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Canadian Rockies including Banff and Jasper National Parks, 2nd Edition

THE BOOK

Author	Andrew Hempstead
Publisher	Moon Handbooks
Published	2001
Format	Paperback, 5" x 7.5"
Pages	229
ISBN-10	1-56691-271-7
Price	$16.95

CANADIAN ROCKIES ARE CALLING YOU!

Canadian Rockies including Banff and Jasper National Parks, 2nd Edition, *by* Andrew Hempstead, Paperback, 5" x 7.5"

Moon Handbooks,Avalon Travel Publishing, 5855 Beaudry St., Emeryville, CA 94608, USA. Email: info@travelmatters.com, Publication Date April 2001. 229 pages, ISBN 1-56691-271-7. Price US$16.95, Can $26.00

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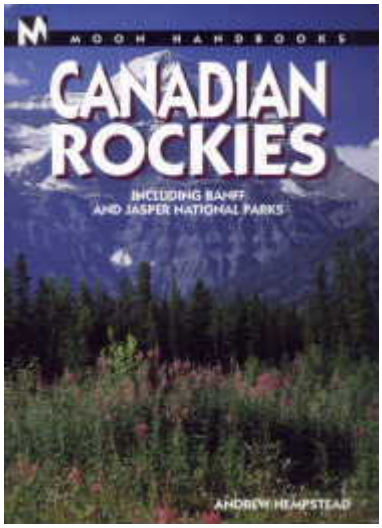
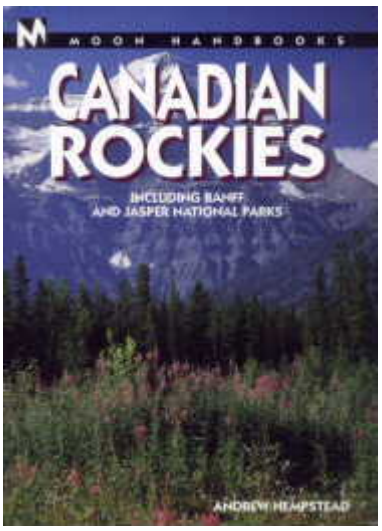


One of the tenets of a good travel book is that it has the power to make you feel as if you are already in the region described in that book. It can take you on an "armchair tour" of the region, so to say. The book under review does exactly that.

When you pick up the book, and shuffle through it, the pictures, the maps and various other pieces of information inside it have exactly this effect on you. Andrew Hempstead - the author of this book, and a widely traveled person - seems to have got that rare gift of travel writing.

Excerpts



The book makes clever use of boxes to give additional (travel related) information. When you are idly shuffling through the book, these boxes tend to catch your attention. Reading them is sheer pleasure. Sample some excerpts from the box which appears at page 42.

WILD BILL PEYTO



Bill Peyto, one of Banff's earliest characters and one of the Canadian Rockies' greatest guides came to Canada from England in 1886 at the tender age of 18. Wearing a tilted sombrero, fringed buckskin coat, cartridge belt, hunting knife, and six-shooter, he looked more like a gunslinger than a mountain man.

As his reputation as a competent guide grew, so did the stories. While guiding clients on one occasion, he led them to his cabin. Before entering, Peyto threw stones in the front door until a loud snap was heard. it was a bear trap that he'd set up to catch a certain trapper who'd been stealing his food. One of the guests commented that if caught, the trapper would surely have died. "You're damned right he would have." Bill replied. "Then I'd have known for sure it was him."

Travel writing is not easy. It is an art form. Not only has one to provide information like history and geography of the region, accommodation tariffs, and routes, one has to be able to keep the reader glued to the book. And as already mentioned, the book must have the power to mentally transport you to that region. The books by Andrew seem to have these qualities.

The book comes fortified with several maps in color. These maps show the region of Canadian Rockies in various magnifications. A glance at these maps would make the reader familiar with the region.

Divided into ten chapters, the book describes ALL the five National Parks of the Canadian Rockies - the Banff National Park, Jasper National Park, Yoho National Park, Kootenay National Park and Waterton Lakes National Park. Besides these, the books gives information on some lesser traveled parks of the Canadian Rockies (in fact there is a full chapter devoted to it), on some wilderness areas, on Canmore traditionally known as the "gateway to the mountain national parks" and Kananaskis country.

