

CANADA

The Insiders' Guide



Maple syrup and mountains are just the beginning of what's on offer north of the 49th parallel.



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Welcome!

Fjords and mountains, lakes and glaciers, icy roads and northern lights, catching a wave on the coast – if there’s an adventure you can’t find in Canada, you probably haven’t searched far enough. What’s it gonna’ be then, eh? A kayak, canoe, trusty pair of hiking boots, or a rental van – the choice is yours.



Our Pick of the Top 10 Experiences in Canada

Road-trip your way around Canada

Hands-down, the best way to explore Canada is by picking a route, hiring a car, and driving around. While the two most popular road-trip itineraries are The Cabot Trail on the east coast and the Icefields Parkway in Alberta, there are far more provinces to explore.

Why not take a two-week drive through Canada’s Maritime provinces – starting in Saint John, New Brunswick and wrap up the trip in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Or, if you’re shorter on time, take the two-to-three day Sea-to-Sky Highway, starting in Vancouver, and head north along Highway 99 to end the trip in Whistler.

Chase the aurora in Yellowknife

With long winter nights, dry crisp air, and close proximity to the magnetic north pole, Canada’s Northwest Territories is one of the best places in the world to witness the northern lights. You don’t need a big aurora storm for the greens, pinks, and red hues to be visible – just cloudless skies!

The northern lights are visible from Yellowknife, but, for the best

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experience, it's a good idea to venture away from the city lights further north – which will give you the chance to drive on top of a frozen lake.

Explore the Canadian Rockies

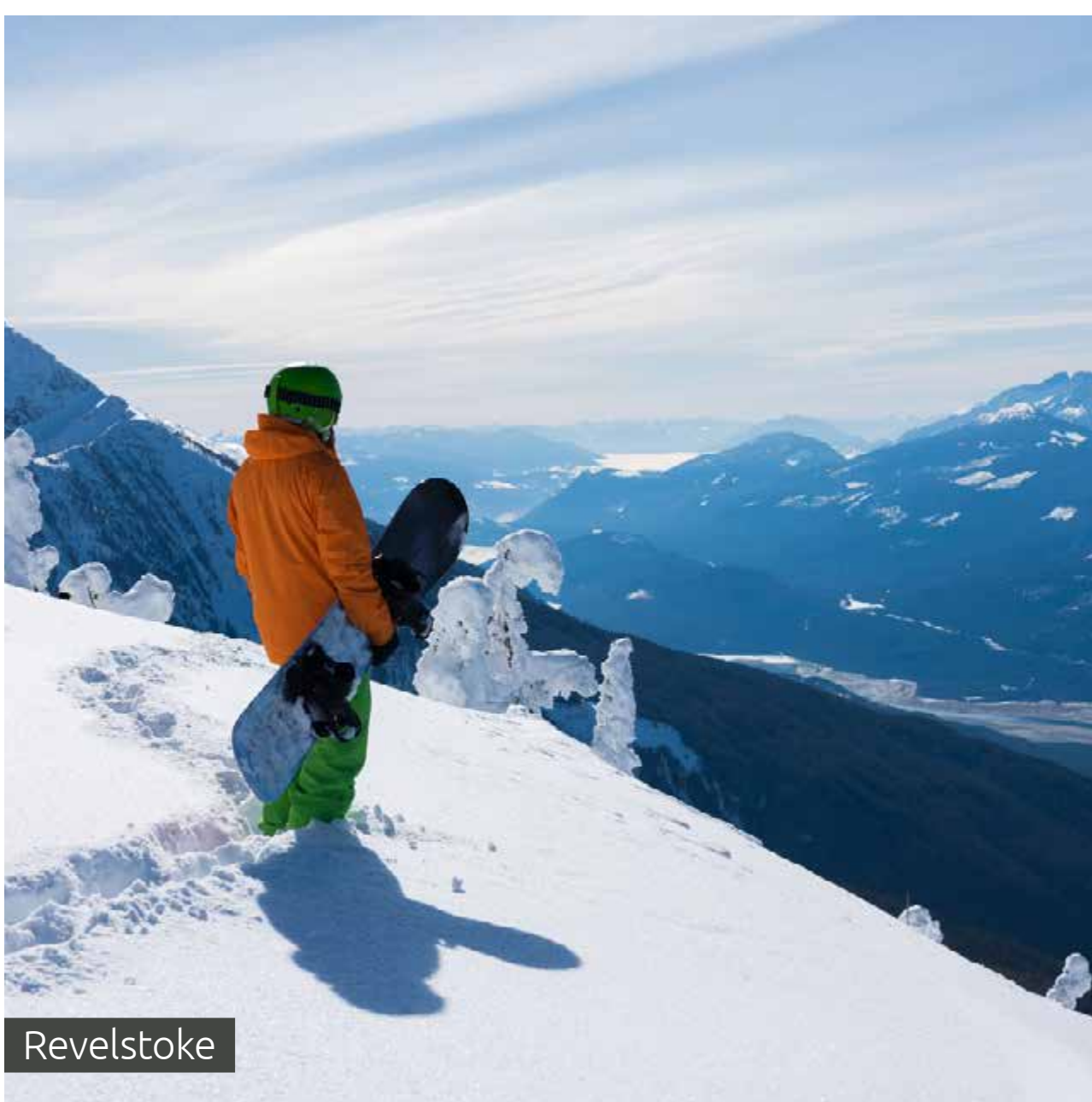
If glaciers and mountains, milky blue lakes and evergreen forests leading the way to alpine meadows sound like a dream to you, choose your method of transport (by bike or on foot) and go backcountry camping in the Canadian Rockies.

Beating the crowds is still easy, so long as you go beyond the main trails. Dying to see Lake Louise? Don't stop at the lake's head by the chateau – follow the well-marked trail to Lake Agnes Tea House (4.3mi/7km) in the late afternoon for views across the valley.

Or, for a more chilled experience in Kootenay National park, take the short walk to Marble Canyon then head on to the Point Pots – a series of spring-fed pools that run from bright orange to lurid green.

Ski the slopes of Revelstoke

Here in the Selkirk Mountains, you can do backcountry touring and cat skiing.



Revelstoke



Spirit Island, Canadian Rockies

“If glaciers and mountains, milky blue lakes and evergreen forests leading the way to alpine meadows sound like a dream to you, go backcountry camping in the Canadian Rockies.”

“Revi”, as the locals call it, receives an incredible 600 inches (1.2m) of powder, annually – which makes it ideal for some off-track skiing and boarding.

Not quite up to scratch on the boarding skills? Most (if not all) of the mountain resorts in Canada offer snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, ice skating, tubing, sleigh rides, and some even have dog sledding and winter biking available.

Brave the cold in the Yukon

Visit the wild territory of northwest Canada, known as the Yukon, to see the charming gold rush town of Whitehorse, marvel at dinosaur skeletons in the MacBride Museum, or bathe in the soothing waters at Takhini hot springs before a long day on the tundra.

If your trip to the Yukon falls between late-August to mid-April, be sure to look up to the skies for the aurora borealis.

Learn about culture on the Haida Gwaii archipelago

Off Canada's northwest coast, the Haida people have lived 12,500 years



Ice fishing

on the 200 islands of the Haida Gwaii archipelago. Embrace the Haida belief that all living things are connected by walking among monumental or mortuary poles (never called totems), or attending a community potlatch (a ceremonial feast).

These misty islands shelter Haida traditions plus 6,800 flora and fauna species. Be on the look-out for cycling and hiking trails, see eagles feasting on salmon left behind by fishermen, and take a boat to Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island) for a dip in a hot springs pool revered for healing.

Icebergs and out-of-this-world landscapes in Newfoundland

Newfoundland is the only province where icebergs make a yearly appearance. During the summer and winter months, icebergs can regularly be seen from the coast along “Iceberg Alley”, a stretch of area from the coast of Labrador down to the northeast coast.

If you're really up for the adventure, make the trip from Labrador city up to Torngat Mountains National Park. It's only accessible via plane from Happy

Valley-Goose Bay, but the landscape is truly out of this world. Here, you'll also catch the spectacular northern lights. The Inuit have called this place home for thousands of years and also run the base camp, offering the opportunity to learn about their way of life, first-hand.

Stuff yourself silly with seafood in Nova Scotia

From remote national parks and quaint fishing villages to whale watching and wild rafting opportunities, once you add in the excellent seafood and super nice people, Nova Scotia becomes an absolute must for travelers.

It takes two tiny ferries to get to Briar Island, but the long journey is well worth it. Start here for whale watching tours that'll take you to see humpbacks, finbacks, and right whales. Stop on the way at Lavena's Catch Café in Freeport for an amazing scallop sandwich.



Newfoundland

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See the tidal changes at Hopewell Rocks, New Brunswick

The uninitiated refer to New Brunswick as a ‘drive-by’ province, but those in the know come for tasty food, diverse cultures, and all the adventure you can pack into mountains, marshes, and warm salt-water beaches.

As you whizz around the Bay of Fundy, make sure you stop twice at Hopewell Rocks – once at low tide to chase sandpipers through the squishy mud flats, and again around six hours later to see the world’s highest tides.

Catch a wave on Vancouver Island

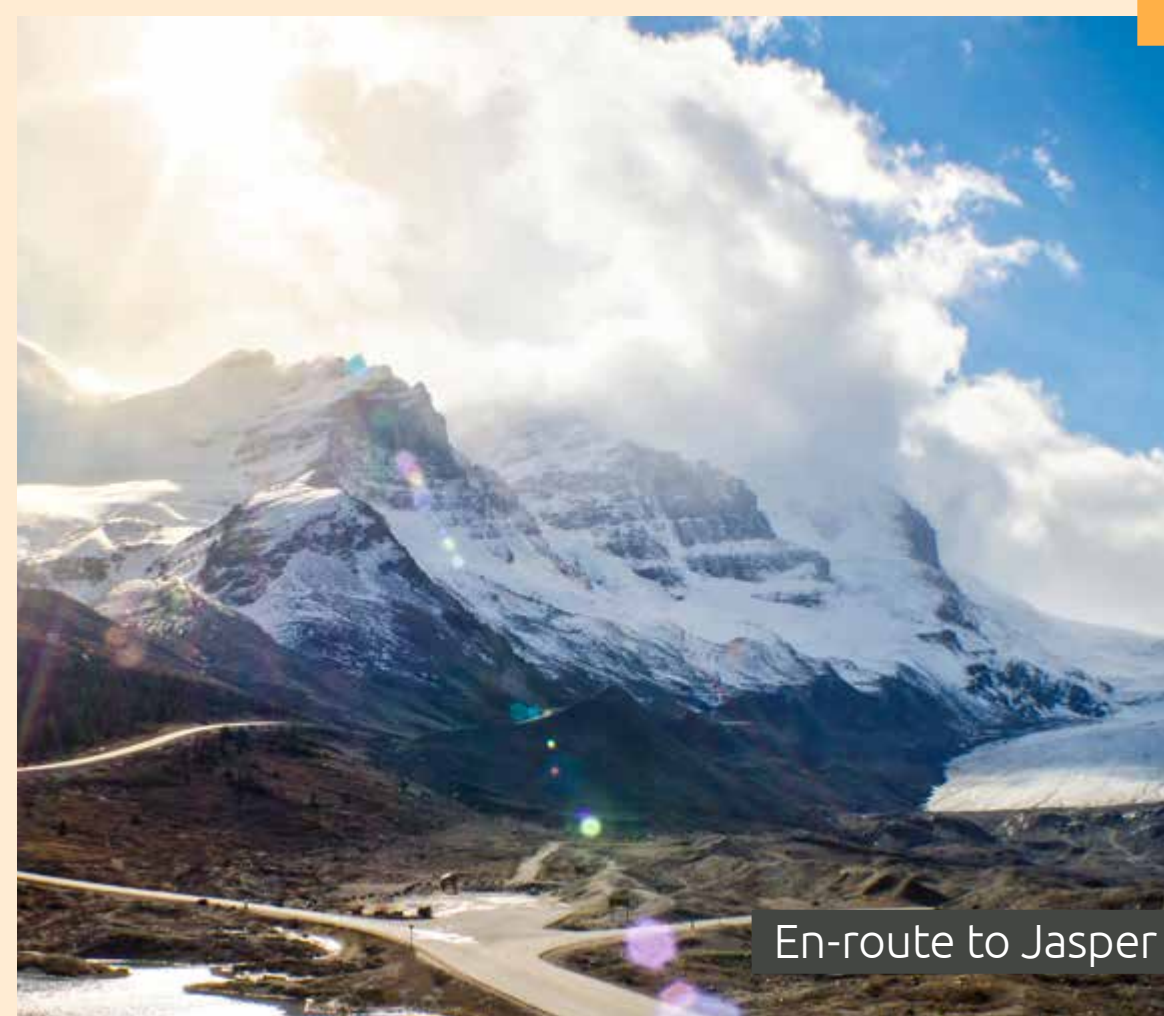
On the wild west coast of Vancouver Island, Tofino is where you’ll find artsy vibes, ancient rainforests, and some of Canada’s best waves to surf. Head to Clayoquot Sound to see gray whales and unbelievably cute sea otters.

If the conditions are right, hire a surfboard and a thick wetsuit to catch a wave or two on Long Beach – Canada’s most famous surf spot.



Climate and Weather

Covering millions of square miles, Canada is comprised of everything from shrub-strewn deserts to the vast Arctic tundra. Weather-wise, here’s what to expect and where to go.



WINTER

While conditions vary significantly, snow typically begins in October/November and stays around until March/April. Temperatures can range from 50°F (10°C) to -31°F (-35°C), and dip even lower in the north. The west coast predominantly experiences rain throughout the winter, with only some periods of snow.

Where to go: Whitehorse or Yellowknife for northern lights, Churchill for polar bear viewing, British Columbia or Banff for skiing or Quebec for winter festival fun.

SPRING

A time of tulips and cherry blossoms, traveling in the spring can be a great way to avoid the crowds. Keep in mind that light snow or rain can continue into May or June, so while temperatures typically sit around 50–68°F (10–20°C), you should pack accordingly.

Where to go: For classic spring scenes between March and May, head to Canada’s most temperate climates in Vancouver and Vancouver Island.

SUMMER

From June to August, Canadian summers mean outdoor fun. With varying levels of humidity, temperatures range between 59–95°F (15–35°C). The far north is a bit cooler, but also boasts exceptionally long days at the height of summer.

Where to go: Everywhere! Rent a car and camp your way across the country. For food and wine lovers, regions like the Okanagan, Niagara, and Prince Edward County are at their best in the summer.

FALL

Beloved across the country, fall offers refreshingly cool weather, around 41–59°F (5–15°C), and spectacular autumn foliage throughout September and October.

Where to go: For the best fall colors, head to Cape Breton or Ontario’s Algonquin Park.

Can’t pick between summer and winter travel? Unless you have specific winter sports or activities in mind, Canada’s summer – with its long daylight hours and endless adventures – is an ideal time to visit.

Accommodation and Transport

Between wilderness escapes and wildlife encounters (most of which are not planned), travel around Canada can be time-consuming and expensive. Whether you opt for a rental car and hired tent or cheap hostels and Airbnb, here's what to expect.

Getting around Canada

Obviously, flying is the fastest way to get from province to province in Canada. It's still a heckuva long way from Halifax to Vancouver, 2,734mi (4,400km), and a long flight. Fares generally start at about US \$409 (C \$500).

The most relaxing and scenic option is to take the train across Canada. Via Rail offers train service from coast to coast. If you want

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With hundreds of provincial and national parks, you can easily camp your way around Canada.



to splurge, The Canadian (from Vancouver to Toronto) and The Ocean (from Montreal to Halifax) are the most luxurious options.

Buses are also widely available, and public transportation in the major cities – especially Toronto – is very good. Taxis are expensive, and can often be avoided.

The UP Express train from Toronto's Pearson airport into the downtown core is a great option, and Vancouver offers the Skytrain into downtown (both cost about US \$7.38 or C \$9).

Eco-friendly options

If you want an eco-friendly holiday, you probably want to visit Canada in summer when there're far more options. The early fall season brings spectacular fall colors, which is during late September.

With hundreds of provincial and national parks across the country, you can easily camp your way around Canada. Camping is relatively inexpensive at about US \$24.60/night (C \$30) and of course a low-impact



activity. You could rent a car, an RV/campervan, or even cycle – though the distances are vast. Within cities, there are bike sharing systems.

Renting a car or RV/campervan will be expensive, at about US \$819/week (C \$1,000) including gas and insurance (note: it's a good idea to carry an international driver's license). But it's a great way to get from campground to campground.

