Headline: Peak experience awaits at Canadian Rockies

Deckhead: Parks, mountains, lakes and more offer walk on wild side

There aren’t enough adjectives to describe the beauty of the Canadian Rockies. Magnificent, splendid and glorious may quickly come to mind, but they barely scratch the surface.

Words paint a picture in our minds, but nothing tells a true story better than witnessing it with our own eyes. Natural wonders have been spurring our senses from the beginning of time.

Snow-covered mountains, winding canyons and fascinating rock formations are among the many treasures waiting to be discovered. Meadows carpeted with wildflowers and supernatural glacial lakes put a bow on this gift of travel.

Banff National Park is 80 miles west of Calgary. Its spectacular views have lured Hollywood icons and British Royalty, but the brightest stars are the local elk who wander the streets. Gushing Bow Falls sits adjacently to the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel. Inspired by a Scottish castle, it took an army of stone-carvers and masons nearly two decades to complete.

The Banff Gondola sends passengers on an eight-minute ride to the summit of Sulphur Mountain. Marvel at 360-degree views of Banff, the Bow Valley and six scenic mountain ranges that ascend 7,486 feet above sea level.

Snow-clad snow domes and Victoria Glacier surround Lake Louise, 36 miles west of Banff. The water’s mysterious blue-green color is the result of fine, glacial “rock flour” particles suspended in the water.

Moraine Lake sits 10 minutes from Lake Louise. The invaluable location once graced the Canadian $20 bill. Loft peaks, including the third-highest mountain in the Rockies, from this crystalline waterway.

Appreciate stunning scenery while traveling Bow Valley Parkway. The 35-mile excursion should include a stop at Johnson Canyon. Seven waterfalls are hidden inside secluded rock walls and accessible by a walking trail. Bighorn sheep and mountain goats frequent the limestone cliffs near Upper Falls. Cross the Continental Divide into Yoho National Park to visit Takakkaw Falls – a cascade higher than Niagara Falls.

Icefields Parkway – called “20 Switzerlands in one” – links Lake Louise to Jasper. The 143-mile parkway offers a constant changing of the mountains, waterfalls, icefields and more than 600 glaciers – the most among other roads on the continent.

Columbia Icefield feeds six major glaciers. That is where you can board an Ice Explorer – an all-terrain vehicle with tires five feet in diameter – for a trek across the Rockies’ biggest icefield and the Athabasca Glacier. The four-mile-long tongue of the ice is the greatest ice mass outside the Arctic Circle.

Witness spectacular scenery, including the Athabasca Falls, on the road to Jasper. Canada’s largest mountain park is home to Mount Robson, the tallest peak in the Canadian Rockies. Considered the backbone of the world, it allows visitors to make a thrilling ascent up Whistler Mountain aboard the Jasper Aerial Tramway.

Regality rarely comes easy, but a visit to the Canadian Rockies is a trip meant for a king and queen.

Cutline: MASTERPIECE – The Canadian Rockies reflect off Moraine Lake in western Canada. Image: Horticulture. Adobe Stock.