



Elizabeth Parker Hut

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Elizabeth Parker Hut by Nancy Hansen

Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policy

Elizabeth Parker Hut is very popular in the summer and therefore a lottery system has been put in place. For information on the summer booking policies visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/ep.html#bookings>

View the Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policies at: www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/reservations.html

Rates

Visit www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html for current hut and wilderness pass prices.

Getting There

The Elizabeth Parker Hut sits at the edge of a small subalpine meadow near Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park, amid some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the Rockies. The following information should be used in conjunction with the correct topographic map (maps are listed below).

Summer

Trailhead location:	12 km west of Lake Louise, AB / 13 km east of Field, BC
Hiking distance:	<1 km
Elevation gain:	50 m / 165 ft.
Approximate time:	15 minutes

Winter

Trailhead location:	12 km west of Lake Louise, AB / 13 km east of Field, BC
Skiing distance:	12 km
Elevation gain:	400 m / 1300 ft.
Approximate time:	3-5 hours

Trailhead location

The Lake O'Hara trailhead is located on the south side of the Trans-Canada Highway, 12km west of Lake Louise, Alberta and 13km east of Field, BC. The turn-off to the trailhead is signed on the highway. After crossing the railroad tracks, turn right and drive about 200 metres to the parking area.

Summer approach

The easiest and fastest way of approaching the hut is via the Lake O'Hara fire road. The road is serviced in the summer months (mid-June to early October) by a Parks Canada bus, which picks passengers up at the Lake O'Hara parking lot four times daily. You can make your bus booking through the ACC office or on-line at the time you make your hut reservation. From the bus drop off point at Le Relais day use shelter, it is less than 1km to the hut on a good trail (see below for an exact description of the trail).

The road is not open to private vehicles at any time. The road can be hiked, but mountain bikes are not permitted. The hike up the road involves 12km of travel with 400 metres of elevation gain. After ~11km, you will reach the campground and a short distance further you will arrive at "Le Relais" day use shelter.

Le Relais to the Hut: From Le Relais, turn right onto a trail between the shelter and the Parks Canada outhouses. Follow the signed trail up and over a small hill. On the other side of the hill, the trail descends a short distance and then turns right and follows Schäffer creek to the Elizabeth Parker Hut. From Le Relais, the walk to the hut takes about 10 minutes.

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Winter approach

Winter access is the same as in summer (see above), but requires skis or snowshoes.

The ski approach to Elizabeth Parker Hut can take anywhere from 3-7 hours, depending on whether you are breaking trail, the weight of your pack and the type of skis you use. Parks Canada considers the access route a simple Class 1; it is primarily forested terrain with some forest openings that may involve the runout zones of infrequent avalanches.

Summer Bus Information

The Alpine Club of Canada only takes bus reservations for people staying at Elizabeth Parker or Abbot Pass huts – we do NOT book people on the bus for day trips or camping. For day trips or camping, people must book the bus through Parks Canada. The Yoho information center is open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, phone (250) 343-6433.

The bus into Lake O'Hara runs from mid June to early October each year. The bus ride takes 20 to 30 minutes. See below for information on buses outside of regularly scheduled bus times. For the bus schedule, visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/ohara.html>

You must arrive 20-25 minutes early for any bus you take into Lake O'Hara. The bus leaves ON TIME, and you must allow time for luggage loading prior to departure.

The ACC is allotted 12 seats on each of the morning in-going buses, and 24 seats on each of the afternoon in-going buses. See below for tips on how to possibly get on a morning bus even if you can only reserve space on an afternoon bus. You cannot reserve space on an outgoing bus – it is first come, first served.

Children under the age of two do not need to be booked on the bus as long as they sit on their parents' laps. If the child is two or older, they MUST have a bus booking.

Maps and Guidebooks

All of the following books and maps can be purchased through the ACC office or online through the ACC online store at: www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html

Map and GPS references

Map reference:	82N/8 (Lake Louise)
Grid reference:	457983
GPS coordinates:	51° 21' 18"-116° 20' 36" NAD83 11U 545726 5689508
Hut elevation:	2,040m (6,700 feet).