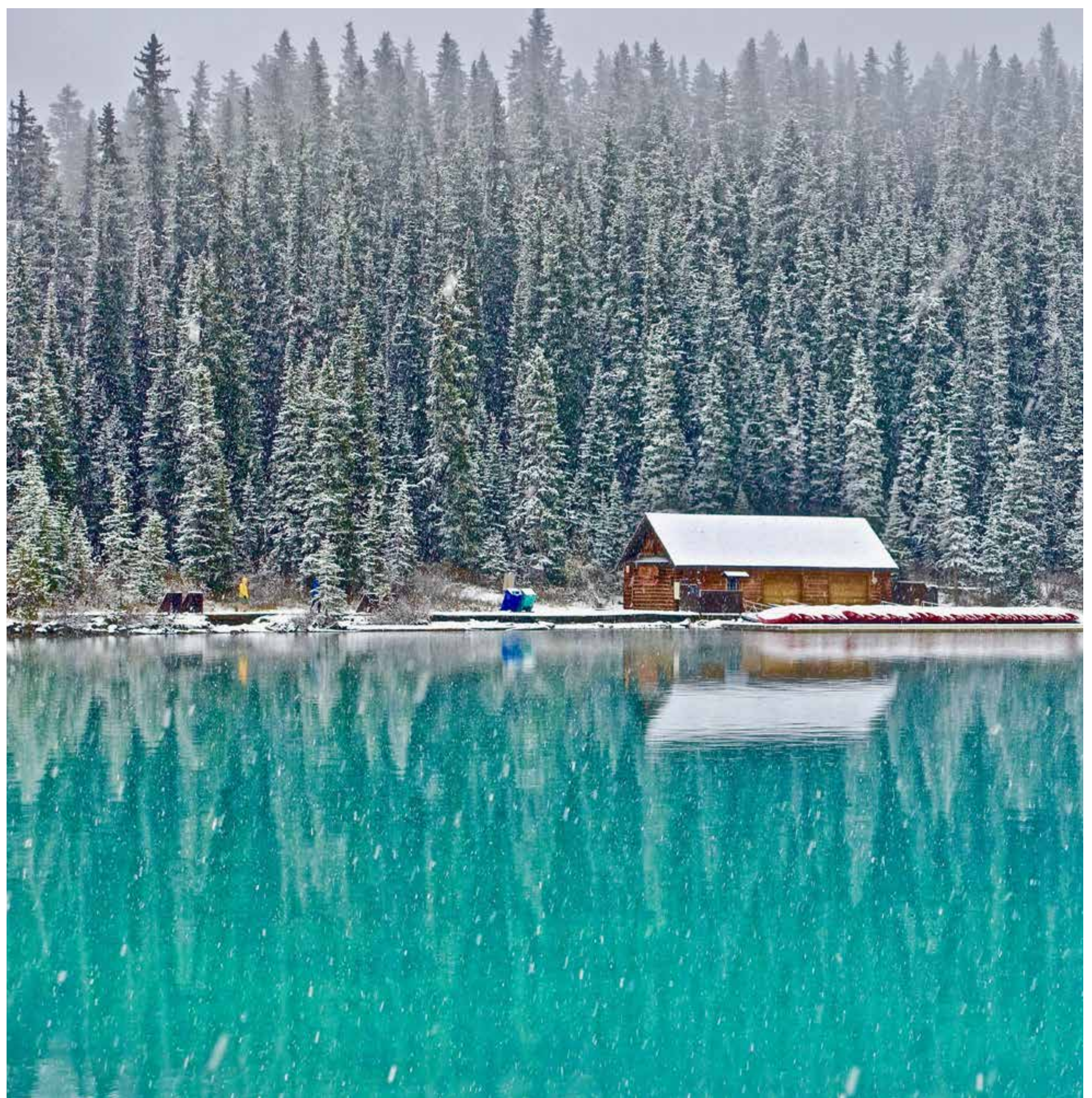
Otherwise, taking the bus is probably the best eco-friendly transportation option to get across Canada. You could also join an eco-friendly tour – there are lots to choose from including wildlife tours, Aboriginal tours, hiking, cycling and much, much more.

Accommodation

Like transport, accommodation in Canada can be expensive. The most affordable options are hostels and, in the summer, camping. A quick check on Hostelworld.com shows 103 hostels in 47 cities in Canada. The average price is about US \$32.80/night (C \$40).

Bed and breakfasts are a popular choice in Canada, and can give you a more culturally-authentic experience. To find reputable places, BBCanada (<https://www.bbcanada.com/>) is a directory of bed and breakfasts in Canada, as well as regional associations. They generally start at about US \$82/night (C \$100), though can be less in small towns.

Airbnb is as popular in Canada as everywhere else, so be sure to shop around online before you book.



An Inuit-led Adventure in Canada's Far North

Go beyond the metropolitan cities and head further north to experience Inuit culture in Torngat Mountains National Park. The National Park was set up to allow the next generation of Inuit to reconnect with their ancestral lands and culture after they were removed and sent to towns further south in the 1950s. Young Inuit can meet with elders and learn about the old ways of hunting, surviving, singing, and story-telling. Visitors are also welcome, and here you can learn, first hand, about the culture as well as see and hear about the pain that comes when governments remove people from their land.

During the day, you can go hiking up nearby mountain ranges with Inuit guides (who are always armed because of ever-present polar and black bears), or take a boat trip around Saglek Bay to see the icebergs and minke whales. In the evening, look up at the stars to see the northern lights, listen to Inuit musicians, artists, and throat signers, or witness drum-dancing performances.

The accommodation is in bear-proof plastic domes, which are actually very cosy. Although there's an electric fence around the camp, bears have been known to break through it – especially if they're hungry! The Inuit are remarkable people, adept at survival in conditions that most of us could not survive for one night. There's certainly something to learn from an experience on Labrador's far north coast.

Mike Carter, Travel Writer.

Hear more from his interview, featured in The World Nomads Podcast: <https://www.worldnomads.com/explore/north-america/canada/the-world-nomads-podcast-episode-2-canada>

Cultural Highlights

In Canada, Multiculturalism is a national policy, which is easy to see when visiting cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and French-speaking Montreal. The main reason for this is that Canada was founded upon multiple cultures including original inhabitants, the Aboriginal (First Nations) people, and Inuit; plus, newer arrivals, the English, French, and Métis.

Aboriginal (First Nations) People

There are hundreds of tribes scattered within what now makes up Canada's borders. The Government now divides these into six main groups geographically, made up of the Woodland First Nations, Iroquoian First Nations, Plains First Nations, Plateau First Nations, Pacific Coast First Nations, and First Nations of the Mackenzie and Yukon River Basins.

The First Nations people lived off the land using what nature provided in their geographic regions. They gathered plants and wild vegetables for nutrition and medicinal purposes, and hunted and trapped animals such as buffalo, deer, salmon, and beaver using spears, bow-and-arrow, or trapping methods for meat and furs. What was harvested depends on the



regions of where the tribes lived – some were nomadic, following where the food was plentiful.

Due to the sheer size of Canada, it would be impossible to gain knowledge and understanding of First Nations people from one region alone. Traditional woodcarvings, mortuary poles, tapestry, clothing, language, and history vary across the country.

Inuit culture

Inuit people reside in Canada's far north regions, reaching into the Arctic Circle. They adapted to live in extreme weather climates and have done so (and still do) for over 5,000 years by hunting and trapping seasonal animals, and living in igloos and *thules* (moveable, tent-like structures made out of whale bones and animal skin).

On April 1st 1999, the Canadian Government finalized the division of

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The First Nations people lived off the land using what nature provided in their geographic regions.



Canada's largest territory (Northwest Territories), creating Nunavut – a new territory inhabited and governed mostly by Inuit people. The capital, Iqaluit has a population of just over 7,000.

Métis culture

During the 1600's – long before Canada was united as a nation in 1867 – French and British fur traders and explorers married First Nations women, which eventuated in birthing a mixed-blood subculture known as the Métis. A new language was eventually spawned, called Michif, a mix between European/French words and Native Canadian (mainly Cree and Ojibwe) dialect.

The Métis made a name for themselves as skilled hunter/trappers and were known to be fiercely independent due to being looked down upon by European colonials and First Nations people. This helped the Métis bond and band together, which led to the creation of a vibrant, proud community known for their decorative uniforms, horses, and wagons – as well

as their celebratory song and dances, using fiddles and drums, often enjoyed after successful buffalo hunts.

Lumberjack culture

Lumberjacks (loggers or tree-fellers) became known across Canada for their hyper masculinity, hard work, grit, and musky smell. These towering, bearded men toiled six days a week in dangerous conditions to clear land for farming and provide timber for building, firewood, and pulp mills.

The culture thrived around the turn of the 18th century with shanties (cramped, sweaty boarding houses built to house Lumberjacks) sprouting up from coast to coast filled with men trying to make a living in extreme conditions.

“Johnny Canuck” is a fictional Lumberjack cartoon character created in the late 1800s that still pops up these days; most notably, as a mascot and namesake for Vancouver's NHL ice hockey team – the Vancouver Canucks. Lumberjack competitions still take place across Canada, pitting men and women against each other in tree climbing, log chopping races, and wood-carving skills.



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Learn More About Canada's Culture

- Attend a traditional [Pow Wow](#), a gathering of traditional First Nations people including song and dance.
- Head to the town of Kapuskasing in northern Ontario for their famous [Lumberjack Heritage Festival](#).
- Check out the Métis virtual museum [here](#).
- Fly to the far north to experience Inuit culture at the [Toonik Tyme Festival](#), held in April they are celebrating their 53rd year in 2018.
- Visit the [UBC Museum of Anthropology](#) in Vancouver to view artifacts and totem poles.

Food in Canada

Aside from maple syrup, poutine, and Nanaimo bars, there's so much more to Canadian food. You've just got to know where and how to find the very best foodie destinations and must-try dishes.

Food on Canada's west coast

On the west coast, British Columbia is famous for its outstanding seafood, wine, and Japanese food. In Vancouver, check out Granville Island's public market for delicacies like smoked salmon and spot prawns, or Kishimoto for sushi. On Vancouver Island, Tofino's Tacofino food truck has pioneered Pacific Northwest Mexican for the post-surf crowd.

Must-try foods in the Prairie Provinces

Canada's prairie provinces have a history of Eastern European immigration and the food that came with it. Places like Regina's Bushwacker Brewpub offer "perogie plates" laden with perogies (dumplings stuffed with mashed potatoes and cheese), garlic sausage, and cabbage rolls.

Other must-visits include Calgary's CharCut for a good Alberta steak, Sidewalk Citizen for Red Fife sourdough, and, in Winnipeg, Neechi Commons for First Nations' foods like freshly-baked *bannock* (bread leavened with baking powder instead of yeast).



Vancouver Summer Night Market

Eating in Canada's east

Heading east to Ontario, Toronto is as diverse as it is large when it comes to the edible, and restaurants like Canoe celebrate the very best of Canadian ingredients, including birch syrup and camelina.

In the summer and fall, more rural areas like Prince Edward County show off the province's wine and agricultural scene – try Norman Hardie Winery for a wine and pizza picnic.

Quebec is a must-visit for wandering gastronomes. In Montreal, try both St. Viateur and Fairmont wood-fired bagels, then debate your favorites. Get a late-night poutine fix at La Banquise. Attend one of the city's public markets for seasonal produce, cheese, sugar pie, and *tourtiere* (meat pie originating from Quebec). And join the queue for a smoked meat sandwich from Schwartz's Deli.

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On Vancouver Island, Tofino's Tacofino food truck has pioneered Pacific Northwest Mexican for the post-surf crowd.



Maple Syrup in Old Montreal

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If you love maple syrup, book in for a wintery, maple-drenched meal at a “Sugar Shack” – the places where they harvest sap and turn it into syrup.

Other great areas to explore include Quebec City and Charlevoix. If you love maple syrup, book in for a wintery, maple-drenched meal at a “Sugar Shack” – the places where they harvest sap and turn it into syrup.

Go further east for Seafood

In Canada’s far east, Lobster rolls (preferably from Saint John Ale House in New Brunswick) are a must, along with comforts like oatcakes, seafood chowder, and wild blueberry desserts.

On Prince Edward Island, try the Avonlea cheddar, or sample Raspberry Point’s salty/sweet oysters.

Remote as it is, Newfoundland is a national highlight. Reserve a table at Mallard Cottage to taste classics like cod tongues, baked beans, and headcheese, or try Raymond’s for refined cuisine from ‘The Rock.’

More rural restaurants like The Twine Loft or Bonavista Social Club are great places to try other favorites, like

bottled moose or *toutons* (traditional pancake made by frying bread on a pan and served with molasses).

Foraging for food in the North

Finally, up north in the Yukon, Klondike Kate’s of Dawson City serves up Boreal ingredients in the style of the American south (think BBQ’d elk and wild blueberry sausages), and every bakery has its own version of the beloved cinnamon bun.

In the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife’s Bullock’s Bistro does fish fries with whitefish, pickerel, and other locally-caught species.

Nunavut is home to “country food,” Inuit food-from-the-land including Arctic char, whale, elk, and foraged berries. If you can get yourself invited to a community feast, you’ll have access to all kinds of delicacies, otherwise buy from processing companies like Kivalliq Arctic Foods or Nunavut Country Food.

Travel Safety

Crime might not be high in Canada, but adventures are always better planned when you take extra precautions to stay safe and informed.

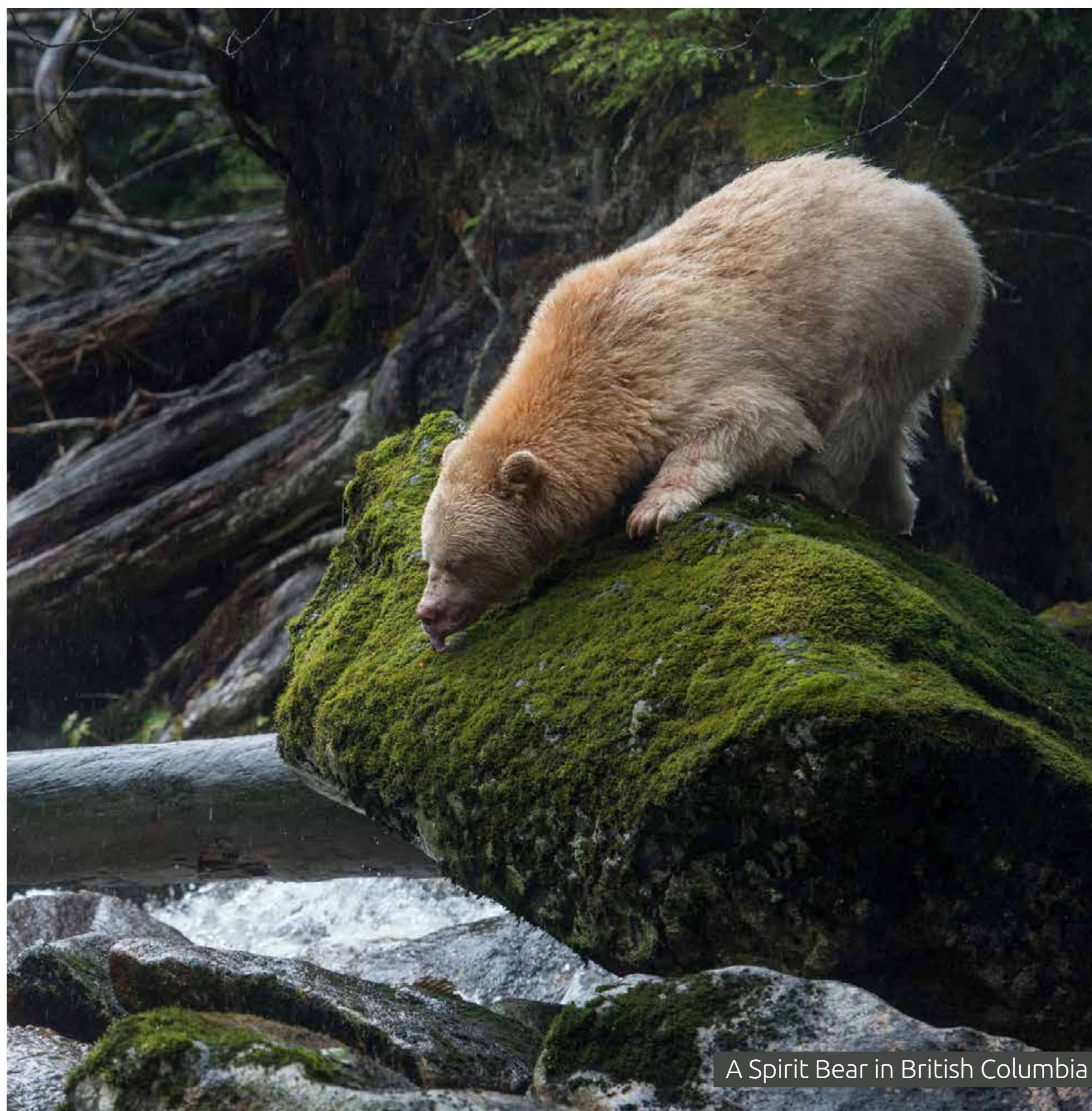
Wildlife encounters

Despite Canada's high population of bears, attacks are uncommon. Neither of the most common species (black bears and grizzlies) view humans as prey, and will generally go out of their way to avoid them.

Sudden encounters occur when a bear's natural 'avoidance instinct' is most likely to shift to aggression. The easiest way to avoid these situations is to warn the bear of your approach: Make a lot of noise while you're walking, especially if you see signs of bears in the area.

Strange smells or the smell of your food is enough to attract a bear's attention, so make sure you comply with the national park's food storage rules and don't wear any strong perfumes or cosmetics. When camping, change out of the clothes you cooked in before going to sleep – you may not look like a freshly-grilled hot dog, but it's best not to smell like one either.

