



Jasper and Banff Trip Report
May 19-22, 2023
SD 73 International Student Program



Twenty-three students and four chaperones left Kamloops at 7:30 am on Friday May 19, 2023. Our tour bus headed north on the Yellowhead Highway towards Jasper National Park. We had a brief stop in Clearwater and then found our first Black bear on the side of the road near Blue River. Following this, we stopped for lunch in Valemount before heading east towards Jasper. This route takes you past Mt. Robson, the highest point in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. There was some forest fire smoke in the air, obscuring our view of Mt. Robson.



Once in the Jasper area, we drove directly to the Jasper Skytram and were able to secure an earlier time to go up the tram than we had previously arranged. This skytram takes people up above the treeline where there is fantastic scenery and several short walks.





Clockwise from top left: Golden-Mantled ground Squirrel seen above the treeline at the top of the sky tram. A large Grizzly Bear along the road between the sky tram and the hostel. A Moose seen on the Friday night wildlife drive. Students looking at the Moose. Below: Random photos from Friday night.



The next morning we went on a wildlife drive from 6:45-8:30 and saw the following clockwise from top left: Moose, Elk, Mountain Goats, a Bald Eagle, Beaver, and a Mule Deer.



At 8:45, all of us left the hostel and drove 10-15 minutes south to a place along the Athabasca River where we boarded raft boats. The scenery in Jasper is breath taking and we had perfect weather conditions for our one hour float.

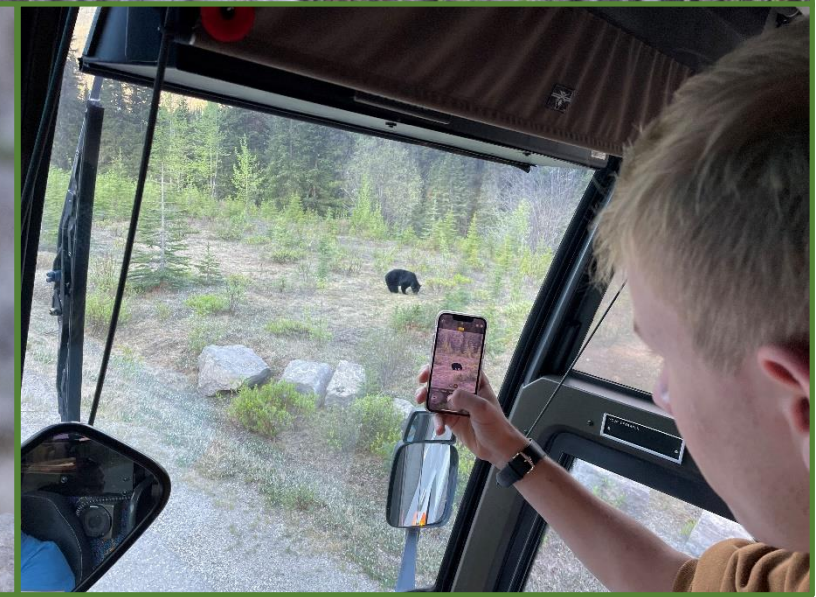


After rafting, we had some free time for lunch, shopping, or resting before meeting again at the bus at 1:00 pm to head out for a hike. We hiked the valley of the Five Lakes Trail and stopped at many different places including a place where you can walk into one of the gorgeous lakes.





The next morning, some of the students met for a morning wildlife drive from 6:30-8:30. We saw three Black Bears, White-tailed Deer, and Hoary Marmots on this drive.





We left Jasper and headed to Banff around 10am, stopping at the Columbia Ice Fields. We had spectacular weather for our ice fields and skywalk tours there.



