

Killarney Outfitters

Killarney Provincial Park Lake and Portage Descriptions

BALSAM LAKE, Killarney Provincial Park

PORTAGE FROM BALSAM LAKE TO THREE MILE LAKE / BELL LAKE

The portage leading from Balsam Lake into Three Mile Lake is a short 30m carry over. This portage was once home to the remnants of an old tramway used in the logging industry. The tramway was recently taken out in the fall of 2011 and the portage now provides good footing through a tight gravel path.

PORTAGE FROM BALSAM LAKE TO PETER LAKE VIA DEACON LAKE / FOX LAKE

Balsam Lake joins to Deacon Lake with just a small lift over. This lift over is not stated as a portage on the park maps but due to low water levels it is rarely possible to paddle through. During low water levels an 825m unmarked portage can be found in the small bay to the left to the entrance of Deacon Creek; although this may be quite overgrown, it is preferable among paddlers as the entrance to Fox Lake.

If heading to Fox Lake from Deacon, continue paddling for approximately 300m to reach a 210m portage which can be found to the right of a small creek.

Follow Fox Lake to its northern shores, here a marshy area begins the final portage into Peter Lake (1322m). The portage leading from Fox Lake to Peter follows along a bog for a few hundred meters and then cuts through the forest. Deacon Creek may look navigable in areas however much of this water way is not; trying this route will cause back tracking.

PORTAGE FROM BALSAM LAKE TO LITTLE BELL LAKE

Follow the southern shores of Balsam Lake for approximately 3km (from the Three Mile portage). A small bay on the southern shoreline is the access to Little Bell Lake. A quick and easy 125m portage exits into Little Bell. There is only one portage in and out of this lake and only one campsite so the lake is perfect for those seeking seclusion.

PORTAGE FROM BALSAM LAKE TO HARRY LAKE VIA PIKE LAKE

To access Harry Lake, a popular fishing spot, there is a 400m portage from the marshy area on the north-eastern shore of Balsam Lake. The first portage on route exits at Pike Lake. Paddle northwest, across the length of Pike, to reach the second 705m portage into Harry Lake.

PORTAGE FROM BALSAM LAKE TO DAVID LAKE

The Balsam to David Lake portage (665m) is considered to be of moderate difficulty, proper footwear is necessary. Towards the north end of the portage is a steep pitch, always watch footing and keep an eye out for damp sections along the trail after heavy rainfall.

BALSAM LAKE

Picturesque Balsam Lake hides many surprises around each bend. Keep an eye out for great blue heron, turtles, or beavers while paddling through a wetland of lily pads, cattails, and troll grass. The small islands on Balsam are perfect spots for weary paddlers to take a lunch break and enjoy the beauty of this northeastern corner of the park.

Balsam Lake is a good option to camp if planning to fish. In addition to the good Bass and Pike fishing on Balsam itself, there is also access to more remote lakes such as Deacon, Fox, or Harry. These lakes have less traffic and are well stocked with Bass and Pike (as well as Perch in Harry), so they are a favourite among avid fishermen. Although acid rain has devastated many fish populations in Killarney, these lakes have been considerably less affected due to their primarily granite, rather than quartzite, lakebeds. Deacon and Fox have portages directly from Balsam, and Harry is accessible via two portages and Pike Lake. Please keep in mind that fishing Lake Trout is prohibited for all seasons due to fish sanctuary regulations in the park.

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When choosing a campsite for the night, we recommend site #116 or #117. These sites are located on small islands covered in large pines. Island sites are always a fun camping option, however keep in mind that large animals such as bears can (and will) swim. Make sure to still take all of the same precautions as on mainland, including hanging food in a tree for the night.