

VANCOUVER IS AWESOME

Take a Hike and Explore Kelowna

By **V.I.A. Custom Content** - May 12, 2015

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The best way to get to know a community is often on foot. Kelowna's downtown shopping, cultural district and 2.2 km waterfront boardwalk, all invite a stroll. Meanwhile, away from the downtown core you'll find the peace and tranquillity of another side of Kelowna—the Okanagan foundation of rock, water and foliage. Here are six of our favourite Kelowna hikes.

Spion Kopje Mountain Trails

For those looking for a challenge, the well-marked but steeply inclined trails of Spion Kopje may be right up your alley. Work up a sweat as you wind your way through 10 km of ponderosa pines and bunch grass towards the spectacular, panoramic views of the entire Okanagan Valley that await you at the top.

Access: Parking available at the end of Lake Hill Drive.

Black Knight Mountain

This trail permits hikers to climb to the top of Black Mountain in Northeast Kelowna for a spectacular view of the Okanagan Valley. About 11 km in length, the hike begins with a gentle incline through scenic grasslands and follows an old dirt road to communication towers at the top of the mountain. Along the way, hikers will pass through stands of fir, cedar and tamarack trees. With the summit at almost 1,300 metres, be prepared for cooler temperatures.

Access: The hike begins at Pyman Road.

Kathleen Lake and Summit

The Kathleen Lake trail is part of the Knox Mountain network located just north of downtown Kelowna. Knox Mountain is a popular hiking and cycling destination for Kelowna residents; the Kathleen Trail is one of its lesser-known pathways. About 2 km in length, the trail is relatively flat except for a steep section at the far end of the loop. Keep a sharp eye and you may spot deer, coyote, bear or even cougar around the lake.

Access: Enter from Knox Mountain Drive and follow the path behind the gate located between the "Lower Crown" (first) and "Upper Apex" (second) lookouts.

Crawford/Canyon Falls

Any hike that ends at a waterfall is a walk well-taken. Double that for the Crawford/Canyon Falls trail, which features two waterfalls on Bellevue Creek. Locals know the 30-minute hike that follows a 20-minute drive from downtown Kelowna is a great way to spend a weekend afternoon. To get to the lower falls takes about 20 minutes. If you continue about 10 more minutes you will see the larger falls (40 feet in height). The trail is challenging, especially when descending, so take care along the paths.

Access: Enter off of Gordon Drive.

Bear Creek: Canyon Rim Trail

The Canyon Rim Trail is a good walk for all hikers. The trail includes staircases and bridges and travels along the rim of Bear Creek Canyon to viewpoints of Okanagan Lake and downtown Kelowna. Highlights include small scenic waterfalls on Bear Creek and a variety of colourful flora and fauna, including Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, maple and birch trees and berry bushes. Watch for bears, coyotes and rattlesnakes.

Access: Get on the trail from Westside Road in West Kelowna

Cedar Mountain Park

This relatively short hike is quite easy until the final few hundred metres, where a steep

climb will take you to a view of Okanagan Lake from about 2,500 feet. A fire pit, featuring stone-slabbed chairs, is available for those planning to spend a little time at the peak. An alternative hike is to the bottom of the cliffs (about 300 feet high).

Access: Hop on this path via Lakeshore Road. Stay straight at the fork on to Chute Lake Road. Once on the gravel road, go about 7 km and watch for an old dirt road on the right. Take this road to an old sawmill site and park.

These six hiking trails are just scratching the surface on the dozens of trails and sites for everyone from beginners to experts. Looking for more hike recommendations? Locals and travellers alike post pics of their favourite hikes on Instagram at #explorelkelowna.

Feature image: Tourism Kelowna

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