Maps

- Chrismar Mapping Services 1:20,000 topographic map entitled "Lake O'Hara". This excellent map shows trails and area highlights in detail.
- Gem Trek Publishing 1:20,000 topographic map entitled "Lake O'Hara". This excellent map shows trails and area highlights in detail.
- Gem Trek Publishing 1:50,000 topographic map entitled "Lake Louise and Yoho". This excellent map shows the trails and highlights of the area.
- The 1:50,000 Canadian Government issued standard topographic map "82N/8 Lake Louise". The Elizabeth Parker Hut is not the "Alpine Club" cabin marked on the south shore of Lake O'Hara this map. The hut is located at grid reference 457983.

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Guidebooks and general interest books

- *Backcountry Huts and Lodges of the Rockies and Columbias*, by Jim Scott
- *Canadian Rockies Trail Guide*, by Patton and Robinson
- *Don't Waste Your Time in the Canadian Rockies*, by Kathy & Craig Copeland
- *The Wonder of Yoho*, by Don Beers
- *Lake O'Hara Trails*, by Don Beers
- *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Sean Dougherty
- *The 11,000ers of the Canadian Rockies*, by Bill Corbett
- *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*, by Chic Scott
- *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies*, by Alan Kane
- *Waterfall Ice Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Joe Josephson
- *Artists of the Rockies*, by Jane Lytton Gooch
- *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*, by Ben Gadd

Website Links

Current conditions

Weather: Go to www.weather.gc.ca click on <BC>, then scroll down to <Yoho National Park>. The weather forecasts are updated 3 times daily.

Avalanche Hazard: Go to www.avalanche.ca click on the <Public Avalanche Bulletins> and review the section for <Banff/Yoho/Kootenay National Parks>. The avalanche forecast for this region is kept currently updated.

Area information

Avalanche Terrain Rating System (ATES): Parks Canada has developed a classification system for avalanche terrain, and has applied ratings to approximately 250 trips in the Mountain National Parks. For more information, visit www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/visit/visit7a1_E.asp

Google Earth Reference: The Lake O'Hara area is covered in high resolution on Google Earth. Go to <http://earth.google.com/>. You will find the Elizabeth Parker Hut at 51° 21' 19.52" N, 116° 20' 38.69" W (or search for <Lake O'Hara>).

1:50,000 Topographic Map: The Canadian Government offers free downloads of their regular 1:50,000 topo maps. The map files are large (25 MB) and take a few minutes to download. You will find this service at: <http://www.geogratis.gc.ca/geogratis/en/product/search.do?id=10119>. Perform your search by selecting "NTS Mapsheet", and enter 082N08. Next, press "Search" under "Search Options" (without changing any of the information in "Search Options"). Select 082N08 from the options and download it.

1:50,000 Topo Map: Area specific version – YellowMaps.com offers access to the Canadian Government maps, but in smaller, area-specific versions. You will find the Lake O'Hara area at http://yellowmaps.com/topo/_lakeohara_bc/index2.htm

Parks Canada Info

Wilderness Passes in National Parks

Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, and Glacier National Parks collect a fee for backcountry overnight use in the Parks. The fees collected from the wilderness passes go towards maintaining trails, supplying the voluntary registration service, avalanche forecasting, backcountry bridge-building, etc. Overnight users of the ACC huts (ages 16 and over) are required to pay this fee. A copy of the wilderness passes should be carried in the backcountry at all times as a Parks Canada representative may ask to see proof of purchase.

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We encourage you to buy these passes from the ACC, as 40% of the monies collected goes to a special huts account for our heritage huts and environmental improvements. You will be offered the option to purchase the pass when you make a reservation, or you can buy an annual pass from our online store at: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html>. For current rates, visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html>.

Vehicle Permits

All vehicles stopping in a National Park must have a Park Motor Vehicle Permit. Annual or single day permits can be purchased at most Park entrance gates and Park visitor centres.

Maximum Group Size

The maximum group size for hiking is 10 persons. If your group is larger, you will need to split into smaller groups.

Voluntary Hazardous Activities Registration

It is recommended that anyone participating in hazardous activities in the backcountry register with the Park Wardens. This registration is free and is the best method of ensuring that someone comes looking for you should the worst happen. You can register at any Parks Canada Visitor Centre.

What Is At the Hut

Summary

Heating:	Wood stove
Lighting:	Propane
Cooking:	Propane oven & range, cookware, dishes & utensils provided
Sleeping:	Dormitory style on thick foam mattresses
Capacity:	24 in summer, 20 in winter
Drinking water:	From the creek (boil or filter)
Human Waste:	Outhouse
Dishwater:	Ground sump
Garbage:	Pack it out!