Canadians have a saying: A fed bear is a dead bear. Animals that come to see humans as a source of food are often classified as "nuisance bears" and will be killed by conservation officials. So, if you're careless with your food or reckless around bears, you're



A Spirit Bear in British Columbia

not only putting yourself in danger, but the animal itself. If you're a real animal lover, you'll admire them from a distance – not kill them with kindness.

Hiking and backcountry camping

Preparation is the key to a successful hike, whether you're intending to go for a few hours or several days. Make sure you're carrying adequate clothing and supplies as well as a detailed map of the area.

Only hike to your level of experience and ability. Study your intended route or ask for some local advice to make sure you're not biting off more than you can chew. Always let someone know what your plans are, where you are heading, and when you'll be back, or you could find yourself in the middle of a very large search area.

Spring and summer can offer

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Never head off-piste without an instructor, guide, or a friend who knows the slopes. No amount of skill will make up for local knowledge.””

perfect hiking conditions, but snowmelt, changing weather, and even freshly-built beaver dams can see the trail you’re following come to an abrupt and soggy end.

If you do find yourself temporarily misplaced, your best bet is to stay put. If you really don’t know where you are, any direction you take has a high chance of being the wrong one, meaning the further you walk, the longer it will take rescuers to find you. Your next priorities should be staying warm, staying hydrated, and staying visible for the Mounties to find you.



Algonquin Provincial Park

Snowfield safety

Hundreds of preventable injuries reported on Canadian ski fields each year are caused by a lack of proper gear, training, knowledge, or consideration for fellow skiers.

Find the right gear: ill-fitting equipment is not only a danger to yourself, but badly-fitted boots and bindings can make you a danger to others. If you’re hiring gear, take the time to get sized-up carefully. Helmets are a must for everyone, from sore-bottomed beginners to back-flipping wizards.

If it’s your first time, invest in at least one lesson to help you get a handle on the slopes. Always stick to your level: Beginners may feel confident after a few lessons, but don’t charge head-first into a double-diamond run.

Never head off-piste without an instructor, guide, or a friend who knows the slopes. No amount of skill will make up for local knowledge. Make sure you’re well kitted out with a tracker beacon, shovel, satellite phone or radio, and plenty to eat and drink.

Visas

Many foreign nationals visiting Canada require a visa, and requirements vary depending on your nationality and purpose of visit. We unravel the visa requirements, including working visas and border crossing from the United States.

Visa requirements

To find out if you need a visa for Canada, the Canadian government has provided a handy, interactive service here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>

You simply select the country code that matches the one on your passport indicating your nationality and press GO.

On the next page, depending on your nationality, and your mode of transportation, you'll find the documents you need. Many foreign nationals flying into Canada now need to apply online for an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). You can apply with a valid passport, a credit or a debit card, and an email address.



Keep your eyes peeled for bald eagles in British Columbia



Hikers in British Columbia

Working visas

Many people around the world would love to work and live in Canada. Working visas are available, including a youth program called International Experience Canada (IEC). You can get all the information you need on eligibility and other requirements here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLish/work/index.asp>

Border crossings

Visitors from the U.S. can cross at many points along the world's longest unguarded border, and from the state of Alaska as well. Most other visitors fly in, or come on a cruise ship to ports on either coast –most notably Vancouver and Halifax.

You don't need an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) to cross the border into Canada from the U.S. if you're driving. You will need a passport and a visa depending on your nationality. To drive in Canada, you need a valid driver's license. You can find all the rules here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-transportation-driving.asp>

What's With All the Aussies in Whistler?

Canada and Australia share a similar colonial history, and it can be pretty easy to get a working visa between the two nations.

Keen snowboarders and skiers are limited with options when it comes to snow in Australia. Australia's most popular ski resort, Perisher, has received an average maximum snow depth of 6.3ft (1.9m) over the past 15 years. Whistler, on the other hand, gets an average of 38ft (11.59m) of snowfall each year, and over 49ft (15m) on the big years – with an average base of at least 9-10ft (3-4m).

The better question is, why aren't there more powder-starved Australians making the pilgrimage to Whistler?



QUEBEC

Quebec is a province of extreme contrasts, where historic castles and downtown skylines stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the great outdoors. Pick from one of 43 designated nature areas or national parks, and set out for an adventure.



Quebec City

A big village with jovial locals, good food, and a cornucopia of festivals and activities, Québec City entices you to step outside, even on the coldest days.

The best way to experience the city is on foot. Start by visiting the old city, then explore some of the local neighborhoods. Wander down quiet streets and discover unique architecture and cozy cafes.

Montmorency Falls

Montmorency Falls has been a part of Quebec City's history and culture since the 17th century. Hike along the paths, try Via Ferrata or Ice canyoning, and spend some time staring at the majesty of water plunging 272ft (83m).

Rent a bike in Old Quebec and ride to Montmorency Falls – a 10.5mi (17km) journey, one way – or take bus #800 from Place D'Youville and get off at stop #3473 des Rapides (US \$2.85 per direction).



Montmorency Falls



Streets of Old Town, Quebec City

Old Quebec

Cobblestoned streets, cafes with sidewalk patios, a 24-hour clock (the rest of Canada uses the 12-hour clock), and commas instead of full-stops on prices all add to the illusion that you're exploring a city in Europe.

Wander down the Dufferin Terrace boardwalk and visit Maison de la littérature, a church that's been converted into a library. Then, take a historical walking tour or a food tour of the old city. Wander along the fortifications and stand at the docks on rue Dalhousie to take a photo of Château Frontenac, majestically towering over the city.

Culture

The culture of Quebec City centers around its history and language, and contributes to the city's 'big village' vibe.

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Pamela MacNaughtan

Spend time visiting the museums and galleries dedicated to telling the story of New France, starting with the Musée du Fort or Musée Place Royale. Attend festivals like Carnaval de Québec or Fêtes de la Nouvelle France, both of which embrace the city's love for culture, history, and the outdoors. Enjoy the various urban pop-up spaces and street performances, which are scattered throughout the city in the summer months.

Eat and drink

Food and drink are an integral piece of the city's culture. While Old Québec has plenty of restaurants, some of the best food is found in the local neighborhoods.

Poutine is an essential experience, and Chez Ashton is a top choice. Enjoy a smoothie from Blender bar à jus in the neighborhood of Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Venture into Saint-Roch for lunch at Deux22 or comfort food at La Cuisine. At night, go Brasserie Griendel in Saint-Sauveur or Le Projet in Sainte-Jean-Baptiste for craft beer and eats.

Day-trips

Take a day trip from Québec City to embrace the outdoors. Instead of going to Île d'Orléans, take the ferry across the Saint-Lawrence river to Lévis. In winter, go to Hôtel de Glace at Village Vacances Valcartier.

Take the shuttle from Old Québec to Wendake and learn about the Huron-Wendat people and their role in Québec.



Enjoy the various urban pop-up spaces and street performances, which are scattered throughout the city.

Take a Day-Trip to Wendake

After outbreaks of various European diseases decimated their population and struggles with colonial powers attributed to the deteriorated Huron-Wendat Confederation of the Great Lakes, hundreds of Huron-Wendat people left the region and journeyed to the north-east section of their territory (now known as Quebec).

Located 11mi (18km) from Old Quebec, Wendake is dedicated to preserving (and sharing) their culture, language, and traditions. One of the best Aboriginal tourism destinations in Canada, Wendake will take your experience in Quebec to the next level. It's a must-do.

Start with a visit to Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Huron Site. Take a guided tour through the Long House and learn about aspects of early aboriginal life in Québec; stopping at Nek8arre Restaurant to try sagamité (a traditional red bean and corn soup) and bannock. From here, continue to peel back the layers of Wendake with a visit to Musée Huron-Wendat, followed by an evening of traditional storytelling while huddled around a fire inside a Long House at Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations.

On hot summer days or the early days of autumn, canoe down the St. Charles river. Explore Kabir Kouba, a 28m waterfall that cascades into a 42m deep canyon, on your own or take a guided tour and learn about traditional leather work in Wendake.

Attend a Pow Wow (held each year at the end of June) and feel the warm embrace of the locals. Dine at Sagamité Restaurant for traditional aboriginal foods with a flavorful modern upgrade.



Pamela MacNaughtan

Montreal

Montreal is a vibrant, bilingual city in the French province of Québec known for its creative arts and culture scene, with a far more European feel compared to Canada’s other big cities.

Mount Royal and Beaver Lake

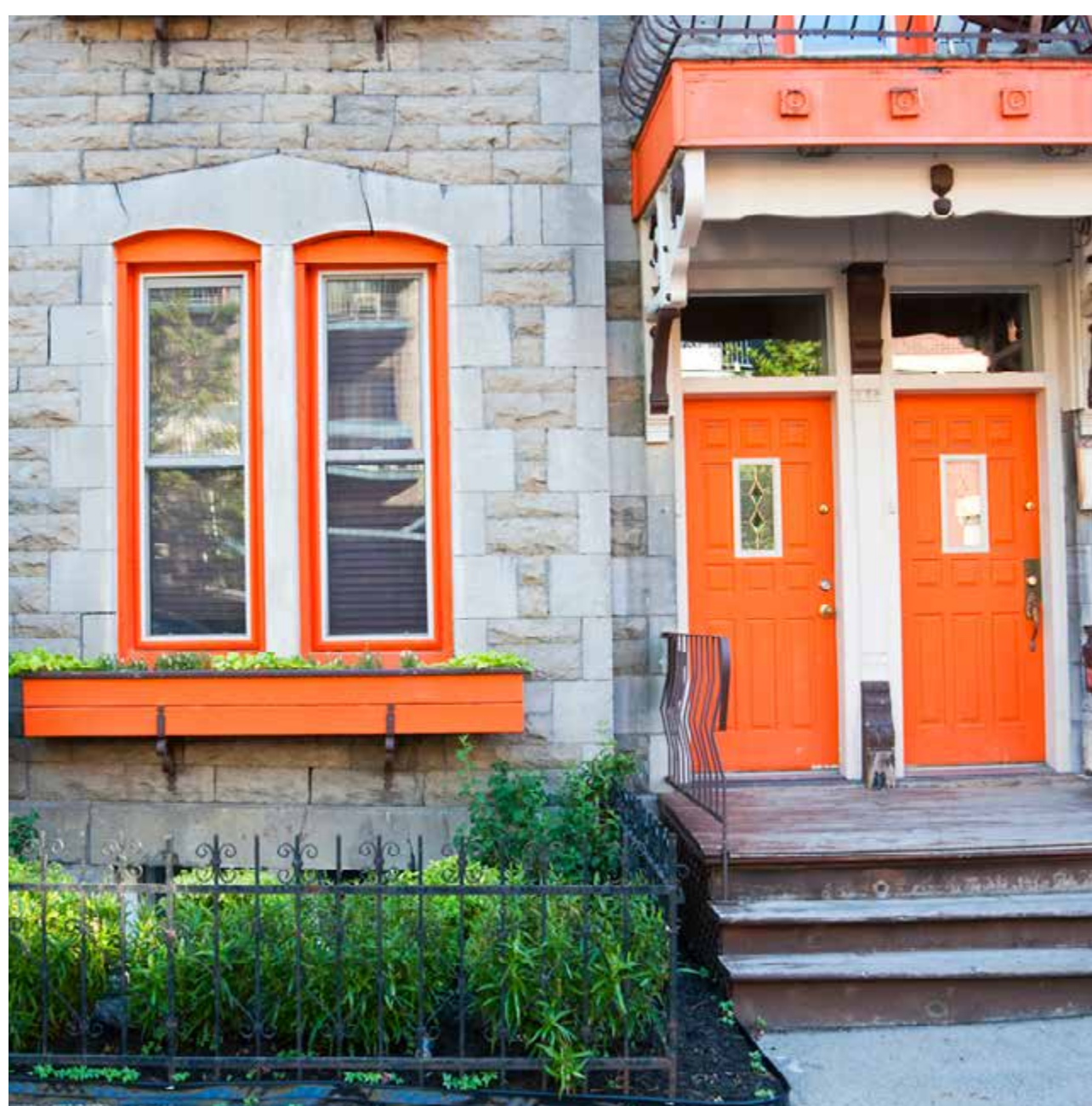
If you’re looking for sweeping vistas, head to the big hill in the middle of the city – Mount Royal. In the evening, look to the hill to spot the giant, illuminated cross, one of the city’s best known landmarks.

If it’s an adventure you’re after, hike 4mi (7km) to the summit. The top of the hill is also accessible by bike and car if you’re not up for the trek.

Snaking trails make it easy to spend an entire day there, so pack a picnic lunch, a bottle of wine, and set yourself up by Beaver Lake after a day of exploring.

Mile End neighborhood

One of the trendiest neighborhoods in



View of Montreal from Mount Royal



the city is also one of the best places to see Montreal’s iconic outdoor staircases and mural-sized street art. Grab a BIXI bike and your camera to explore this lively scene.

Make a stop at Jewish bakery Hof Kelsten on Boulevard Saint Laurent for some freshly-baked breads (which they supply to some of Montreal’s top restaurants, like Joe Beef and Toqué) and tasty sandwiches. There are plenty of hipster coffee shops to kick-start your day, too.

La Ronde and Parc Jean Drapeau

Île Sainte Hélène, just across the Jacques Cartier bridge, is a great spot to escape the busy downtown core. This little island in the Saint Lawrence river has played a significant role in the city’s history, as it was once a fort, a prison, and home to Expo 67.

“Snaking trails make it easy to spend an entire day there, so pack a picnic lunch, a bottle of wine, and set yourself up by Beaver Lake after a day of exploring.”

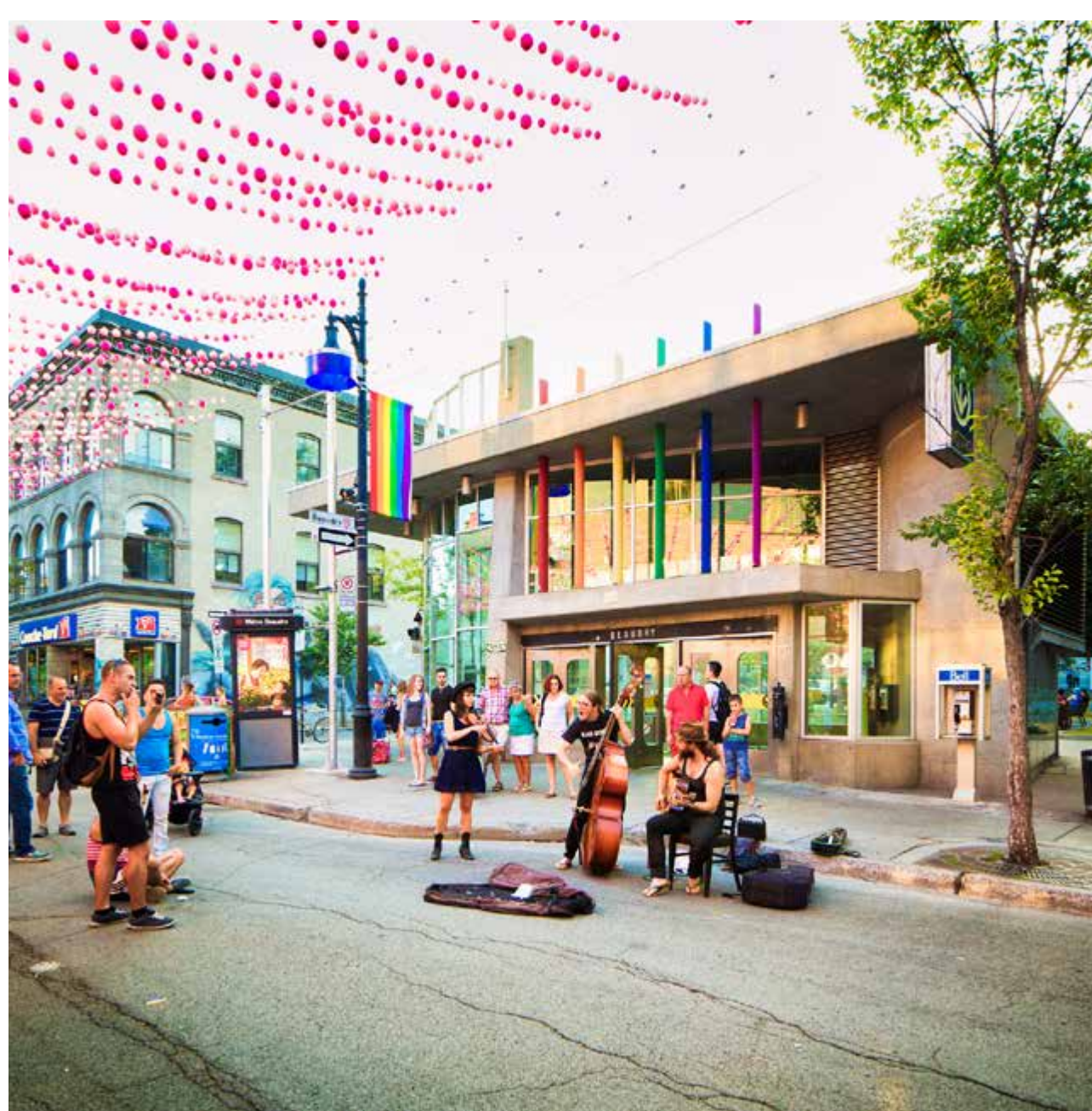


Old Montreal

Within Parc Jean Drapeau on the island, you'll find the theme park La Ronde, which is a great summertime day-trip for families with kids (and those young at heart), and the Montréal Biosphere museum – with its impressive dome – is a must-see.

