



MALIGNE CANYON - JASPER NATIONAL PARK



Rating: Easy Hike

Length: 1+ hours (Lower to Upper (one way) 1.8 miles)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall

Waypoints:

Upper Parking Area

11U 432731mE 5863915mN

N52° 55' 14" W118° 00' 02"

Lower Parking Area

11U 431666mE 5864010mN

N52° 55' 17" W118° 00' 59"

Hype

One of the must-do sights near Jasper is Maligne Canyon. A short hike visits a stunning canyon section where the Maligne River has cut deeply into the limestone layer, eroding a gorge that is, in spots, only 2 meters (6 feet) wide and 50 meters (160 feet) deep. A trail follows along the top of the gorge, crossing at several points to give close views of the tumultuous waters ragging in the canyon floor below.

Maligne Canyon is one of the most popular hikes in the area, and quite busy. Those wanting a short walk should start at the upper trailhead. The most dramatic sections of the canyon are near the upper trailhead and within just a few minutes of the parking lot. For those looking for a bit longer journey, I recommend hiking from the lower trailhead to the upper trailhead and back. Hike from the bottom and back sees the full canyon twice and a nice outing.

Tags: *hike, family friendly, access: paved*

Trailhead

Lower Trailhead

Head north out of Jasper on 16A to its junction with AB-16. Turn left on AB-16 toward Edmonton. After 1.8km, turn right onto Maligne Lake Rd.

The Maligne Lake road crosses the Athabasca River. Follow it for 3.1km to a signed Maligne Canyon Trailhead sign. Turn left and follow the side road 700 meters to its end at the trailhead.

Upper Trailhead

Instead of turning off the Malign Canyon road, stay on it for an additional 3 km. The signed Malign Canyon upper trailhead is on the left. There is a restaurant at the trailhead and a large parking lot. On weekends, this parking area can fill up early.

Route

Lower Trailhead

From the lower trailhead, the trail crosses the Malign River, then heads upstream climbing reasonably steeply. At the first junction, go right, then right again at the second junction which stays closer to the river and is more scenic, in my opinion.

From here, it is an amble up along the river as the canyon deepens and becomes more and more dramatic. At the upper bridges, there is a trail on either side of the canyon. There are lots of options to see the canyon from different viewpoints. Return when you reach the upper parking lot.

Upper Trailhead

Follow the trail as it follows the canyon rim downstream. Several bridges and trails allow for excellent views into the gorge. Return the same way when motivation or time runs out.

