MODERATE GARIBALDI PARK SHELTER HUT YEAR-ROUND

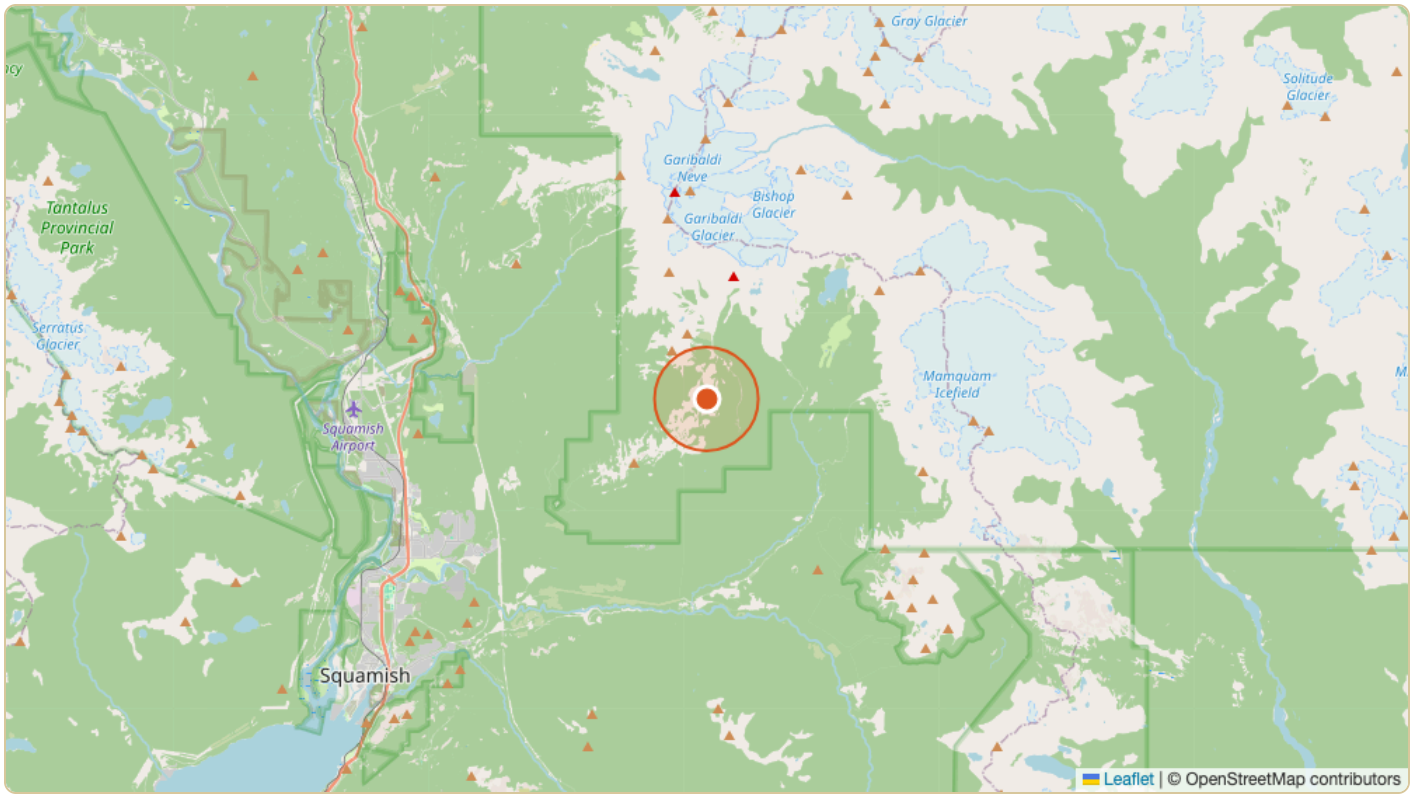
Elfin Lakes

The Diamond Head road-grade hike to Red Heather Meadows and Elfin Lakes: 11 km one way and about 700 m of climbing, plus a rough road in.

DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH FIRST. This is not a navigation tool and must not be your only source. Confirm everything with the land manager.

DIFFICULTY	ONE WAY	ELEVATION GAIN
Moderate	**11 km**	**≈ 700 m**
BC Parks: strenuous then moderate	5 km + 6 km	450 m + 250 m (BC Parks)

RETURN	ACCESS ROAD	SEASON
≈ 22 km	**5 km gravel**	**Year-round**
Out & back	4x4 recommended	Chains required in winter



Approximate area only, not a trailhead or route. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Park	Garibaldi Provincial Park
Access	Mamquam Rd to Garibaldi Park Rd, 5 km gravel
Lot to Red Heather	5 km, 450 m
Red Heather to Elfin	6 km, 250 m
Overnight	Reservation required year-round

Biking	Permitted to Elfin Lakes
Dogs & drones	Prohibited

Overview

The Elfin Lakes trail follows an old road grade from the Diamond Head parking lot to Red Heather Meadows (5 km, 450 m of gain), then on to Elfin Lakes (6 km, 250 m). BC Parks lists pit toilets, a day-use shelter and an overnight shelter at Elfin Lakes.

