

Banff/Lake Louise
February 25 to March 3, 2017

We had 34 travelers from the Jacksonville Ski Club attend the Florida Ski Council trip to Banff and Lake Louise. The agenda was packed and everyone was excited for our "Bucket List" ski trip.

5:45am was an early start at JAX. We had a layover in Houston and found many other FCS clubs were on our flight into Calgary. We arrived Calgary and boarded the bus to our first hotel, the Fairmont Banff Springs. The hotel was beautiful. We checked in, got our skis and headed to the FSC Orientation. Everyone received a comprehensive package with agenda, bus schedules, extra activities information while enjoying a drink and mingling.

We had the choice to ski three top-notch ski resorts Norquay, Sunshine Village and Lake Louise, all just a short and scenic bus ride from the hotel. Many people took advantage of the complimentary mountain tours provided by the ski area staff. These tours were an excellent way to learn the mountain. They ranged from one to three hours. The guides were very good. Some skiers did this several days in a row! We also had many Jacksonville skiers that took ski lessons to re-refresh their ski skills. The instructors were very good and the prices were reasonable.

The Banff Springs hotel has a wonderful outdoor heated pool that many enjoyed after a hard day of skiing and winter activities.

The weather was cold in the beginning of the trip, but the snow conditions were great. We were expecting fresh snow each day in the forecast, but only skied in powder the last day.

We had a group dinner Sunday night at restaurant in the town of Banff. It was a fun time. The Elk burger was the group favorite and we had a club drawing for Banff/Louise hat/t-shirts/mugs. It was a good time for everyone for Jacksonville to relax and get to know each other.

Monday night was the Florida Ski Council welcome party. The theme was "Old Hollywood". Everyone was very creative with costumes. The party was held in a beautiful ballroom in the hotel. The food was excellent. Everyone enjoyed the dancing and socializing.

Wednesday was transfer day. Most everyone left Banff in the morning and took the bus to Lake Louise for a great day of skiing. We had our group mountain lunch at the base lodge and took our club photo. It was a blue bird sky ski day.

At the end of the day we checked into the Fairmount Lake Louise hotel. The hotel is exquisite and is located on the lake. There were ice sculpture, ice-skating and an ice bar right out the hotel doorsteps.

There were so many other non-ski activities available to our group. We hiked ice canyons, rode snowmobiles, snow shoed, ice skated, visited hot springs, toured the Canadian Rockies via helicopter, the list goes on and on.

Thursday was the Florida Ski Council Farewell Party. Again the food was excellent. There was a great DJ playing all the dance favorites. Everyone enjoyed the evening.

Friday was the last day of skiing and snow finally arrived. Visibility was tough, but the snow was great.

It snowed and snowed all night. When we woke up Saturday for our early bus ride to Calgary, there was about a foot of new snow. We wish we could have stayed and skied another day! The bus ride to the airport was slow due to the road conditions, but our bus driver did a great job. We arrived safe and on time for our flights home.

The Jacksonville Ski Club Banff/Louise Lake trip was very successful. We had a wonderful group. Everyone enjoyed spending time and skiing with old and new friends. Amazing accommodation, world-class skiing, and breathtaking Canadian Rocky Mountains. Thanks to the club and the Florida Ski Council for putting the perfect trip together.