The buildings

The Elizabeth Parker Hut is actually two buildings: the main hut and the Wiwaxy Cabin. The main hut consists of a large kitchen area and a living room which houses sleeping quarters, tables and a wood burning stove. The Wiwaxy Cabin has sleeping quarters only - users share the kitchen and living area with the main hut users.

Sleeping arrangements

The main building sleeps up to 16 people comfortably on four-inch thick, covered foam mattress found on two long bunks. The Wiwaxy Cabin sleeps eight people comfortably on four-inch thick, covered foam mattress found on two bunk levels.

Capacity

The total capacity of the two huts is 24 people in the summer and 20 in the winter.

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Kitchen

The kitchen is well supplied with dishes, cutlery, utensils, pots and pans and bake ware (including roasting pans, cookie sheets, bread pans and muffin pans). There is a full size propane oven, as well as several two-burner propane stoves for cooking.

Lighting

The hut is lit by several propane lights. Propane is supplied by the ACC via a large outdoor tank.

Heat

There is a wood-burning stove in the main cabin, and another in the Wiwaxy Cabin during winter months only. Firewood is stored behind the outhouse. Please replace all firewood you use in the hut with cut and split wood from the pile.



Interior of Elizabeth Parker Hut

Tools

The hut has a good supply of tools including water buckets, axes, saws, shovels, etc.

Drinking Water

Drinking water is available 30m to the north of the hut from the creek which runs down from Odaray Mountain. An easily accessible pipe can be found under the bridge. During winter, you will find some unfrozen pools under the snow at the junction of two creeks approximately 80m northeast of the hut. It is recommended that you boil or filter all drinking water.

Grey Water

Grey water disposal is in a ground sump next to the hut. You can drain grey water directly down the sinks, but please ensure that the strainer is in place under the drain. Do not allow any food scraps (including coffee grounds) to enter the grey water sump or it will become plugged. Please periodically empty the strainer contents into the fireplace. The grey water sump occasionally freezes in the winter. In this case, please dump your grey water (strained of food particles) within a three metre radius of the outhouse.

Human Waste

The outhouse is located 25m southwest of the front door of the main hut. Do not dispose of any garbage in the outhouse.

Garbage

Burn all paper garbage and food scraps, and pack out all other garbage and unused food. In the summer, all recyclables which are clean and separated may be taken to the Le Relais day shelter. Garbage can be deposited in Parks Canada containers at the campground. In the winter all garbage and recyclables must be packed out.

What You Need to Bring

- combination lock number for the hut door (call the ACC office to confirm before you go to the hut)
- sleeping bag
- toilet paper
- newspaper for lighting the fire
- matches
- first aid kit

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- 9V battery for the smoke detector
- reservation form from the ACC (with bus reservation information where applicable)
- Parks Canada overnight or annual wilderness pass (the former will be on your reservation form if you purchase it through the ACC). Parks Canada will ask to see your pass/receipt when you board the bus.

Hut Rules

Here is a list of simple rules we ask that you follow in order to maximize everyone's enjoyment of the "hut experience".

While at the hut:

- No smoking.
- Dogs are not permitted in any ACC facility (with the exception of seeing eye dogs).
- Some Parks also outlaw dogs entirely; leashed or not. Check before you go!
- If you arrive at the hut before 2:00pm, put your belongings where they will not disturb the previous nights' occupants.
- Please be considerate of others; the hut should be quiet by 10 pm.
- Carry out all of your garbage.
- Do not do personal washing in cooking pots or nearby streams - use wash basins and slop pits.
- Fill stoves and lanterns outside the hut and leave extra fuel outside.
- Clean the stoves after using them.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Follow posted instructions for care and maintenance of toilet systems so that they function properly with minimum odour and environmental impact.

When leaving a hut:

- If your belongings will be in the hut after 2:00pm, and you are not staying that night, be sure to pack everything up and leave it out of the way in a corner so the new guests can move in.
- Leave all tools inside the hut when not being used.
- Empty all water containers and slop buckets before leaving the hut.
- Take out all leftover food as food left in the hut encourages rodents. (Other people generally won't use it as they don't know how old it is.)
- Bring out damaged axes, lanterns or stoves and discharged fire extinguishers - advise the national office.
- Close & latch the outhouse door when leaving to keep out rodents & snow.
- Close/lock hut, replace shutters (if applicable), before leaving the hut.
- A nearly full outhouse, damage to hut & similar matters should be reported to the national office (you may call collect)

Please leave the hut in better condition than you found it. Thank you for your consideration in following these rules, and have a great time!

