Cathedral Crags to the Trans-Canada Highway, but this descent is very steep and intimidating and is for experts only. Beware!

**MOUNT FIELD**

**Distance** 16 km return  
**Height gain** 1300 m  
**Max elevation** 2635 m  
**Map** Lake Louise 82 N/8  
**Avalanche Terrain Rating** Complex

*Mount Field has become one of the classic ski ascents of the Rockies. Because the tour takes you onto huge slopes, you should only undertake this ascent when the avalanche hazard is low. If conditions are safe you can ski right to the summit. The run back down is excellent. This is one of the few areas described in this book that regularly has surface hoar instabilities.*

There is a large parking lot at the trailhead, which is reached by taking the turnoff for the Yoho Valley, 4 km east of Field along the Trans-Canada Highway. If you are coming from Lake Louise, the turnoff is on your right at the bottom of the big hill from Kicking Horse Pass, just beyond the bridge over the Kicking Horse River.

The upper slopes of Mount Field. Photo Chic Scott.
From the parking lot, ski across the bridge, past the campground entrance, then head up the snow-covered road toward Takakkaw Falls. Follow the road for about 4.5 km to the switchbacks where the road climbs steeply. Several hundred metres beyond the switchbacks you come upon a giant avalanche path on the left. This is where you leave the road, 538600 E 5700500 N. Ascend the avalanche path along the left edge, where it feels a little less threatening. As the slope steepens you may feel more secure ascending through the forest along the edge of the avalanche path. After about 600 vertical metres you leave the uppermost trees behind, 538200 E 5698600 N, and angle out right into a
trough. Ascend the trough. Then, higher up, angle out right again onto wide open slopes. Continue climbing up moderately angled slopes until you reach the final steep headwall below the summit.

This headwall presents serious avalanche risk and should be treated with caution. If you are not certain of the snow stability you should not attempt it. A slightly safer alternative is the steep, rounded shoulder to the left of this slope. Above you are several huge cornices that are also a real danger.

Above the steep headwall, moderate slopes for several hundred metres lead to the top of the mountain. The view of Mount Stephen from here is very impressive and the 1300-metre run back down is awesome.

**MOUNT HECTOR**

**Distance** 11 km return  
**Height gain** 1600 m  
**Max elevation** 3395 m  
**Map** Hector Lake 82 N/9  
**Avalanche Terrain Rating** Complex