



**Alberta Health
Services**

**CROSS-CANADA
RENAL FITNESS CHALLENGE**
Places & Faces

Banff National Park, Alberta

People have been visiting the area around Banff National Park for more than ten thousand years, but it wasn't until the 1800s that it became an important part of Canada. In 1875, work began on a cross-country railroad to connect British Columbia with the east, and the railroad went through Banff, bringing explorers, workers, and settlers to the area.

In 1885, with the railroad finished, private interests were planning to develop the area where the modern Banff townsite sits, around the Cave and Basin hot springs. But there was an argument over who had discovered the hot springs and who had the right to build there. Prime Minister John A. MacDonalD ended the argument by turning the area into a public park called the Banff Hot Springs Reserve.

In 1887 the protected area expanded and became the Rocky Mountains Park, the first national park in Canada and the second in North America, after Yellowstone in the United States. The park was accessibly only by train until 1911. In 1930 the current boundaries were fixed, and the park was renamed as Banff National Park.

Early on, the park was designed to appeal to sports hunters and wealthy tourists, but the park is now open to the world, and became part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.



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