Riding on an Ice Explorer bus out on to the Athabasca Glacier

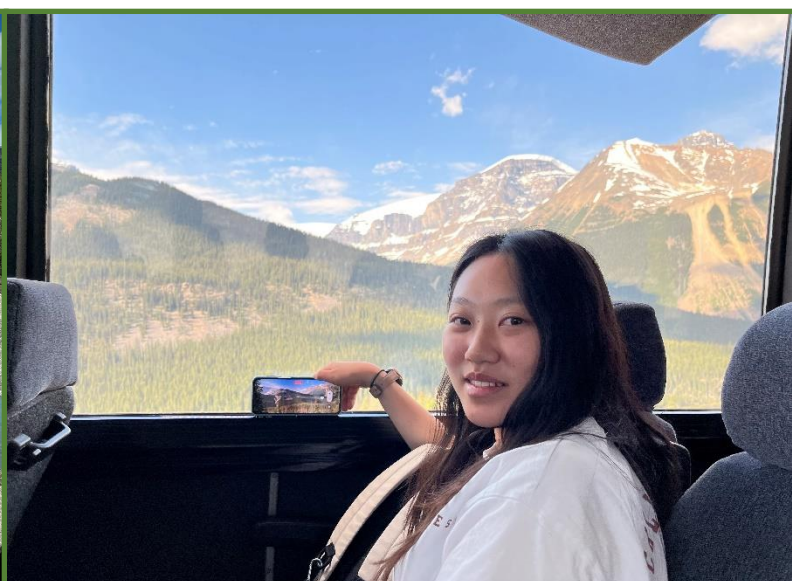




The sky walk is a glass bridge around 300m up from the valley below.

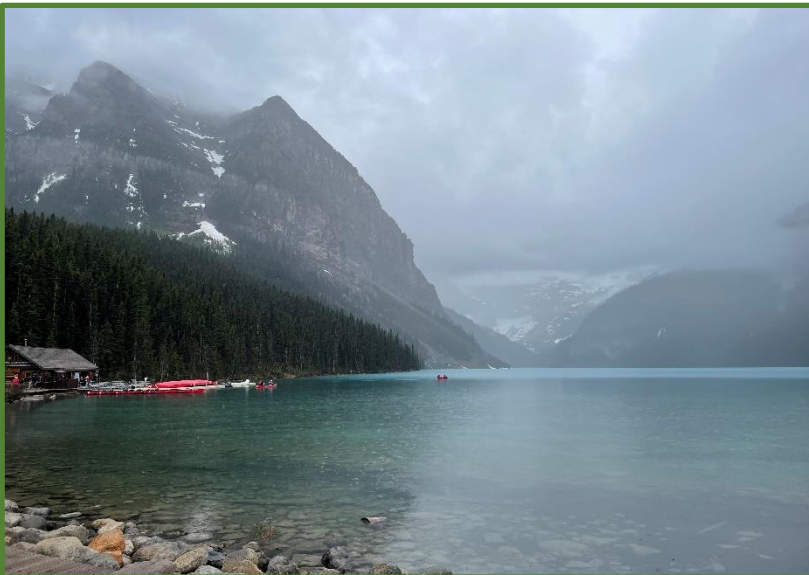


After the Ice Fields and Skywalk tours, we travelled south the rest of the way to Banff. The photos below are from the rest of the drive on one of the most beautiful roads in the world.





Mammals seen on the day between Jasper and Banff. Clockwise from top left: Columbian Ground Squirrel, Mountain Goat, White-tailed Deer, and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep.



We had some time in Banff to shop and get supper on the last night. We left Banff at 8:30 the next morning and drove the 5.5 hours back to Kamloops. On the way, we stopped at Lake Louise where it was rainy and cloudy. We arrived in Kamloops at 5pm.

Students on this trip were from: Brazil, Taiwan, Belgium, Mexico, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and Japan.

Favourite Moment:

Keeti – seeing a random Grizzly Bear on the side of the road.

Cato – the Valley of the 5 Lakes hikes, swimming, the glacier, the bears, and the rafting.

Sofia – The Valley of the 5 Lakes Hike because the lake colours were very pretty. I also liked being on the glacier.

Jannika – Walking on the glacier because it was a really unique experience.