Old Montreal

To get a real feel for Europe, head to Old Montreal by the water. History



buffs will love discovering some of the city's oldest and grandest buildings, including the Notre Dame Basilica, Saint Sulpice Seminary, and City Hall.

If you've got a sweet tooth, pop into Maison Christian Faure, across from Montreal's archaeological museum, for some traditional French pâtisserie treats.

Montreal for foodies

You can't leave Montreal without having a poutine (a saucy mixture of fries, gravy and cheese curds) at La Banquise. Ditto a Montréal smoked meat sandwich from Schwartz's Deli.

The best neighborhoods for foodies to explore are Mile End and Plateau (Lawrence, Maison Publique), Griffintown (Nora Gray, Junior), Little Burgundy (Le Vin Papillon, Patrisse Pâtissier), and Saint-Henri (Sumac, Ludger).

“History buffs will love discovering some of the city's oldest and grandest buildings.”

When to go

Summer is the best time to visit, when the streets come alive with sidewalk patios and outdoor performances, and many of the big festivals like the jazz festival and circus festival draw international crowds to buzzing venues in June and July.

Don't discount winter though. Just don your hat, scarf, and thermal underwear and head to the beloved electronic music festival, Igloofest, in January and February. You'll soon find out that Montréalers know better than anyone how to have fun in sub-zero temperatures.

Adventure in Quebec

Outside the walls of Montreal and Quebec, there are day-hikes, winter sports, and wilderness escapes to be discovered.

Take a hike in Aiguebelle National Park

Take a walk across the 210ft (64m) long suspension bridge that sways 72ft (22m) above Lake Haie from edge-to-edge in Aiguebelle National Park. This protected wilderness in western Quebec is full of geological treasures, like the enormous stone formations known as “Giant's kettles” or the abundance of quartz in rocks all around.

Here, two lakes are separated by only a kilometer, yet flow in different directions due to glacier pressure causing an ancient fault line. Take 220 steps up the cliff side, or opt for a canoe or kayak to paddle around the lakes.

In the colder months when the snow falls, snowshoes or backcountry skis



Pink Lake

help adventure seekers navigate the stunning terrain.

The park is located in Abitibi Temiscamingue, an approximate 7hr drive from Montreal.

Hike to Lusk Cave and Pink Lake in Gatineau Park

Gatineau Park attracts 2.7 million tourists a year – which is no surprise, as it’s a short drive from the metropolis of Ottawa.

Pink Lake is a deceiving attraction – despite its name, the lake actually has a turquoise appearance. The water is part of a meromictic system, which means the upper and lower layers of water never mix, creating a unique biodiversity.

Elsewhere in the park, you’ll find waterfalls, but be sure to find the Lusk Caves. To reach the caves, take a scenic hike through Gatineau park. Before you

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Pink Lake is a deceiving attraction – despite its name, the lake actually has a turquoise appearance.



Coastline of Magdalen Islands

QUEBEC

go, don't forget to pack swimmers and sturdy hiking boots.

Under an hour's drive from Gatineau is Tremblant village, a top spot for skiers and snowboarders, with a ski hill, shops, restaurants, and hotels – as well as all the splendor of the Laurentian region.

Horseback riding, beaches, and biking in the Laurentians

Find four seasons of fun in the unspoiled wilderness of the Laurentians, just a short drive north of Montreal. In the summer, go horseback riding, hiking, relax on the beaches, hire a kayak, and mountain bike through the mountains. In winter, you can ski, snowshoe, go tubing down thrilling hills, or even take part in a dog sled ride.

Make Saguenay your playground

Just two hours away from Quebec City, you'll find the waterfront communities of Saguenay welcoming travelers who love to get outside and explore the natural playground in one of their three national parks and the marine park.

Whether you choose a solo



Kayaking in Saguenay



Hiking in the Laurentians

adventure by sea kayak or take part in a tour on a zodiac, you'll be amazed as you explore one of the world's longest fjords. Fjord-du-Saguenay National Park is also a great place for bird watchers, and keep your eyes peeled for moose, beaver, porcupine, and even beluga whale.

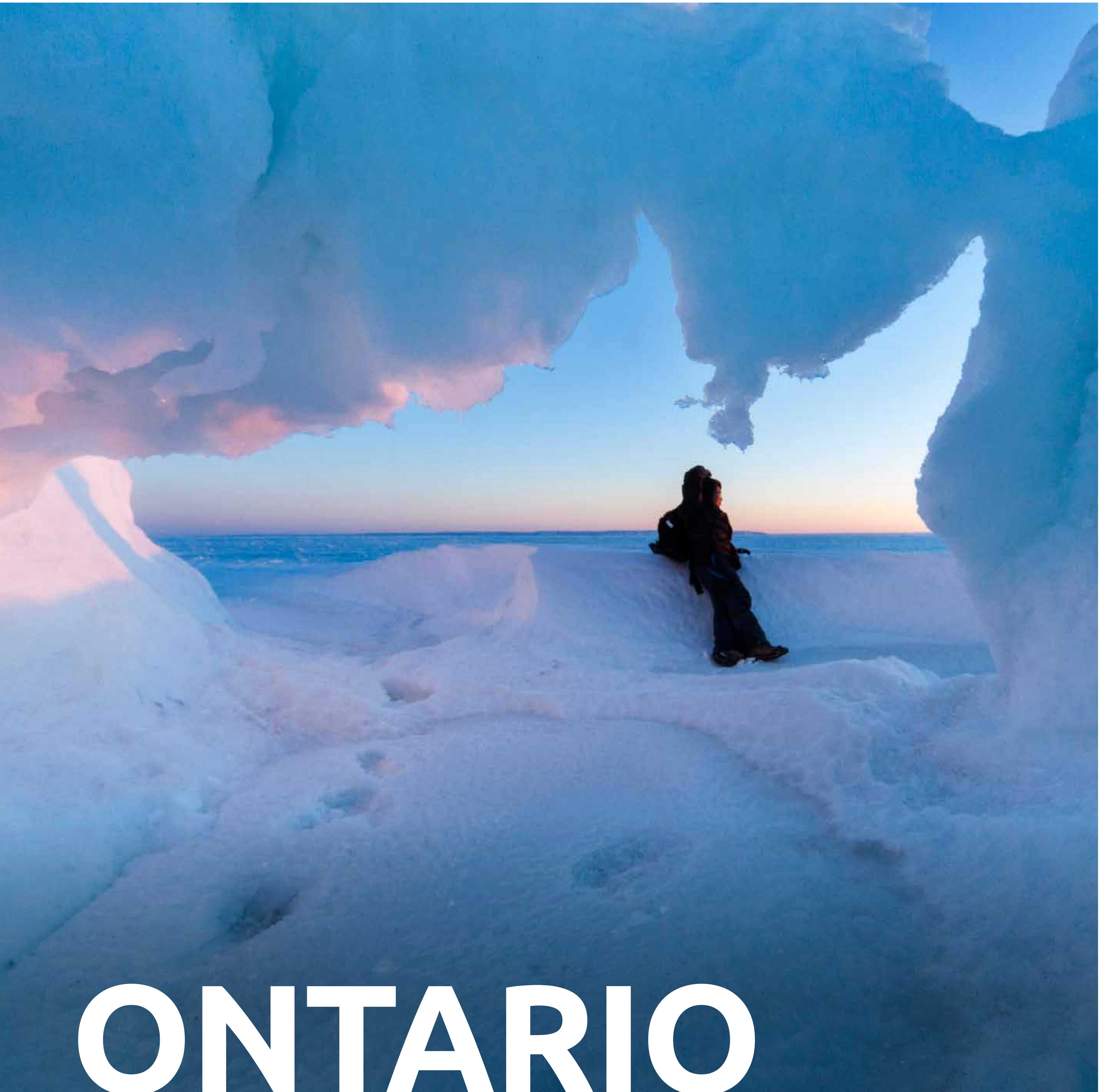
Winter escapes at Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury

Winter sports seekers will find a winter wonderland just a 45-minute drive from Quebec City at Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury, or the Stoneham Mountain Resort, which is even closer to town.

This hill holds the title of Canada's largest illuminated ski center, where visitors can ski, snowboard, and take a turn at the Olympic half-pipe. With ski in, ski out accommodations and hot tubs, the *apres* ski amenities are almost as attractive as the powdered snow.

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Find four seasons of fun in the unspoiled wilderness of the Laurentians, just a short drive north of Montreal.



ONTARIO

When we say “Canadian wilderness”, your mind probably conjures up images of the Rocky Mountains. Ontario might be pretty flat, but there’s so much to explore outside the major cities. If lakes, forests, road-trips, and wildlife sound like a good time, stick around.

Toronto

It's Canada's largest city and the economic hub, but there's so much more to Toronto than skyscrapers and business meetings.

See the CN Tower

Every first-time visitor to Toronto has to see the CN Tower. It defines the city skyline. Views from the top can stretch to cities as far away as Hamilton and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

If you're up for an adrenaline rush, test your wits by perching yourself precariously on the CN Tower's Edge Walk.

Toronto Islands

To get that picture-perfect Instagram shot, pack a picnic and head over to the Toronto Islands. Or, stay on the mainland and capture the sun setting over the skyline from Polson Pier or Trillium Park at Ontario Place.



CN Tower



Kensington Market

Visit the charming neighborhoods

The charm of Toronto lies in its neighborhoods where the city's multiculturalism is on full display. Kensington Market is the most vibrant neighborhood, and has been home to many different waves of immigrants over the past century.

In the west-end, make a point to visit Little Italy, Parkdale, and West Queen West. While in the east-end, the neighborhoods of Leslieville, the Danforth, and The Beach shouldn't be missed.

Take a step back in time and visit the Distillery Historic District, once home to the largest distillery in the world and boasting beautifully-preserved Victorian industrial buildings. This pedestrian-only district is filled with restaurants, one-of-a-kind shops, art galleries, a brewery, and a distillery.

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If you're up for an adrenaline rush, test your wits by perching yourself precariously on the CN Tower's Edge Walk.



Experience Toronto's festivities

A visit to Toronto during one of these top festivals and events will really bring your experience to life. The Toronto Pride Festival is held in June, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival in July, the Toronto International Film Festival in September, and the Toronto Christmas Market in December.



Niagra on the Lake

Visit the waterfall capital of the world, Hamilton

Nature lovers will enjoy a visit to Hamilton, known as the waterfall capital of the world, with over 100 waterfalls found around the city. Hamilton is also quite the hot spot for foodies these days, too.

Go back in time on a trip to Niagra-on-the-Lake

A little over an hour's drive from Toronto is the charming little town of Niagra-on-the-Lake, known for its wineries, summer Shaw Festival, and buildings dating back to the 19th century.

Niagra Falls (of course)

If there's only one day-trip you take from Toronto, you must visit Niagara Falls – a collection of three waterfalls on the US-Canadian border. The Horseshoe Falls are the largest and most popular, and visitors can get an up-close viewing with a ride on the Hornblower Niagara Cruise.

Navigate Your Way Around

The Toronto Transit Commission (or the TTC, as locals call it) is a network of subways, streetcars, and buses that will get you around the city. A day-pass is worthwhile if you'll be making four or more trips in a day, especially on weekends when a single day-pass is good for two adults and up to four children.

Bike Share

Toronto is another great option for getting around the city on two wheels. They have over 2,000 bikes spread across 200 stations in the city. And, of course, nothing beats walking!

Ottawa

Ottawa is the capital city of Canada, but it's often skipped in favor of Montreal or Toronto. From street art and local festivals to exploring the outdoors on a quick day-trip, we'll show you why Ottawa shouldn't be missed.

Ottawa's local markets and neighborhoods

Take a stroll through Byward Market, where over 600 businesses sell anything from trinkets to local farmers' produce.

The Notre Dame Basilica in Lower Town neighborhood will certainly catch your eye – regardless of how religious you are, the impressive designs are certainly something to gawk at.

If you've chosen to visit in winter, head to Rideau Canal where you can skate across the frozen water. This 125mi (200km) waterway was constructed back in the early 1800s, and is a UNESCO World Heritage site



Byward Market



Rideau Canal

– not to mention one of the most memorable features in Ottawa.

Ottawa also has some pretty cool street art, especially in the Glebe and Vanier neighborhoods. Be on the lookout for bright murals up side-streets and outside local shops.

Get some fresh air in Ottawa's parks

The thing that locals love about Ottawa is that it's surrounded by nature. You'll even see yoga classes happening in front of Parliament during the summer – feel free to join in!

Take a stroll through Majors Hill Park, Confederation Park, the grounds of Rideau Hall, and find a great photo spot at Nepean Point.

Wander the paths that wind alongside the Rideau Canal or the Ottawa River – which is part of the

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If you've chosen to visit in winter, head to Rideau Canal where you can skate across the frozen water.

ONTARIO

Trans-Canada Trail. Or, for an easy day-trip, head to the Gatineau Hills for hiking or skiing.

Nightlife

Ottawa isn't known for its party scene, but there are a few fun places to grab a drink with new friends. If you love beer, head to CRAFT or the Bier Markt. If you want to dance, check out The Great Canadian Cabin or The Heart and Crown.

The Byward Market area is your best bet to finding nightlife in Ottawa. Of course, if there's an NHL or CFL game, any bar will do. When the night is over, join the locals and head to Zaks Diner for your post-party food fix.

Festivals and events

Ottawa celebrates all four seasons, and there's always something going on. During the winter, you can expect tons of Christmas lights and a winterscape light show projected onto the Parliament buildings. Early February is Winterlude: a winter festival with ice sculpting competitions, special events, and a giant snow kingdom with ice slides for everyone.

Spring is the tulip festival, with hundreds of multi-colored tulips (an annual gift from the Netherlands) popping up across the city.

With summer comes Canada Day (July 1st), and several music festivals including Bluesfest.

Finally, fall is celebrated in with several community fairs, a Food and Wine Festival, and, of course, Canadian Thanksgiving, and Halloween.



Ottawa River

Ottawa for foodies

When it comes to local favorites, you need to try these: a freshly-made sandwich from La Bottega, gelato from Stella Luna, and a beaver tail from the stall in the market – yes, they are touristy, but locals love them too.

Ottawa also has Ribfest (June) and PoutineFest (April) – absolute musts if you're around.

Parliament and museums

Canadian Parliament offers free group tours throughout the day, depending on whether Parliament is in session or if there's construction. The Ottawa area also has several museums including the Museum of History and the War Museum. The museums and the National Gallery all offer some free time each week, so plan ahead to avoid disappointment.

Getting Around Ottawa

Most of Ottawa's attractions are really close together, which means you can walk from place to place. That being said, if you want to explore some of the more outlying neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Little Italy, and Westboro, you will have to use OC Transpo – the city's bus service.

Adventure in Ontario

No matter what time of year you visit, Ontario's wilderness offers adventure for anyone wanting to experience the Canadian outdoors.

Algonquin National Park

Perhaps the best-known National Park in Ontario, Algonquin is filled with forests, rivers, lakes, and dozens of trails. The best part? It's only a few hours' drive from both Ottawa and Toronto, and its sheer size means you'll probably want to stay for at least two days.

The park is accessible year-round, with everything from whitewater rafting in the spring to dog sledding and snowshoeing in the winter.

For hikers, there are small trails perfect for day-hikes, as well as multi-day trails such as the Western Uplands Trail, which is 55mi (88km) long. As one of the larger parks, it's also home to plenty of Canadian wildlife, so keep your eyes open for moose and bears.



Bruce Peninsula



Georgian Bay

“For hikers, there are small trails perfect for day-hikes, as well as multi-day trails.”

Georgian Bay

To see the most picturesque wilderness area in Ontario, head to Georgian Bay. This area is part of Lake Huron, and has over 30,000 islands and 1,243mi (2,000km) of shoreline. On the shores around the lake, you can find two popular parks: Killarney Provincial Park and Bruce Peninsula National Park, as well as Wasaga Beach.

Here, you'll find hiking and cycling trails of varying lengths, plenty of spots to go swimming in summer, canoeing and kayaking opportunities, and plenty of wildlife to be seen. Georgian Bay also has a number of old shipwrecks, making it an awesome place for fresh water scuba diving.

It's also a great spot for road-trips. The Georgian Bay Coastal Route is usually done in 7-15 days, depending on how many stops you make.

ONTARIO
Lake Superior Provincial Park

Given its northern location, Lake Superior is well off the beaten track for most travelers. But, as the largest lake in the world, it has plenty to offer outdoor enthusiasts and adventure seekers.

It's easy to spend days exploring the lakes, forests, hills, and waterfalls of this park. If you're short on time, you can still take in the landscapes and scenery on a 52mi (83km) road-trip through the park, via the Trans-Canada Highway.

