

Outdoor Adventure Guide

Take people up mountains, down rivers and into the backcountry, and bring all of them home.

TYPICAL PAY

\$43,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$35k to \$62k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Mountains, rivers, coastlines, ski areas, lodges, national and provin...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Get outside constantly on your own time. Employers hire on personal experience first: days on rivers, in the backcountry, on rock.
- 2 First aid and one discipline certification** 2 to 6 months
Wilderness first aid plus an entry certification in paddling, climbing or hiking. This is the minimum to be hired.
- 3 First seasons as an assistant** 1 to 3 seasons
Raft guide, hiking guide, camp and lodge work. You are learning groups, weather and how far you can push people.
- 4 Professional certification** 2 to 5 years
Hiking guide, then alpine, rock or ski guide through the national guides association. Blended online, classroom and field training with field-based assessment.
- 5 Full mountain guide, if you go that far** 5+ years
The top credential in Canada, combining alpine, rock and ski. Few people finish it, and those who do can work internationally.

Pros and cons

- + You work in places people save all year to visit
- + Training is hands-on, no lecture halls
- + Strong community and a skill set that works worldwide
- Seasonal income and long off-season gaps
- You pay for your own expensive certifications
- People get hurt, and sometimes worse, on your watch

Good to know

Canadian mountain guides can work anywhere

The Association of Canadian Mountain Guides is the Canadian member of the international federation of mountain guide associations, so a fully certified Canadian mountain guide is recognized...

Heli-skiing was invented in Canada

Commercial helicopter skiing started in the Bugaboos in British Columbia in the mid 1960s, run by Austrian-Canadian guide Hans Gmoser. The industry it created is still centred in the interior ranges...

Optional boosts

Avalanche training. Swiftwater rescue. Advanced wilderness first aid. Small vessel operator certificate.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Outdoor Guide in Canada, wages (updated Nov 19, 2025)

Association of Canadian Mountain Guides: guide certifications

Paddle Canada: canoe, kayak and paddleboard instructor certification

Avalanche Canada: public avalanche forecasts and training

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/adventure-guide>



Scan for the full clicker