Nolann – The first lake on the hike because we could swim and the view was amazing.

Eve – When we swam in the first lake on the hike because the landscape and the weather was perfect.

Savio – Going on the glacier because the water there was really tasty.

Igor – Interacting with the ground squirrel at the top of the skytram.

Marion – the Valley of the 5 Lakes hike and being able to swim in some of the lakes.

Edith – Swimming in the lake during the hike.

Joana – Swimming in the lake with my friends because it was a beautiful place and it was really hot. Also when we went to Lake Louise because it was one of the reasons I decided to come to Canada.

Nicole – When I saw the 5 lakes and I could enjoy it with my friends.

Lucas – When we hung out in the town of Banff because it was cool to visit the city, go to the stores, and be with my friends.

Ana – Everyone swimming in a freezing lake and the reaction of everyone's faces.

Natalia M – When I saw the first lake on the Valley of the 5 Lakes Hike.

Natalia B – Playing Just Dance in the hostel.

Victor – Hanging out in Banff with friends because it's a beautiful town.

Jenny – Being in Banff because I ate spaghetti, walked around the town, and bought a magnet.

Nancy – Morning wildlife drives and rafting because the mornings were the best times to get closer to the animals and the rafting was fun.

Eileen – When we were in Jasper town because it was very beautiful and I felt very relaxed.

Caleb – When I went on the glacier because I drank from the water.

Anais – On the glacier because the colour was really beautiful, and the scenery was something I had never seen before.

Rinka – When we went on the glacier because it was white and blue so it was really beautiful and mysterious.

Heloisa – Hiking above the skytram because it made me feel alive.

One Thing I Learned:

Keeti – Some lakes are green-blue because the water comes from glaciers.

Cato – How glaciers are made and that rivers are milky blue because the snow/ice takes all the sediment from the mountains.

Sofia – What a glacier is and that you can drink water from a glacier.

Jannika – Lake Louise is not as spectacular as people say, especially not in the rain.

Nolann – My phone is stupid because it didn't change time so I missed the first morning wildlife drive.

Eve – We have to get up early to have a better chance to see wildlife.

Savio – Glacier water is used in cities for drinking.

Igor – To check to make sure I have my cell phone before leaving somewhere.

Marion – The different types of wildlife. I didn't expect to see a Grizzly Bear and I learned the differences of Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goats.

Edith – The colour of the rivers are due to the fine silt that comes off the mountains.

Joana – If Mr. Beeke says the hike is flat, that's a lie.

Nicole – Glacial water is the best water to drink.

Lucas – That Igor is very good at Just Dance.

Ana – That we need to enjoy the moment because it goes really fast. I also learned how to use crutches.

Natalia M – I need to enjoy each moment to the fullest.

Natalia B – We can drink water from glaciers.

Victor – You need to be careful with your ankles when you are hiking.

Jenny – What Jasper and Banff look like because my parents honeymooned there 25 years ago.

Nancy – Watch every step you take because if you don't you might have to go to the pharmacy.

Eileen – We should be careful all the time because we had two people get hurt on this trip.

Caleb – How to use a walking stick properly.

Anais – Sometimes you need to hike to see beautiful lakes and swim in them.

Rinka – Glaciers are made from snow and 10m of snow becomes 1 m of ice. It takes 5 years to make. I thought a glacier was just frozen water.

Heloisa – I learned about how glaciers become big.

Mammal List: Mammals seen on the four day trip.

1. Mule Deer – 15
2. Black Bear – 10
3. Grizzly Bear – 1
4. Coyote – 1
5. Woodchuck – 1
6. Elk – 20
7. Moose – 3
8. Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel – 3
9. Mountain Goat – 3
10. Beaver – 1
11. Muskrat – 3
12. White-tailed Deer – 2
13. Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep – 50
14. Hoary Marmot – 3
15. Red Squirrel – 4
16. Columbian Ground Squirrel – 2
17. California Bighorn Sheep – 6 (seen back in Kamloops from the bus)