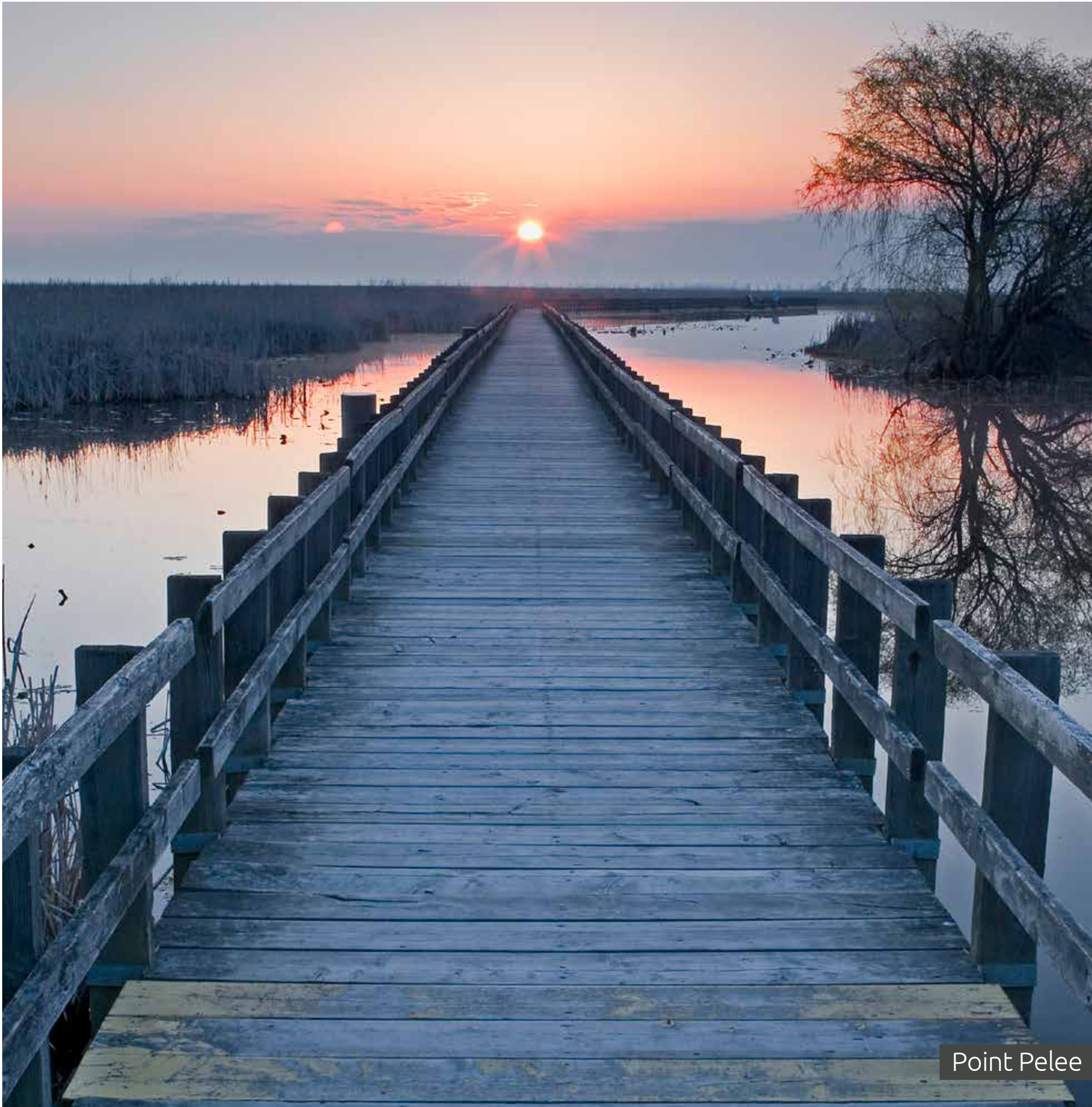
Canoeing and hiking are two of the top activities here, both of which can be done as a daily activity, or as a week-long voyage.

Niagara Parks

No doubt you've heard of the famous Niagara Falls, and while they are a must-see, the whole surrounding area is great to explore and easily accessible for visitors on a day trip. There are 9mi (15km) of hiking footpaths, bouldering opportunities in the Niagara Glen, and a 33mi (53km) cycling trail along the Niagara River.



Lake Superior



Point Pelee

Point Pelee National Park

Point Pelee on Lake Erie is about 70% marshland and about 30% forest. Like the other parks, it's great for hiking, cycling, and canoeing. But, the highlight here is the wildlife, specifically two annual events.

Point Pelee is best known for bird watching, especially during the spring migration. The area is actually nicknamed the 'Warbler Capital of Canada'. See the monarch butterfly migration in the fall, as Point Pelee is part of their migratory route.

““
Point Pelee is best known for bird watching, especially during the spring migration.””

Take Your Mountain Bike to Collingwood, Ontario

Just a couple of hours from Toronto, the lush deciduous forests of Georgian Bay contain some of Canada's finest single track, downhill, and cross-country trails. Proximity to the ocean also makes for the perfect post ride refresher.

- Best for:** Intermediate.
- How long you need:** 5 days.
- When to go:** May to September.

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- Ontario**
- British Columbia
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- Atlantic Provinces



BRITISH COLUMBIA

No other place can compete against wilderness adventures in British Columbia. Even the most seasoned explorers will agree that BC has some of the most wicked landscapes to climb and slopes to carve up. Grab your surfboard or skis – whichever season you choose to visit, adventure is ripe for the taking.

Vancouver

Set on the Pacific and flanked by snow-capped mountains, Vancouver is a vision of west coast living. Travelers are drawn to it both for its easy access to outdoor adventure and laid-back urban core.

Capilano Suspension Bridge and Grouse Mountain

For an easily-accessible outdoor adventure, catch the free shuttles to Capilano Suspension Bridge or Grouse Mountain. It takes the average hiker an hour and a half to hike 1.8mi (2.5km) to the summit of Grouse Mountain. If you're not feeling up to it but still want the views, there's a gondola. If you've got a hire car, try Lynn Canyon for its free suspension bridge and hiking.

Stanley Park

Check out the aquarium, walk or rent a bike to cycle the 6mi (10km) seawall, swim at one of the beaches, or stop off to enjoy some lunch.

Sunset, Kitsilano, Spanish Banks, or the



Cliff walk over Capilano River



Stanley Park

(clothing optional) Wreck are also great beaches for hanging out. Kayaks and stand-up paddleboards are available for rent on False Creek.

Granville Island

For its shops, food and flower-filled public market, restaurants, galleries, and theatre; Granville Island can easily entertain for a day.

Get your arts and culture fix in Vancouver

The Vancouver Art Gallery, the Museum of Vancouver, and the Museum of Anthropology are all worth a visit. The latter being a good excuse to visit the sprawling University of British Columbia campus.

Vancouver loves its festivals and events, so there's always something to experience. Highlights include the Eastside Culture Crawl, Vancouver International Film Festival, Vancouver Folk Festival, Bard on the Beach, Celebration of Light, and Vancouver Pride Festival.

If you're keen to do some shopping, hit up Mount Pleasant for smaller, independently-owned businesses.

Accommodation & Transport in Vancouver

Vancouver is busy with conventions, so book ahead for hotels. If opting for Airbnb, seek out neighborhoods like Mt. Pleasant, Strathcona, or the West End.

If you're on a budget, Samesun, HI Vancouver, and The Cambie are good centrally-located options. And if you don't mind a short commute on the Canada Line, hotels in Richmond typically cost less.

Besides walking, the cheapest option is Vancouver's public transit system – day passes or re-loadable cards are good for buses, the Skytrain, and the Seabus.

Uber has not yet made it to Vancouver, but other convenient modes of travel are taxis, Car2Go or EVO car shares, and the Mobi bike share system.

Vancouver Island and Victoria

A trip to British Columbia wouldn't be complete without visiting Victoria (the provincial capital) and Vancouver Island. Often overlooked because of limited public transport, intrepid adventurers will be rewarded with views of unspoiled scenery, chats with quirky locals, and maybe even a rendezvous with a wild bear.

Victoria

Known as the "Garden City", the best way to explore the quaint CBD and leafy suburbs is by bicycle, stopping at historic landmarks like the Fairmont Empress Hotel (try their high tea), Parliament Buildings and famous Canadian artist/writer Emily Carr's house.

You can get up close and personal with wild seals that frequent the docks of Oak Bay Marina, an easy pedal from



Victoria Island



Mount Washington, Vancouver Island

the city via historic neighborhoods, then stop for a rest and a wander at Beacon Hill Park on your way back.

You can't leave without discovering Butchart Gardens, the Island's most-visited attraction, which is just a short drive from the city.

Camping on Vancouver Island

The Island has a wide range of camping and hiking options, ranging from simple drive-in style overnight campgrounds with facilities to multi-day hikes. Depending on your experience, what gear you have, and time of year, you'll be able to find an option suitable for you.

Beginner campers will love the tidal beaches, day hikes, and wild river swimming options in Parksville, on the east coast near Nanaimo. Provincial campgrounds need to be reserved ahead to guarantee a site.

Preparation for Canada's Wilderness

Camping in British Columbia is fantastic, but it can also be dangerous for the ill-prepared. Make sure to consult with local outfitters and Park Rangers with regards to weather, wildlife and having the right gear. Also, remember to leave no trace, bringing out what you take in, and respect the natural habitat.



Mountain biking and hiking trails

Mountain biking trails are literally everywhere. Just grab a trail map from a local parks office or bike shop to find the best trail for your level of experience.

The famous West Coast Trail will captivate hardcore hikers and campers. Open from May–September, it takes 5-7 days and passes through rugged, wild terrain including raging rivers, serene lakes, ancient rainforests and deserted, mystical beaches littered with driftwood.

Tofino

If laid back, artsy vibes, ancient rainforests, surfing, and one of Canada's top restaurants sounds like your kind of thing, then head to Tofino on the wild west coast of the Island.

You'll immerse yourself into the Island culture of this little town on the tip of a peninsula that marks the entrance to Clayoquot Sound, which teems with marine life like gray whales and unbelievably cute sea otters.

If the conditions are right, hire a surfboard and a thick wetsuit to catch a wave or two on Long Beach – Canada's most famous surf spot.

After a hard day exploring the sea and forest, pop into a tavern for a yarn with local fishermen who'll be sure to keep the conversation interesting for a pint or two of craft ale. Make sure to reserve a table at Wolf in the Fog, which serves up delicious, locally sourced, rustic plates – with sea views.

Exploring smaller islands by ferry

Consider exploring smaller islands accessed by the BC Ferries network between the Island and the mainland. Salt Spring Island and Bowen Island are popular choices with a range of accommodation and activities like foraging, hiking, whale watching, fishing, and visiting sustainable farms.

Pull up a window seat or space on the top deck if the sun is out and keep a keen eye for pods of orca whales as they are often seen in the area.

Getting to Vancouver Island

It's not often that transport can be the star of the journey. Getting to "the Island", as BC locals affectionately call it, is definitely part of the fun.

Ferry: BC Ferries run multiple daily services from Horseshoe Bay and Tsawwassen, both accessible by bus from downtown Vancouver to Horseshoe Bay and Nanaimo on the Island. Hiring a car in Vancouver and driving over would be the best option so you have transport covered to get around.

Seaplane: Catching a seaplane from downtown Vancouver to Nanaimo or Victoria, you'll soar past Lion's Gate Bridge taking in spectacular views of the city and mountains. Whales are even easier to spot from above! Check the Harbor Air website for schedules and fares.

Whistler

Whistler is known world-wide for snowboarding and skiing, however there's so much more to do in and around town. Awesome events, nightlife, inspiring landscapes, cool jobs, and endless adventures await.

Skiing around Whistler

For backcountry skiers, doing the Spearhead Traverse is a local rite of passage. Skiing in the Duffey Lake area north of Whistler around Mt. Joffre is where you'll find some of the best skiing in the area.

Hiking and trail running

Running the rubble creek classic route, from Cheakamus Lake to Rubble Creek, is an unforgettable hiking/trail-running tour that's best done at the end of summer.

Hiking to Wedgemont Lake and the Joffre Lakes should be on everyone's to-do list, with rewarding views at the end of long trails.



Adventure to get the adrenaline pumping

You can go zip-lining above black bears and cruise through the mountains on all-terrain vehicles, or go mountain biking through the many trails that surround the village. Try rafting the Elaho River, or bobsledding at the Olympic Park.

Festivals and events

The Whistler Ski and Snowboard Festival happens in April each year, and it's a great time of year to be in town, with plenty of free outdoor concerts happening.

Crankworx is an annual mountain biking festival that usually falls in August each year. It celebrates the soul of mountain biking, and brings the best riders and bike fans in the world together for a week of racing, slopestyle competitions, demos, and the chance to take to some of Whistler's best trails.

Want a local beer experience? Try some Coast Mountain Beer with your new friends, and you'll no doubt go for apres ski drinks at Dusty's.

So, You Want to Work in Whistler?

The best time to look for work is spring and fall. Summer and winter are the big seasons. Keep in mind most companies aim to be fully staffed well before Christmas and by mid-June.

If you want to work in the service industry, it's essential to have a Serving It Right card (<http://servingitright.com/>).

Driving is a huge part of many jobs, so getting your Class 4 driver's license to drive customers in company vehicles is a big asset to have on your resumé. A first aid certificate can be extremely useful, some jobs even require one!

Look out for jobs in restaurants, hotels, and the mountain operations – these are the biggest employers.

There are also cool jobs available in white water rafting, ATV guiding, photography, mountain bike guiding, zip line guiding, or at one of the many annual events – perfect for combining adventure and work!

Haida Gwaii

A visit to Haida Gwaii's rain-soaked forests and ancient sites will captivate nature and culture seekers. The misty islands that were never ceded to the Canadian government shelter Haida traditions, plus 6,800 flora and fauna species.

Off Canada's northwest coast, the Haida people have lived 12,500 years on the 200 islands of the Haida Gwaii archipelago. Embrace the Haida belief that all living things are connected by walking among monumental or mortuary poles (never called totems), or attending a community *potlatch* (a ceremonial feast).

Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve

Accessible only by boat or float plane, take a guided day-trip to walk among fallen longhouses and to meet a watchmen guardian. Stop at Gandll K'in Gwaayyaay (Hotsprings Island) for a dip in a hot springs pool revered for healing. If you have more time, head to Sgang Gwaay to walk among history and ancient mortuary poles which lean over the beach on Anthony Island. Keep your eyes peeled for whales on the journey back.

Hike the Tow Hill trail

In Naikoon Provincial Park, you'll find Tow Hill trail, which is an easy 1.36mi (2.2km) hike to three viewing platforms. On a clear day, you can enjoy ocean views and see all the way to Alaska.



Follow the Spirit Lake trail

There are no hiking trails in Gwaii Haanas (except short paths near watchmen sites), so do your hiking on the northern islands. A popular choice is Spirit Lake Trail, which is near Skidegate Village. Take a guided hike to learn about trees used in Haida baskets or carvings.

Cycling trails

If you want paved cycling trails, you can explore 93mi (150km) of highway in just a few days. Willing to tackle gravel roads? A network of logging roads – some no longer used for active logging – offer longer distances and backcountry camping.

Haida Heritage Center

Head to Kay Llnagaay's popular aboriginal tourism attraction. It offers historical displays, the Kay bistro where you can rub shoulders with locals, and see interpretative talks. Be sure to stop off at the carving shed, where a new pole may be underway.

Getting There and Around

BC Ferries sails several times weekly from Prince Rupert. Fares start at US \$31.79 (C \$38.75) one-way.

There are daily flights from Vancouver to Masset with Pacific Coastal Airlines or from Prince Rupert with Inland Air. Air Canada flies daily from Vancouver to Sandspit International Airport (YZP) from US \$204 (C \$249) one-way.

The ferry between Moresby and Graham Islands runs several times daily. If arriving in Sandspit, book the shuttle to reach Village of Queen Charlotte or Skidegate (there is no taxi).

Adventure in British Columbia

Endless opportunities exist for adventurous travelers in British Columbia. So, what'll it be? Rafting, climbing, canoeing, kite surfing, or road-tripping?

Water adventures

You can surf in Tofino, canoe the legendary Bowron Lake circuit, learn how to kite surf in Squamish, sea kayak out to Gabriola Island, or go scuba diving on the Sunshine Coast in Powell River – one of the world's best cold-water diving destinations.

Go rafting on the Elaho River in Squamish/Whistler, the Kicking Horse River near Golden, the Thompson River in Lytton, and the Clearwater River in Wells Grey Provincial Park. These are all guided day-trips, however it's also possible to do multi-day camping/rafting trips – search around to find the right tour operator for you.



Garibaldi Park



Bugaboo Mountains

Finding off-the-beaten-track hiking trails

Looking for quieter trails? Hiking both Lake Lovely Water or Echo Lake near Squamish will require river crossings, and are quite strenuous. It's a good idea to do these as overnight trips, which means you'll need to pack all the right gear.

The hike up to Panorama Ridge will take 11 hours, as will the scramble up to Black Tusk. Both of these difficult hikes will reward you with unreal views of Garibaldi Lake below. There are designated camping areas available along the trail for overnight stays.

