



Hungabee Lake and Opabin Plateau

Opabin Plateau Trails

The Opabin (oh-PAY-bin) Plateau is a beautiful hanging valley perched atop a rocky cliff above Lake O'Hara. Several trails climb to the head of this valley from either side of the cliff. Hikers often use both trails – one in and one out – to make a wonderful round-trip tour of this stunning destination.

Hiking time: 1 hour to Opabin Plateau, 45 minutes to 1 hour more to Opabin Lake

Length: 1.8 km to Opabin Plateau, 1.4 km from Opabin Plateau to Opabin Lake

Elevation Gain: 190 m to Opabin Plateau, 250 m to Opabin Lake

To access West Opabin Trail, start at the Warden's Cabin and head to the south (right) as you are facing the lake. Hike 600 meters on the Lakeshore Trail, then turn right (south) onto West Opabin Trail, which is marked by a trail sign.

After climbing a short hill, you come to a second junction. Turning right (northwest) will take you on a short circuit to Alpine Meadow Trail and back to the Day Shelter; the route to West Opabin is straight (southeast). Cross a bridge and continue to the shore of Mary Lake. The trail continues around the lake before breaking out onto the scree slope above the lake. This is a great place to catch your breath before the climb to the plateau. Just before the trail reaches the plateau, the route to All Souls' Prospect breaks out to your right (southwest). (See the trail description under Lake O'Hara Alpine Circuit).

Once on the plateau you have numerous options, as follows:

Opabin Prospect Circuit

After you reach Opabin Plateau, a left (northwest) turn at the first trail junction will take you out to Opabin Prospect for a lookout over the entire Lake O'Hara Valley. This is also a great place for a snack or lunch. This trail continues, eventually looping back up with the main trail leading to Opabin Lake.

Opabin Lake Trail

After you reach Opabin Plateau, continue on the trail until you reach a creek crossing at Cascade Lakes (the junction immediately before you cross the creek heads back to Opabin Prospect). At the junction immediately after the creek, continue straight (southeast) on the main trail, which parallels the creek. Left (northwest) at this junction will take you to East Opabin Trail and back to Lake O'Hara.

After continuing another 300 metres on the main trail to Opabin Lake, you will arrive at another junction. Turning left (northeast) allows you to take a shortcut to Hungabee Lake and East Opabin Trail, or join the little-used Opabin Highline Trail, which, in turn, joins the trail beside Cascade Lakes. To get to Opabin Lake, however, turn right (northeast) and you will be at your destination in 20 minutes. Once there, you can complete the circuit by descending via East Opabin Trail.

East Opabin Trail

Hiking time: 1 hour to the top of the switchbacks, 45 minutes more to Opabin Lake

Length: 2.0 km to the top of the switchbacks, 1.2 km from the top of the switchbacks to Opabin Lake

Elevation Gain: 125 m to the top of the switchbacks, 250 m to Opabin Lake

Like West Opabin Trail, East Opabin Trail is accessed from the Lakeshore Trail. Start at the Warden's Cabin and head to the south (right) as you are facing the lake. Continue past West Opabin Trail junction and cross three streams before arriving at East Opabin trailhead after 1.4 km.

From here the trail heads into the forest with Opabin Creek running alongside. Eventually the trail begins to switchback up the mountain. At times there seems no end to the climbing! When you get to the top of the switchbacks, you break out into a small meadow with a trail junction. Here you can head right (southwest) across the creek,

climb the staircase, and join Opabin Prospect Trail and West Opabin Trail. The left (southeast) fork takes you up a gentle gully to Hungabee Lake, where you can turn right (west) to join West Opabin Trail.

Just past the junction to Hungabee Lake, you will pass Yukness Ledges Trail junction. The trail to Opabin Lake carries on straight past this junction and climbs a short slope before reaching the lake. You can then return the way you came or continue the circuit back to Lake O'Hara via West Opabin Trail.

