rating:** Moderate. Distance: 8.0 km (5.0 mi) one way.  
**Elevation gain:** 370m (1,214 ft). **Allow:** 5 to 6 hours return.  
**The signed trailhead** is behind Gibbon and Lost Horse cabins.

Except for the last 2.7 km, this is a mostly level trail through flower-filled meadows, culminating in spectacular views of the hanging glacier on Mt. Ball from the south side of the pass.

From the lodge, hike to Shadow Lake, cross the large footbridge at the outlet and head south up Haiduk Creek through wide meadows.

At Ball Pass Junction and Re21 Campground at km 5.3, turn right (southwest) to follow a small creek. The path climbs gently at first, then steeply as you approach the pass. Near the top of the pass, in the distance, you glimpse the east end of Shadow Lake and the lodge.

## Haiduk Lake

**Rating:** Moderate. Distance: 8.1 km (5.0 mi) one way from the lodge.  
**Elevation gain:** 230m (755 ft). **Allow:** 5 hours return.  
**The signed trailhead** is behind Gibbon and Lost Horse cabins.

This is an easier excursion to scenic Haiduk Lake, backdropped by rugged Haiduk Peak. The trail is the same as Ball Pass (above) until you reach Ball Pass junction at km 5.3 km (mi 3.3). Veer left (south) here at Re21 Campground. You climb steeply for a few minutes, then follow an easy grade to Haiduk Lake. To continue to Whistling Pass or on Egypt Lake Loop, see below.

## Whistling Pass

**Rating:** Moderate to strenuous.  
**Distance:** 2.9 km (1.8 mi) from Haiduk Lake to Whistling Pass.  
**Elevation gain:** 230m (755 ft) additional from Haiduk Lake.  
**Allow:** 4 to 5½ hours return from Haiduk Lake.



Paul Zizka Photography

Shadow Lake from Little Copper  
(see column to left)

From Haiduk Lake, the trail contours around the east shore, then starts a stiff climb through a rockfall to Whistling Pass.

Views from the pass take in Haiduk, Scarab and Mummy Lakes, as well as Mt. Ball. The pass is named after the shrill whistles of the hoary marmots who make their home here.

## Egypt Lake Loop

**Rating:** Strenuous. Distance: 25.9 km (16 mi) total for the loop.  
**Elevation gain:** 565m (1,854 ft) total. **Allow:** At least 9 hours.

This is a long day hike from the lodge, but worth the effort. From **Whistling Pass** (above), head down to Scarab Lake. Then you climb a short rise and look down to Egypt Lake. Descend toward Egypt Lake where a short side trail leads to a good view. After passing Egypt Lake Campground, continue north up Pharaoh Creek to complete an epic loop back to the lodge.