In Bugaboo Provincial Park, take the drive up the logging roads to where the tradition of Heli Skiing began in Canada! Hike to Applebee Camp and view the towering rock spires launching out of the glaciers.

Road-tripping around British Columbia

If you really want to see the best of British Columbia, start by renting a truck to drive yourself around. Check out Tumbler Ridge where you should go hiking in Monkman Park or take a jet

Road-tripping the Sea-to-Sky Highway

Experience British Columbia's incredible mountainous coastline and drive the Sea-to-Sky Highway. It starts in Vancouver and heads north on Highway 99, ending just north of Whistler.

This route is perfect for those who love the outdoors, plus cultural and historic sites. There are seven interpretive centers, shaped like cedar-bark hats, along the route which give insights into the cultural significance of the region.

Photo worthy stops include Brandywine Falls, the Lynn Canyon and Sky Pilot Suspension Bridges, and Shannon Falls.



Takakkaw Falls, Yoho National Park

boat up to Kinuseo Falls, then continue onto the Alaska Highway.

Driving along the Stewart Cassiar highway is adventurous and remote, but there are a few awesome places to pop in along the way. Check out Hell's Gate on the Fraser river, where an impressive canyon has been carved by the ferocious water.

Take a BC Ferry from Port Hardy to Bella Coola into the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest – don't forget to stop in at Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, close to the community of Bella Coola! It is possible to do a 'Grizzly Safari' near Bella Coola, or head up towards Valemont to see Mt. Robson – the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies.

Make the most of winter

Looking for other winter adventures aside from the obvious choice of skiing or snowboarding? You can do snowmobile tours in Revelstoke, Golden, Whistler, or Fernie. Plus, there are many great snowshoe trips in Garibaldi Park, go to the Elfin Lake Hut, do the Garibaldi Neve Traverse, or the Howe Sound Crest Trail in late spring.

“Roaring for 991ft to the valley floor below, Takakkaw Falls is one of the tallest waterfalls in BC.”

Exploring the Canadian Rockies: British Columbia

YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Yoho is Cree for “awe,” and it's easy to see how this slice of the Rockies got its name. Home to giant waterfalls, 61 lakes, excellent day hikes, and a stunning scenic road that hits all the park highlights, you'll find this little gem of a park a 20-minute drive west of Lake Louise.

Takakkaw Falls: Roaring for 991ft (300m) to the valley floor below, Takakkaw Falls is one of the tallest waterfalls in BC. Get to the trailhead by car, or take on the scenic switchbacks of Yoho Valley Road by bicycle – 8.51mi (13.7km) to complete the whole road, one-way.

Complete Yoho's Iceline Trail: Yoho's Iceline Trail (13.35mi/21.5 km) follows the edge of incredible 12,000-year-old glaciers. Give yourself a couple of days to complete the loop, staying overnight at Little Yoho Campground or Stanley Mitchell Hut.

Bathe in Emerald Lake and Lake O'Hara: There are no bathable hot springs in Yoho, so you'll just have to brave a dip in one of its turquoise lakes. Called out for their ridiculous beauty are Emerald Lake and Lake O'Hara.

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

This is the skinniest of the Rockies parks, measuring only 4.9mi (8km) on either side of Highway 93. It takes about an hour to drive through the park from Banff, but you'll definitely want to stop off for some adventuring on your way to the town of Radium and its famous hot springs pools.

Hike to Floe Lake: Floe Lake is a 6.64mi (10.7km) hike through woods and wildflower meadows to a perfect alpine lake. This one makes for a magic day hike, but you can also stay in a backcountry camp site on the lake's shore if you want to extend the trip.

Walk to Marble Canyon: For a more chilled experience in Kootenay National Park, check out the short walk to Marble Canyon then head on to the Point Pots — a series of spring-fed pools that run from bright orange to lurid green.

A scenic sunset over a lake with two people in a canoe. The sky is filled with colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water. In the foreground, two people are sitting in a small canoe on the water, their silhouettes visible against the bright sunset. The background shows a dark forest of trees and distant mountains under a twilight sky.

PRAIRIES & NORTH

Taking a trip up north to the remote and freezing cold Northwest Territories and the Yukon, or making your way around central Canada's Prairies might not make its way to the top of many itineraries, but with the northern lights and landscapes primed for tents, prioritizing these provinces won't be a mistake.

Alberta

Chances are, you know about the popular areas of Banff, Jasper, and Lake Louise. While these are breathtaking places to see, there's so much more to explore in Alberta.

Lake Louise and Moraine Lake

Surrounded by snowcapped mountains, these picture-perfect lakes are a great spot to take a hike or launch your canoe into the water. When winter rolls around, hiking gets replaced by ice-skating or snowshoeing.

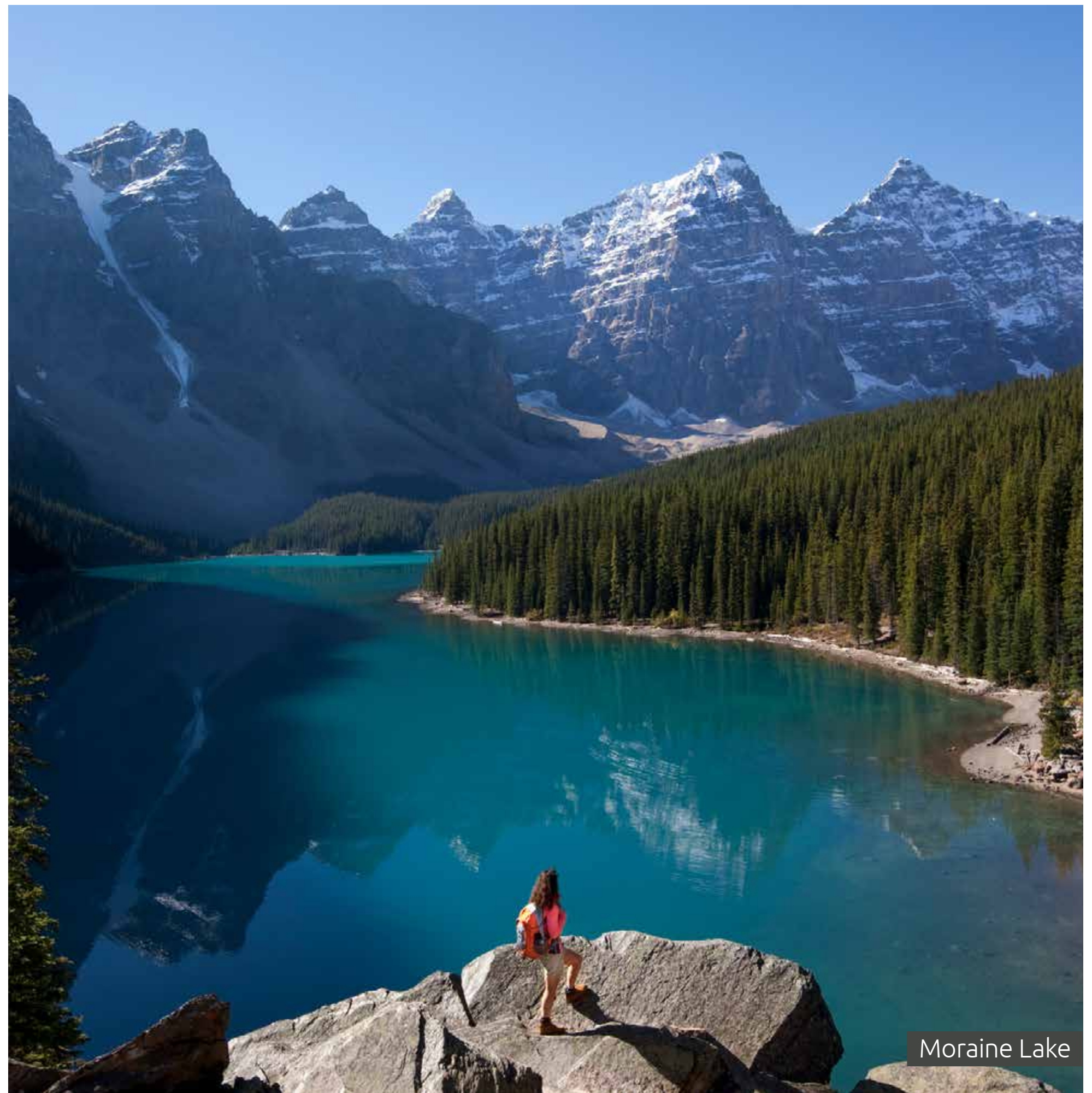
Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump

You read that correctly. This UNESCO World Heritage site is where the Native American hunters used to trap and kill buffalo by driving them off the eleven-meter-high cliff.

The Head-Smashed-In interpretive center and museum was built into the ancient sandstone cliff, and opened in 1987. Here, they offer tipi camping



Athabasca Glacier



Moraine Lake

and hands-on educational workshops to get an insight into First Nations life. There are also a number of special events and native festivals held each year, so check out the calendar to see if your trip coincides with any festivities.

See the enormous Columbia Icefield

You won't want to miss the expansive Columbia Icefield. It's about 90.75mi² (325 km²) and feeds eight major glaciers, including Athabasca – which is the most visited in North America.

Local experiences in Calgary

Also referred to as “Cow Town” due to its wild-west culture, Calgary is a diverse city that you won't want to miss. The beautiful Bow River slices through the city, with its banks and adjoining parks offering a wonderful

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These picture-perfect lakes are a great spot to take a hike or launch your canoe into the water.



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The beautiful Bow River slices through the city, with its banks and adjoining parks offering a wonderful place for walking.

place for walking. Or, if you're visiting in the summer, you can hop in a dinghy and go on a leisurely float down the river with some friends.

If you're in Calgary between October and April, don't miss out on seeing a Calgary Flames hockey game at Saddledome arena. Grab a terribly strong draft beer from the concession stand and join the wild fans in cheering on the home team.

If rivers, sports, and events aren't your thing, you can visit the famous 17th Avenue and Eau Claire areas for boutique shopping, or enjoy a fantastic view of the city while dining on a succulent Alberta beef steak at the Sky 360 Restaurant atop the Calgary Tower.

Otherwise, just 10 minutes from the city center, you'll find Tom Campbell's Hill Natural Park. This spot offers an excellent view of the city of Calgary and the Rocky Mountains beyond.

A day-trip to Johnston Canyon

Located in Banff National Park, less than two hours from Calgary, you'll find this beautiful hike. The lower falls is the most popular trip, followed by the upper falls. However, if you continue on for a further 2mi (3.2km), you'll arrive at the Ink Pots. These green-colored mineral springs bubble up to the surface, and the return trip in Johnston Canyon to the Ink Pots takes around five hours on foot.

Find dinosaur fossils in Drumheller

If prehistoric animals are your thing, take the trip just an hour and a half from Calgary to see dinosaur fossils in Drumheller. The Royal Tyrrell Museum offers one of the largest displays of dinosaurs in the world. Want more than fossils? Drumheller and the Badlands have a heap of great hikes around.

PRAIRIES & NORTH
Friendly folk (and music) in Edmonton

With arts, culture, history, and nature at its doorstep, the capital city of Alberta shouldn't be missed. One of the most unique things about Edmonton is that there're biking trails running through the heart of the city.

Escape the hustle and bustle by taking a 35-minute drive east to Elk Island National Park, where you can find out how bison were brought back from the brink of extinction, plus see herds of bison, elk, deer, and moose.

If you're in Edmonton during early-to-mid August, don't miss the Edmonton Folk Music Festival – which is said to be one of the world's premier folk festivals. Artists in the Blues, Country, Contemporary Folk, Celtic, and Soul genres hit the stage to entertain the crowd at Gallagher Park.



Johnston Canyon, Banff National Park

Exploring the Canadian Rockies: Alberta
BANFF NATIONAL PARK

Beating the crowds in Canada's most famous national park is easy – that's if you go beyond the main trails.

Lake Louise: Lake Louise absolutely deserves the hype, but those in-the-know don't stop at the lake's head by the chateau. Follow the well-marked 4.3mi return (7km) trail to Lake Agnes Tea House in the late afternoon for stunning views across the valley and to see pikas "eep!" among the rocks.

Ride the Lake Minnewanka Loop: The Lake Minnewanka Loop road (8.13mi/13.1km) runs through classic Rockies scenery — mountains, lakes, meadows home to bugling elk through fall, and boulders where it's hard not to say hello to the resident bighorn sheep. When you reach Lake Minnewanka, veer off the road and along the shore for excellent singletrack. As you cycle this loop, you'll spot one of the park's prettiest campgrounds hidden among the woods at Two Jack Lake. Accessible by car, it'll make a great base for your Banff adventure.

Chill Out in Banff Upper Hot Springs: When you're ready to chill, head to Banff Upper Hot Springs. The views out to Mount Rundle and beyond while you bathe are unreal. Go in the evening to watch those famous mountain faces turn pink under the setting sun.

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Jasper covers an epic 4,200mi² (10,878km²) which means there are a lot of backcountry trails, peaks, and lakes to explore.

Hike the Skyline Trail: Crossing three mountain passes, the Skyline Trail (27.34mi/44 km) is recognized as one of the best multi-day hikes in the country. Give yourself three days to complete the trip, and head to the Parks Canada website to secure your backcountry camping spots.

Hiking the Tonquin Valley is another brilliant backcountry experience.

Bike the Overlander Trail: Jasper's well known for its mountain biking opportunities. Check out the Overlander Trail (9.94mi/16km one-way), where twisting single-track follows the gorgeous Athabasca River valley. In summer, also look out for weekly group bike rides run by the local bike stores.

Backcountry Camping in Jasper National Park: If it's hidden backcountry camping spots you're looking for, you might want to borrow or rent a canoe or kayak to reach river spots, like Athabasca Island, or perfect hangouts on Maligne Lake, like Hidden Cove. Kayak 8.7mi (14km) along the lake to reach iconic Spirit Island... Or just join one of the cruises heading there!

Soak in the Miette Hot Springs: Miette Hot Springs pool is the spot to soak your muscles. (Tip: You can rent a fun vintage swimsuit here).

Hike the Sulphur Skyline: Miette is also the starting point for one of the best day hikes in the park. Sulphur Skyline (4.9mi/8km round-trip) is a stiff climb, but the views from the top are so worth it. Just don't follow the bad behavior of others by feeding the golden-mantled squirrels at the top. Wildlife should stay wild.

Manitoba

Found smack dab in the middle of Canada, Manitoba encapsulates the true spirit of the Canadian prairies. Despite cold winters, Manitobans stay busy throughout the year with 92 provincial parks and some of Canada's best festivals.

Culture and festivals in Manitoba

Throughout the year, festivals and cultural events exhibit the diversity and creativity of Manitoba's people. Winnipeg hosts the lively Festival du Voyageur every February, complete with live music, ice sculptures, and a showcase of First Nations, Métis, and Voyageur histories – all integral to Manitoba's culture.

In summer, Winnipeg bursts to life with the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Winnipeg Fringe Festival, and Folklorama – a celebration of the province's multiculturalism.

Other festivals worth attending are Gimli's Icelandic Festival, Dauphin's Countryfest, and Rainbow Trout Fest, an up-and-coming folk festival.

Adventure for all seasons in Assiniboine Park

Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park is perfect for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in winter, while in summer it comes alive with bike trails, outdoor entertainment, botanical gardens, and the Assiniboine Park Zoo – where the permanent *Journey to Churchill* exhibit is the next best thing to seeing polar bears in Churchill.



Polar Bears fighting in Churchill

Alicia Grosart

Go camping in Riding Mountain National Park

Riding Mountain is the place to spend some time camping and hiking in Manitoba. By day, walk the sandy shores of Clear Lake – in a province with over 100,000 lakes, this is one of its most beautiful. At night, pitch your tent under the endless stars and fall asleep to the distant howls of wolves.

Trappist Monastery Provincial Heritage Park

This park in Winnipeg is most notable for the abandoned monastery, which is ideal for a wander or an impromptu photo shoot. The monastery looks particularly stunning against a prairie sky sunset.

Road-tripping around Manitoba

With all that Prairie landscape, road trips are one of the best ways to discover Manitoba. Check out Souris for its swinging bridge, Altona for its gorgeous sunflower season, Whiteshell Provincial Park for some serious wildlife spotting and fishing opportunities, or Narcisse for its snake pits (not for the faint of heart, naturally).

A Polar Bear Encounter in Churchill

For six weeks every year, Churchill, Canada is in the primary migration path of the polar bear community. The bears, who haven't had a decent meal in months, find their way to this sleepy town along the Hudson Bay, where they will wait for the water to become ice, meaning seals can become dinner.

Passing by Churchill has never presented a major problem, until now that the Arctic is experiencing the toasty repercussions of climate change. Warmer weather means that the ice forms later. Delayed ice means hungrier bears hanging around this Hudson Bay hub.

The local community needed to be convinced that these bears were more beneficial to the town alive than dead. And now they are, in the form of tundra tourism.

Saskatchewan

The rectangular province of Saskatchewan is bisected by the green treetops of the Boreal forest in the north and the golden wheat fields in the southern agricultural region. Plus, it's zigzagged with more than 99,420mi (160,000km) of roads for endless road tripping options.

