A Scrambler’s Guide to Mount Temple

**List of Climbs**

- [ ] Rockfall – Human-triggered rockfall is one of the leading causes of accidents on this route. To minimize exposure to this hazard:
  - **Travelling** in a group with other scramblers so any dislodged rocks do not gather speed and hit people below, or wait until other parties are no longer directly below/above you.
  - **Tread** more slowly on the descent to avoid causing rockfall.
  - **Tales** off if there or people below so everyone can be extra diligent and not cause rockfall.
  - If a rock is dislodged, yell “Rock!” so people below move out of the way.
  - **Prevent** yourself.
  - **Plan** for short rests behind rock bluffs or faces, and longer rests near the ridge.
  - **Cross** gullies quickly and avoid travelling any distance in them.
  - Wear a helmet! (Available to rent locally.)

**Further Information**

- Banff Public Safety Specialists provide trip planning and navigation expertise. Call 403-522-1264 for the Lake Louise backcountry trails Warden Office in the Banff Industrial Compound.
- Guidebooks available in local bookstores and Friends of Banff National Park information office.
- The Mountain Conditions Report (MCR) can be found on the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides website (www.acmg.ca/mcr).
ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The route description to the summit of Mt. Temple begins at the Moraine Lake parking lot. The following description is keyed to the numbers on the photos. Round trip time is 7-12 hours.

1. Moraine Lake to Larch Valley
Follow the lakeshore trail, past the Moraine Lodge (1,888 m), for 35 m to the trail junction for Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass. Thirteen gentle switchbacks lead up 352 m through 2.5 km of forest to another trail junction near a bench. Take the right (north) fork towards Larch Valley/Sentinel Pass/Paradise Valley (the left fork leads to Eiffel Lake).

2. Larch Valley to Sentinel Pass
As Sentinel Pass (2,611 m) comes into view, take time to look at the route and conditions from a distance. If there is any snow on the upper mountain, ice axes and crampons are likely required; this may mean turning around. Ascend the switchbacks to Sentinel Pass between Pinacate and Mt. Temple. This is a good spot to put on helmets.

3. Up the scree from Sentinel Pass (2611 m)
A worn scree path dotted with cairns leads up and just right of the ridge. To avoid loose scree and rockfall from parties above, stay to the left of the benchy gully where the footing is more secure. At the top of the gully, a long diagonal path leads up and to the right, past a yellow rock wall and below two large gullies to the first grey rock band. Two prominent scree paths should be visible below—an important landmark.

4. First grey rock band
Climb the left side of the shallow gully; look for a cairn marking the ascent line. Don’t be lured by the beaten path that leads away on a big traverse to the right, passing the two scree paths below, where the cliff band becomes more difficult to ascend. Scramble up a series of rock steps. Paths and cairns lead up through the grey/black steps towards the second grey rock band. Look back and landmark the correct ascent so you are not lured to the wrong feature when you descend.

5. Second grey rock band (considered the crux of the route)
 Traverse under two gullies closer to the ridge and climb two steep, blustery steps just to the right of the second gully. Both the five- and three-metre steps involve some exposed climbing. Consider the severity of a rope and safety line here, especially on the way down. Be careful at the start, as there are some polished holds. It’s not recommended to follow the beaten paths up the gully, as they expose climbers to the large bowls above where natural and human-triggered rockfall may occur. After the step, follow the cairned path zigzagging over the ground-covered rock slabs/steps (take extra caution here during the descent). Then angle left back to the ridge to find the break in the next band of light brown rock. Look back—note the way to the step for the descent.

6. Light brown rock step
Follow the cairned trail to the ridge crest and ascend the rock steps just right of the ridge. Make every attempt to stay to the side of the gully, especially if there are people above. Gentle rock steps lead left out of the light brown rock onto black scree. Follow cairn and stay to the right to the light brown rock to regain the ridge. The summit ridge comes into view.

7. The Summit
After descending the last rock band, it may look tempting and even shorter to plunge down one of the two scree paths leading away from the ridge into the middle of the amphitheatre. On a busy day, these routes leave scramblers exposed to rockfall from above. There have been several rescues of people hit by rocks in the lower section of this route.

THE DESCENT

Descend by the same route you climbed. Retrace your steps. No shortcuts!

Be very careful on the descent not to dislodge rocks, which can injure people below. Other gullies or routes may look inviting (there may even be cairns!) when looking down from above, but any other route will lead to larger cliffs or looser rock.

As Sentinel Pass (2,611 m) comes into view, take time to look at the route and conditions from a distance. If there is any snow on the upper mountain, ice axes and crampons are likely required; this may mean turning around. Ascend the switchbacks to Sentinel Pass between Pinacate and Mt. Temple. This is a good spot to put on helmets.

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