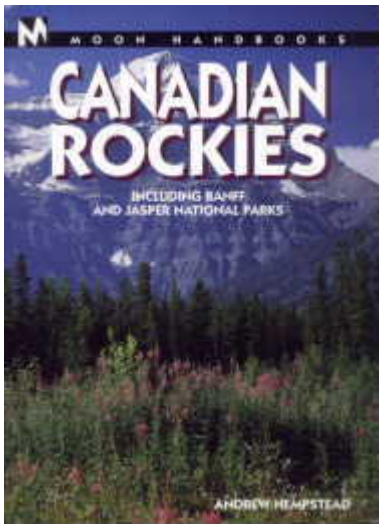
The lesser known parks described in this book are the Akamina/Kishinena Provincial Park, Elk Lakes Provincial Park, Height of the Rockies Provincial Park, Mt. Assiniboine Provincial Park, Mt. Robson Provincial Park, Top of the World Provincial Park, and Whiteswan lake Provincial Park. The Wilderness areas described are Siffleur Wilderness area, White Goat Wilderness area and Willmore Wilderness Park. These regions, as the book informs us, are truly wild. You won't find any restaurants, accommodation, even roads. They are just as the name describes them - wild.

Whenever I travel to a new region, I like to know about its history, people, flora, fauna, even things such as geology and topography. Not only does this information quench my thirst for knowledge, it actually helps me to become familiar with the new territory mentally. And I find myself better equipped to deal with the new place and people. Surprisingly very few travel books give information on subjects like these. Their range limits to giving phrases in local language like "how much" and "too much" and the accommodation tariffs. This book devotes an entire chapter on subjects like flora, fauna, history and geology. This is one reason, I found this book particularly absorbing. Of course readers not interested in these topics, may easily skip this chapter.

Canadian Rockies - as we all know - are a string of mountains between the Western provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. They straddle not just one but three nations. Starting from the dense forests of central Mexico, they run North through the US states of New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Then they continue across the 49th parallel (the US-Canada Border), enter Canada and form the natural boundary between British Columbia and Alberta (the actual provincial boundary is the Continental Divide, an imaginary line that runs along the highest peaks of the Rockies). The Rockies go further north and finally descend to their northern terminus in the boreal forests of northern Canada. The National Parks described in this book straddle on both sides of the Rockies. The ones on Eastern side (Alberta) are the Jasper, Banff and Waterton Lakes National Parks (from North to South). And the ones on the Western side (British Columbia) are the Yoho and the Kootenay National Parks. All information regarding accommodations, recreational activities, flora, fauna etc are given separately for each National Park.

QUICK NOTES

Some major highlights of *Canadian Rockies including Banff and Jasper National Parks* at a glance:



& A comprehensive look at regional geology, human history, flora and fauna, and all the top attractions
& Advice on how to make the most of your visit to the Canadian Rockies' five national parks - Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, and Waterton Lakes
& Extensive restaurant listings and a wealth of overnight options ranging from lakeside campgrounds to the historic Chateau Lake Louise
& Detailed trail descriptions for day hikers, backpackers, and mountain bikers
& 23 easy-to-use maps

Another feature of the book that I found particularly interesting is the rendering of additional information in separate boxes. These pieces of information do not fit exactly in the main text, but serve very well to set the frame for the accompanying text. For instance, when you are reading the section on the "climate" you get to read about Chinook winds in a separate box. A clear crisp diagram helps you understand exactly what this is. Similarly when you are reading the history of the region, you get to read about a colorful character Wild Bill Peyto in a separate box, along with his picture. At other places you get to read such additional information as The Alpine club of Canada (page 102), the Brewster Boys (page 91), and Lake Louise (page 52). Interesting quotes, stories, and anecdotes are given to spice up the matter throughout the book.

Of course we get to read traditional things like accommodation tariffs and the various recreational activities too. The author tends to give the websites of all relevant places wherever necessary. For instance, while giving information on accommodations, he gives you not just one, but three websites. Incidentally these are www.alberta-accommodations.com, www.alberta-campgrounds.com, and www.alpineclubofcanada.ca. One can immediately log on to these sites and book accommodations there.

In all a very good and useful book for everyone. If you are heading for Canadian Rockies, this book is certainly for you. But if for some reason, you don't plan to go there, even then this book is worth a try. After all, for just a few dollars you get to get a satisfying armchair tour of this interesting region!

Order this Book by clicking here

-Editor-in-Chief

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