Lose yourself in the wilderness of Prince Albert National Park

First-time visitors to the park might be surprised to see dozens of elk wandering through town. That's normal in northern Saskatchewan. Although the resort village of Waskesiu and its namesake lake (meaning "red deer" or "elk" in Cree) are the anchor points of the park, true adventure lies in exploration by canoe, kayak, or on foot.

Hike or paddle the 25mi (40km) return trip across Kingsmere Lake to world-acclaimed naturalist Grey Owl's cabin during a weekend stay. Easier afternoon hikes are close to Waskesiu. You'll find carnivorous pitcher plants lining the Boundary Bog Trail in summer and bears fishing for trout in the river on the Mud Creek Trail in spring.

In wintertime, backcountry ski into Crean Kitchen campsite for a true northern outdoor experience. Tent overnight for a chance to watch the aurora borealis dance above the snow-covered lake on a backdrop of a billion stars.

For a glamping wilderness escape outside the park, cruise the scenic route through the mixed forest along Highway 263 to Christopher Lake. Book a night or two in a yurt at Flora Bora Yurts. Or

“Explore further than most visitors and hike the short distance along the Trans Canada Trail for a quieter viewpoint.”

venture to the wild west side of the park for a horseback ride with Sturgeon River Ranch.

If you time it right, you can catch one of half-a-dozen music festivals at the Ness Creek festival site throughout the summer months.

Road-trip through the Cypress Hills

The highest point in Canada east of the Rocky Mountains can be found in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. Saskatchewanians joke you can watch your dog run away for three days in the province; looking out from atop Bald Butte and the Conglomerate Cliffs viewpoints, you wouldn't doubt it.

Explore further than most visitors and hike the short distance along the Trans Canada Trail to the Hidden Conglomerate Cliffs for a quieter viewpoint overlooking Battle Creek.



Conglomerate Cliffs, Cypress Hills



Wascana Lake, Regina

Saskatchewan is well-known for its world class freshwater fishing, and you might even get a view of fly fishermen casting for brown trout in the stream.

While in the West Block, stop at the Fort Walsh National Historic Site and learn the history of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP, the precursor to Canada's iconic RCMP). Rent a bike and ride the hilly trails to visit the Cypress Hills Massacre site.

Return to civilization in Saskatoon

A foodie mecca with more restaurants per-capita than any other city in Canada, Saskatoon is the province's largest urban center. It's home to the country's only perogy drive-through at Baba's Homestyle Perogies.

For a taste of history, bike north along the Meewasin Valley Trails to Wanuskewin Heritage Park. An important cultural center, this National Historic Site highlights the rich history and way of life of the indigenous peoples of the Northern Plains. Most intriguing are the

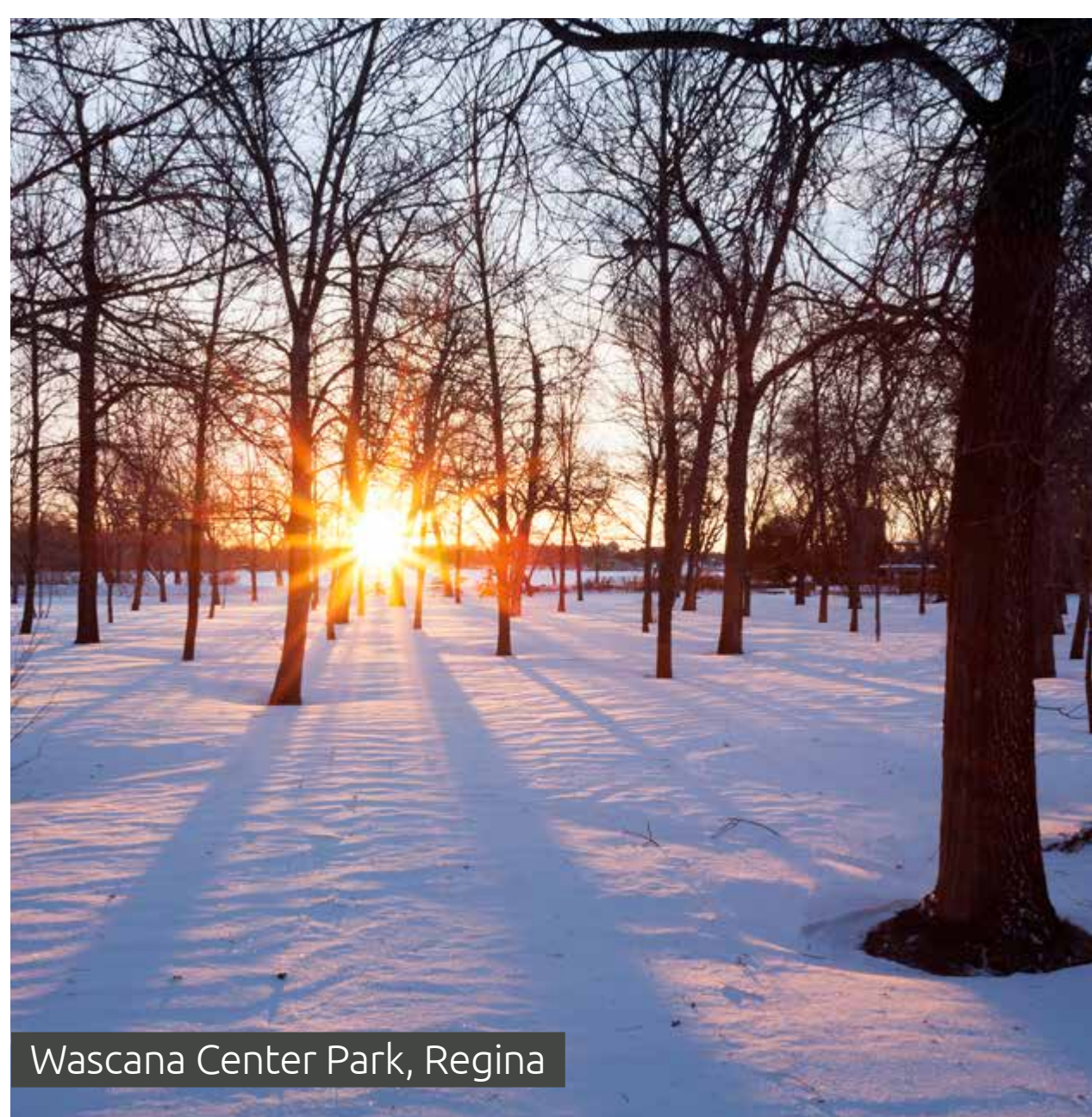
artefacts hidden within the soil layers in the park: Relics of hand tools and an elk-tooth amulet have been dated back 6,000 years – twice as old as the pyramids of Giza.

Visit the capital, Regina

Saskatchewan's capital, Regina, is known as the Queen City. It's also a sunshine destination in Canada with more than 322 sunny days a year.

Take a tour of Stone Hall Castle, a medieval-style renovated fortress originally built to offer protection from a prairie cyclone. Or go on a hunt for the ghost of Howie at Government House. He's rumored to haunt the museum and current working office of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Connect your NWMP history learned at Fort Walsh to the RCMP Heritage Centre that celebrates and commemorates the police force's 132-year history. As every RCMP officer in Canada has learned to become a "Mountie" at Regina's Depot Division training facility, it's the only place in Canada you'll get a glimpse into cadet life.



Wascana Center Park, Regina

Road-trip: Winnipeg to Calgary

It sure is flat, but central Canada, or the Prairies as it's more commonly known, offers some great experiences for a week-long road trip.

Start in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and head west along the Trans-Canada Highway. If you love oversized road-side attractions, this road trip is for you! First up, grab a photo with the large Coca-Cola can in Portage la Prairie. Continue west through Brandon, and grab another photo with the massive statue of a chief's head in Indian Head. Learn about the origins of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in Regina, Saskatchewan, and grab yet another photo with Mac the Moose in Moosejaw.

Afterwards, relax at the Temple Gardens Hotel and Spa, home to Canada's largest geothermal mineral water pool. Once in Calgary, don't miss visiting Drumheller, just northeast of the city, known for the biggest collection of dinosaur bones in the world.

Yukon

From watching the northern lights to wildlife encounters, charming gold rush towns and high-octane activities, the sparsely-populated wild Yukon will deliver an experience unlike any of the other provinces.

Explore the capital, Whitehorse

Delve into the region's fascinating gold rush history at the MacBride Museum, marvel at dinosaur skeletons and sabre tooth tigers at the Beringia Interpretive Centre, or bathe in the soothing waters at the Takhini hot springs.

Downtown, be sure to pick up a Pierre Burton tome about the region's colorful pioneers at Well-Read books before dropping into The Dirty Northern bar for a well-earned beer.

See the northern lights

The Yukon is one of the finest regions in Canada for watching the aurora borealis – aka the northern lights. The



Yukon Quest, dog sled racing



Whitehorse

prime time to see them is between late-August to mid-April.

A variety of tour operators facilitate this experience with guided tours which include transfers to and from Whitehorse, as well as cozy cabins equipped with wood-fired stoves, hot drinks, tripods for mounting your camera, and even photography advice.

Take a glacier flight over Kluane National Park

Home to Mount Logan – Canada's highest peak at 19,550ft (5,959m), and the world's largest non-polar glacier ice fields, Kluane National Park is simply stunning.

Though you can hike regions of the backcountry or even raft past glaciers, undoubtedly the best views are from the air. Flying through epic mountain passes that seem almost close enough to touch, you'll get the world's best

“““

The Yukon is one of the finest regions in Canada for watching the aurora borealis – aka the northern lights.



Kluane National Park

view of a stunning alpine landscape carved out over millions of years.

Experience the Yukon Quest

Each year, the Yukon Quest – a 621mi (1,000km) dog sled race from Whitehorse, Canada to Fairbanks, Alaska – has spectators flocking to the Yukon to witness what many regard as the toughest race on earth. Those keen to see the event first-hand can also try mushing a dog sled themselves.

Just outside Whitehorse, Muktuk Kennels offers a host of dog sled adventures, ranging from a guided, two-hour excursion to far longer customized expeditions.

Trek the Chilkoot Trail

Made famous as the route traveled by miners and prospectors during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s,

this trek is as challenging as it is spectacular. Today's trail spans 33mi (53km) through the Coast Mountains from the ghost town of Dyea, Alaska to Bennett, British Columbia.

A trip to Dawson city

Founded at the height of the Klondike Gold Rush, the charming town of Dawson on the banks of the Yukon River still retains the air of a wild west settlement. In winter, the vibrant red, blue, and yellow wooden houses stand in stark contrast to the snowy landscape, while the surrounding steep hills give it the feel of a miniature San Francisco transported into the wilderness.

Join the Sour toe cocktail club, trek stunning trails, explore Tombstone National Park, and visit Jack London's cabin to sample just a few of Dawson's highlights.

“““

Flying through epic mountain passes that seem almost close enough to touch, you'll get the world's best view of a stunning alpine landscape carved out over millions of years.

Getting to the Yukon

Most major commercial airlines connect with Yukon's gateway city of Whitehorse via Vancouver, Ottawa, Yellowknife, and Edmonton airports. There are also a number of convenient connections from other North American cities – if you're starting your journey in the US.

Northwest Territories

With long winter nights, dry crisp air, and close proximity to the magnetic north pole, Canada's Northwest Territories is one of the best places in the world to witness the northern lights.

Visit the adventure capital of the north, Yellowknife

Consider spending at least three days here to maximize your chances of seeing the northern lights. Thanks to its close proximity to the arctic circle, they are out on most nights. You don't need a big aurora storm for the greens, pinks, and red hues to be visible – just cloudless skies.

Aside from the northern lights, there are plenty of other things to do here, from snowmobiling and kite skiing to dog sledding and visiting the world-famous ice castle.

The ice castle in Yellowknife is erected every year for the Snowking's Winter Festival in March. Everything



The Ice Castle

Marta Kulesza



Yellowknife Aurora

Marta Kulesza

is made out of ice: ice bars, ice dancefloors, ice slides, ice sculptures, and even an ironic ice fireplace. A fun place for people of every age.

Chasing the aurora around Yellowknife

The northern lights are visible from Yellowknife, but for the best experience, it's a good idea to venture away from the city lights further north. To get there, you'll drive on top of a frozen lake.

The lakes around Yellowknife freeze a few meters thick in the extreme low temperatures. For the duration of winter, ice roads are constructed and speed limit signs are erected, shortening travel time for many locals who live on the shorelines.

The earliest open in December and remain in-use until April, which is perfect, because this time of the year

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Aside from the northern lights, there are plenty of other things to do here, from snowmobiling and kite skiing to dog sledding and visiting the world-famous ice castle.

PRAIRIES & NORTH

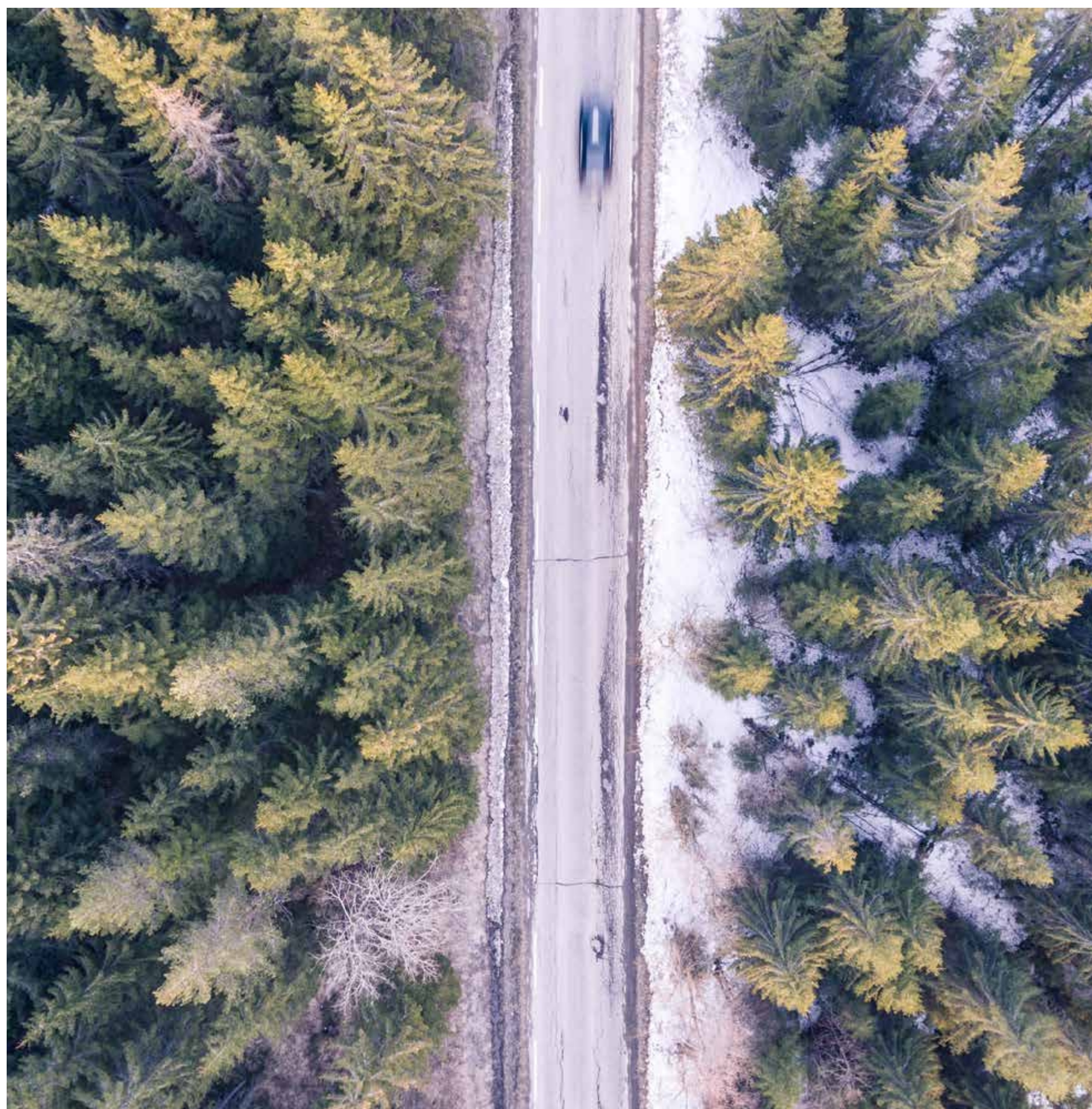
is also best for aurora viewings. The nights are long and the air is dry, so you don't have to worry about cloud coverage.

Braving a road-trip to Yellowknife

No matter where you start your journey, it's a long way to Yellowknife. A couple of days' driving – at the very least – and to be truthful, although there's lots to do and see around the city, the drive up north is uneventful in terms of attractions. Yellowknife has a domestic airport, so catching a flight might be more worth your while.

If you do decide to drive, make sure your vehicle is equipped with winter tires. Keep your eyes out for herds of bison or caribou on the side or in the middle of the road. It's a good idea to make sure both your headlights are working on the vehicle before you set off.