Things To Do Around the Hut

Hiking

The hiking in the Lake O'Hara area is world-renowned. Surrounded by high jagged peaks, tumbling glaciers and pristine alpine lakes, visitors can choose from short, flat trails to long, steep hikes that wind their way up into the alpine. Early summer provides an abundance of wildflowers and raging waterfalls, while fall displays lovely golden larch trees. Wildlife can be seen throughout the year.

For those looking for a little more adventure, a visit to the Elizabeth Parker Hut can be combined with a trip to the Abbot Pass Hut, a national historic site perched high on the col between Mts. Victoria and Lefroy.

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Climbing and scrambling

The Lake O'Hara area has a huge abundance of alpine rock climbing and mountaineering. Classics include Wiwaxy Ridge (5.7), Mt. Odaray (5.4/snow/ice), Mt. Hungabee (5.3/snow/ice), and Mt. Huber (scrambling and glacier). See Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies <link to the online store> by Sean Dougherty for route information.

There are a number of scrambles that one can do easily in a day from the Elizabeth Parker Hut. Wiwaxy Peak (via Wiwaxy Gap), Mt. Yukness, Mt. Shaeffer (from McArthur Lake) and Little Odaray all offer fine outings.

Backcountry Skiing

The Elizabeth Parker Hut is very popular in winter. It is one of the few ACC huts which can be reasonably reached with light cross-country skis. The ski touring in the area ranges from easy, flat tours to advanced ski mountaineering.

Ice climbing

The area has one well-known ice climb on Wiwaxy Peak – Sad and Beautiful World (160m, WI 4). Refer to Waterfall Ice Climbs in the Canadian Rockies for more information.

History

As much as any single person, Elizabeth Parker was responsible for the formation of the Alpine Club of Canada.

For many years, climber and surveyor A.O. Wheeler had a desire to begin a Canadian alpine club "similar to the European and other big alpine clubs of the world representing mountain ranges such as the Canadian Cordillera," but could not rouse sufficient interest and support, meeting instead with skepticism and indifference. In 1902, in a conversation at Glacier House, Rogers Pass with Charles Fay, Wheeler decided to form a Canadian chapter of the American Alpine Club, which Fay was in the process of forming. When Wheeler tried to garner support for the idea through the country's leading newspapers, Elizabeth Parker, then on the staff of the Winnipeg Free Press, chastised him for his lack of patriotism. Wheeler asked Parker to support his "plan A", a truly Canadian club, and got the support in spades. As Wheeler said of the Club's co-founder: "Her cultured and forcible style of writing, her keen sense of vision and invariable accuracy of statement was one of the most helpful factors of the Club's foundation." Largely due to the efforts of Elizabeth Parker and the Winnipeg Free Press, the Alpine Club of Canada was formed in Winnipeg on March 27, 1906; Mrs. Parker was one of six original honorary members.

The present Wiwaxy cabin was the first hut in the Lake O'Hara area, built in 1912 by the Canadian Pacific Railway. This was the same year that the ACC applied for and was granted a two-acre lease for a future hut on the south shore of Lake O'Hara, the site of the Club's 1909 annual camp. In 1919, the CPR built the present Elizabeth Parker Hut, and by 1923 had built a further 11 huts in the meadow. In 1923/24, the CPR moved all but the first two huts down to the lakeshore, and seven years later donated the last two in the meadow to the ACC. The Club was able to exchange its lakeshore lease for a meadow lease, and in 1931 was in business with a hut at Lake O'Hara - the Elizabeth Parker Hut.

As you can expect with log buildings, the Elizabeth Parker Hut has required substantial renovations and upkeep. Over the years the hut has seen a new floor, a new roof, new timbers and new foundation logs, as well as completely new interior furnishings. The outhouses are new, a stove in the Wiwaxy Cabin has been added and the entire meadow around the hut has been rehabilitated and reseeded. Over the past couple of years, the Huts Committee has worked very hard to restore the appearance of the hut as closely as possible to its original state. The Canadian government designated the Elizabeth Parker Hut as a Federal Heritage Building in 1997.

"...her memory is preserved by the very popular tribute inscribed with her name, the 'Elizabeth Parker Hut', maintained in one of the most charming centres of the Canadian Rockies, close by beautiful Lake O'Hara." (Quotation from Elizabeth Parker's obituary by A. O. Wheeler, CAJ #29)