BC Parks says the road in, from Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Park Road, is 5 km of gravel with potholes and that 4x4 vehicles are recommended. In winter, chains are mandatory above the chain-up area.

11 km one way · ≈ 700 m gain · 4x4 recommended · Year-round

Getting there & overnight

The road Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Park Road is 5 km of gravel with potholes (450 m of climbing). BC Parks recommends 4x4. Chains are mandatory above the chain-up area in winter.

Day-use pass BC Parks requires free vehicle day-use passes during summer months at the Cheakamus, Diamondhead and Rubble Creek trailheads. Book at reserve.bcparks.ca/dayuse and check current dates.

Elfin Lakes overnight Reservations are required year-round for the Elfin Lakes Campground and overnight shelter. Please don't use the overnight shelter without a reservation.

Red Heather BC Parks lists a pit toilet and a warming hut (firewood and stove in winter) at Red Heather Meadows. No camping in the warming hut.

Rules & safety

Prohibited BC Parks prohibits motorized vehicles, domestic animals, fires and drones in Garibaldi Provincial Park year-round.

Weather BC Parks warns that Garibaldi's weather can be severe and unforgiving, and that day visitors should be capable of camping overnight in an emergency.

Pack it out The park is user-maintained with no garbage removal. Use the outhouses provided, and bring your own toilet paper beyond trailheads.

Rampart Ponds BC Parks says the trail past Zig Zag Creek is closed until further notice after a bridge washout, with no alternate route, and advises visitors not to access the area. Rampart Ponds Campground is closed.

Beyond Elfin Elfin Lakes to Opal Cone is 6.5 km (460 m, strenuous). To the Saddle/Gargoyles/Columnar Peak is 2.5 km (330 m, difficult, steep, unmaintained).

Biking Biking is permitted to Elfin Lakes but not beyond. No camping at Mamquam Lake.

Questions

How long is the Elfin Lakes hike?
By BC Parks' figures it is 11 km one way (5 km to Red Heather Meadows plus 6 km to Elfin Lakes) with about 700 m of gain, so roughly 22 km return.

What is the road like?
BC Parks says Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Park Road is 5 km of gravel with potholes, with 4x4 recommended and chains mandatory above the chain-up area in winter.

Do I need a reservation?
Yes for overnight stays: Elfin Lakes Campground and the overnight shelter need reservations year-round. Summer day-use passes are also required at Diamond Head.

Is the Rampart Ponds trail open?
No. BC Parks says it is closed until further notice and advises visitors not to access the area.

Safety checklist

Tell someone your plan Leave your route, group size and expected return time with someone you trust, and check in when you are back. BC AdventureSmart (adventuresmart.ca) has a free trip-plan form.

Check conditions the same day Look at the weather, road and trail conditions, closures and (in snow season) the avalanche forecast on the day you go, not last week. Use the land manager's page for this guide.

Set a turnaround time Pick a time to turn back whatever happens, start early, and carry a headlamp. Most trips go wrong in the last hours of the day.

Carry the essentials Water, food, navigation (map and offline GPS), light, first aid, extra layers, sun protection, a whistle and fire or shelter. A phone alone is not a plan.

Emergencies Call 911. Cell coverage is unreliable or absent in much of the Sea to Sky backcountry, so consider a satellite messenger and know your location.

Water and wildlife Wear a life jacket on the water: cold water can disable you in minutes. Carry bear spray where bears are present, keep food secured and give wildlife space.

Sources & disclaimer

This guide draws on BC Parks: Garibaldi Provincial Park Trail Information (updated May 19, 2026).

Last checked November 18, 2026. Figures marked ≈ are approximate, and sources sometimes disagree. Always confirm with the land manager before you go.

Outdoor recreation involves risk, including serious injury and death. This guide is general information compiled from the public sources listed above and was last checked on November 18, 2026. Conditions, access, closures, fees and rules change, and some figures differ between sources. It is not a substitute for current information from the land manager, for proper skills, equipment and preparation, or for your own judgment. You are responsible for your own safety and decisions. To the extent permitted by law, Sea to Sky Trails and its authors accept no liability for loss, injury or damage arising from use of this guide.

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