Don't leave without extra supplies of food and water, emergency blankets, and a decent car battery. You don't want to be stranded anywhere for too long in the fickle temperatures



(often reaching -50°F below zero), because it might be a while before you see another car driving by.

A Pro Photographer's Guide to Capturing the Northern Lights

There's no point having the most expensive camera if you have no budget left for an expensive trip to see the northern lights. But, the better the gear, the better the photo – providing you know how to use it properly.

The best camera for photographing the aurora borealis would be a DSLR with a full-frame sensor and a fast, wide-angle lens. Another essential would be to carry a sturdy tripod, which will allow you to shoot at longer shutter speeds.

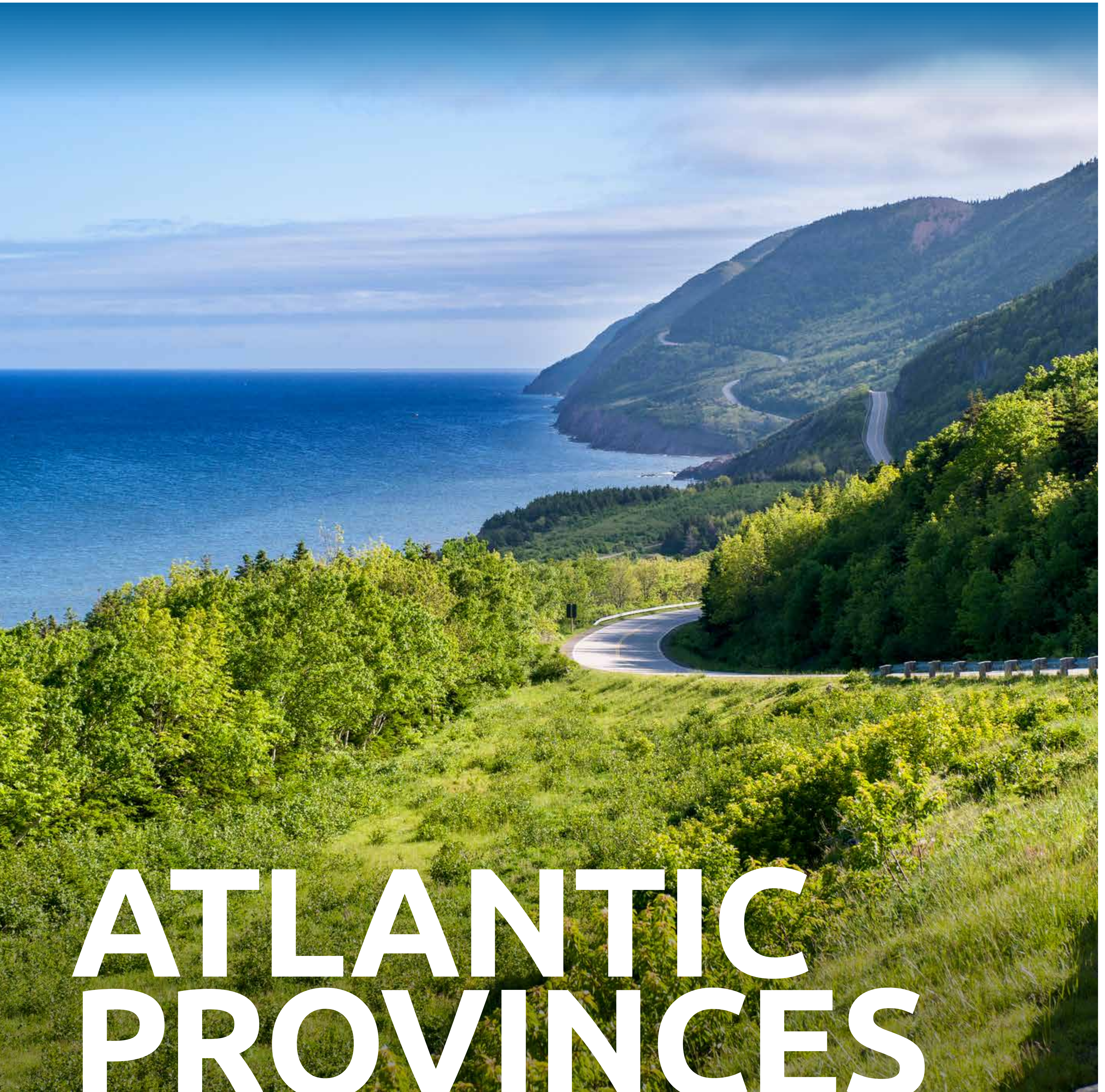
Get Your Camera Settings Right

1. Switch your camera to manual focus and set it to infinity.
2. Adjust your camera settings to the highest ISO possible, without the image becoming too noisy/grainy.
3. Open your aperture as much as possible by selecting the lowest possible F-number.
4. To capture details in an Aurora shot, depending on its current activity level, you should stick to shutter speeds between ¼ of a second to 15 seconds.

Sometimes, the aurora moves incredibly quickly, dancing effortlessly in the skies. Sticking to higher shutter speed will allow you to capture a multiplicity of detail.



Marta Kulesza



ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Driving the Lighthouse Route to see postcard-pretty towns, staying up late to see the stars in a designated Dark Sky Preserve, and tasting Canada's best seafood, the Atlantic Provinces are where you'll find challenging hikes, one of the most famous road-trips, and cultural sites to delve a little deeper.

Nova Scotia

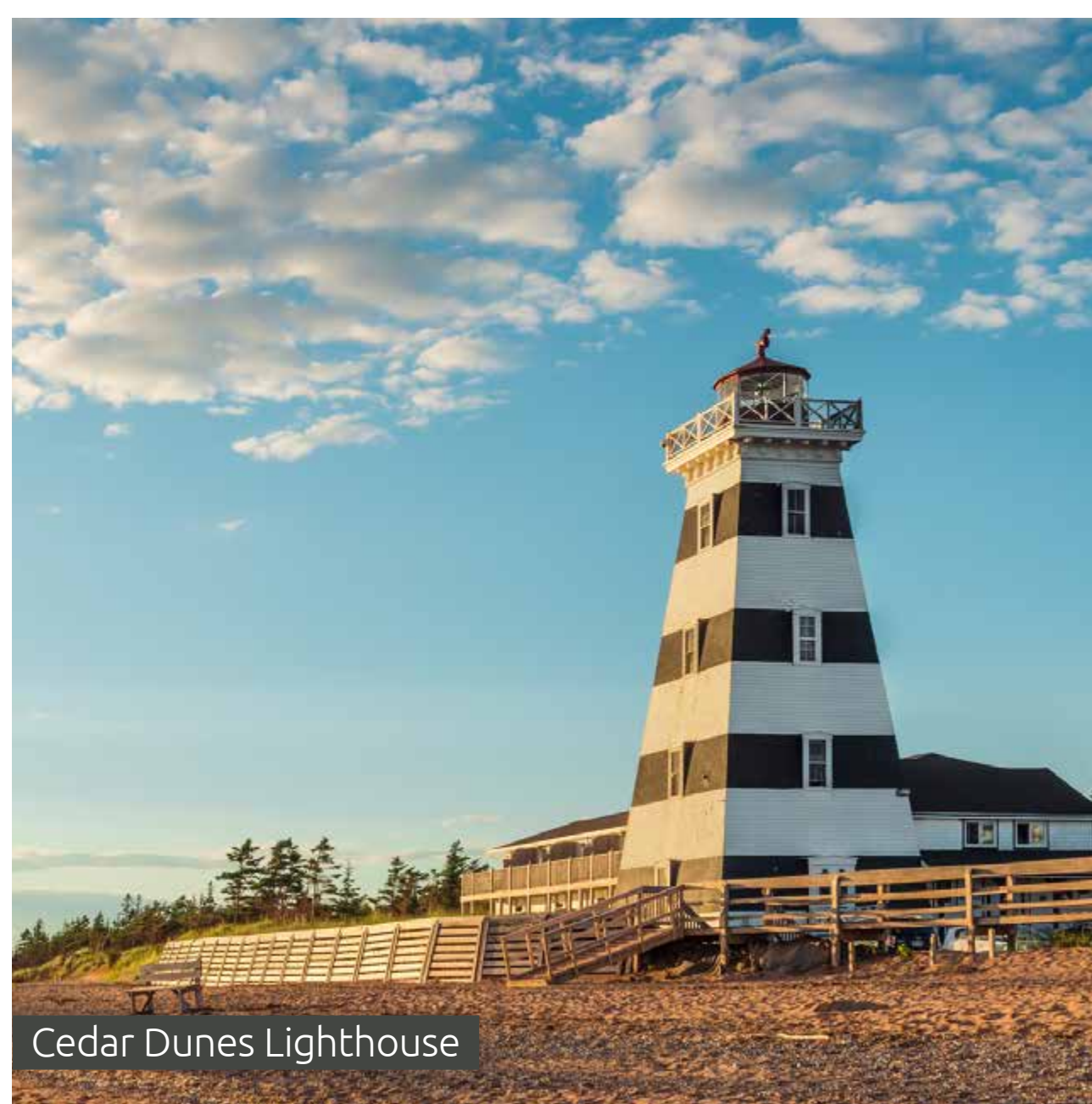
Whatever pace of trip you're after, Nova Scotia provides. Its capital, Halifax, is a hip urban city on the ocean, but you should definitely rent a car and hit the road to explore quaint fishing villages and stuff yourself silly with seafood.

Driving the Lighthouse Route

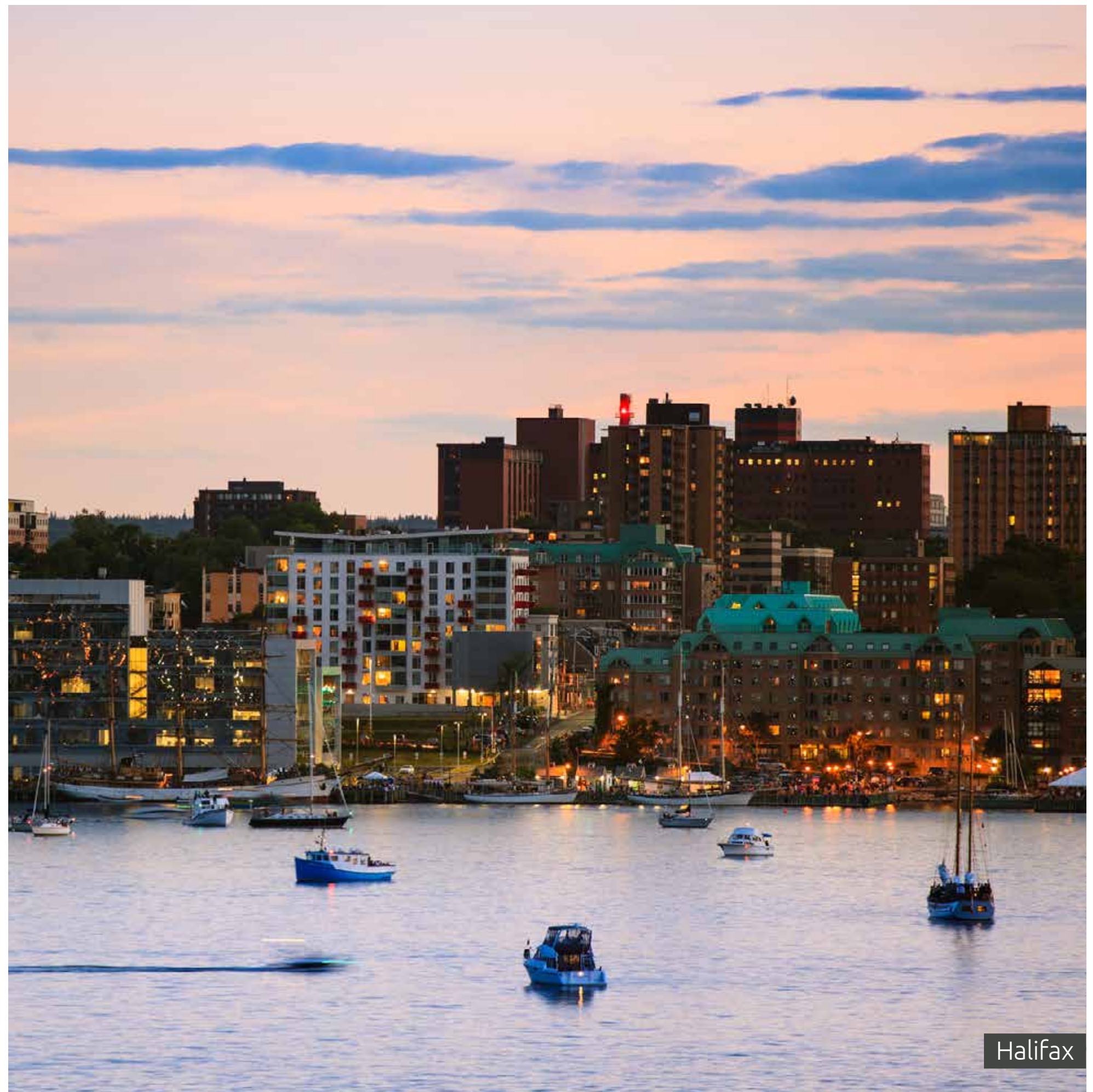
Winding your way along the coast, you'll visit postcard-pretty towns including Mahone Bay and colorful Lunenburg – both of which have great restaurants, boutiques, cafes, and historical attractions. This part of Nova Scotia has miles upon miles of white sand beaches to enjoy, with the three secluded bays of Carter's Beach being a local's favorite.

Discover the north coast of Nova Scotia

You'll find far less tourists on the north coast. Head up to the sweet university town of Wolfville, which is set among award-winning wineries. Stay in a



Cedar Dunes Lighthouse



Halifax

converted train car at the Train Station Inn in Tatamagouche and sample craft beer at the Tatamagouche Brewing Company. Then, visit local beaches, a lavender farm, and grab a lobster roll at Mennonite bakery, The Country Bread Basket.

Kejimikujik National Park

In Kejimikujik National Park on the south shore, you can hike through pristine wilderness to find Mi'kmaq petroglyphs and wildlife, kayak lakes and rivers, or camp out to watch stars litter the sky – as the park is a designated Dark Sky Preserve.

Hiking in Cape Chignecto Provincial Park

Hardcore hikers will love the 32mi (51km) coastal loop at Cape Chignecto Provincial Park, which takes you along 600ft (180m) sea cliffs and through

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This part of Nova Scotia has miles upon miles of white sand beaches to enjoy, with the three secluded bays of Carter's Beach being a local's favorite.



Skyline Trail

pristine wilderness. Rated "very challenging", you're advised to take three days to do the hike, and be prepared to rough it as there are no amenities.

Briar Island

It takes two tiny ferries to get to Briar Island, but the journey is well worth it. This is the launch point for whale watching tours that'll take you to see humpbacks, finbacks, and right whales. Stop at Lavena's Catch Café at Freeport on the way for a delicious scallop sandwich.

Cape Breton Island

Cape Breton Island is filled with jaw-dropping landscapes, historically and culturally significant sites, and some of the friendliest people you'll meet in the world. Here, you'll find Gaelic, Aboriginal, and Acadian cultures, the world's largest inland sea – Bras d'Or Lake, and Canada's most famous

driving route – the Cabot Trail. Learn about the significance of Cape Breton Island's location at the Fortress of Louisbourg. Built in 1713 by the French to maintain its hold on the lucrative fishing industry and to protect Quebec City from British invasion, it fell twice to the British before being demolished.

Today, it's the largest reconstructed historic site in North America and allows visitors to experience a typical day at the fortress in the mid 18th century, including the chance to sleep overnight in either the Rodrigue House, or an 18th century style tent in the King's Bastion.

Hikers will want to spend a few days at Cape Breton Highlands National Park and tackle both Franey – a challenging 4.6mi (7.5km) loop trail with 360 degree views of the landscape below, and the Skyline Trail – an easy 5.2 (8.5km) loop trail best enjoyed at sunset.

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Road-tripping the Cabot Trail

It's the Cabot Trail that lures visitors from around the world to Cape Breton Island. This 186mi (300km) circular route can be completed in either direction, though counter-clockwise keeps you on the outer side of the roadway for those epic views. Take your time and spend a minimum of three nights on the Cabot Trail to fully appreciate the coastal and mountain views.

Prince Edward Island

It might be Canada's smallest province, but what it lacks in size it more than makes up for with incredible scenery and things to do.

Rent a car and explore PEI

With a rental car, you can explore without boundaries. Visit the Northshore and East Point Lighthouses, the charming towns of Victoria, Stratford, and West Cape, and one of the many beaches – especially Prince Edward Island National Park, Greenwich Beach, and Basin Head Beach – home to the singing sands.

Cycle the Confederation Trail

Cyclists will love the Confederation Trail, which spans the entire province. It's built on the old, abandoned railway lines and includes 270mi (435km) of trails to enjoy. Pick up a detailed map from the Tourism Office.

Taste PEI's delicious seafood

You can't leave PEI without sampling the island's biggest exports: mussels and oysters.

One culinary experience you can't miss is a church lobster dinner. New Glasgow Lobster Suppers was the first to offer this back in 1958 and continues to this day. Your meal includes your choice of lobster, and comes with unlimited fresh rolls, clam chowder, freshly steamed PEI blue mussels, salads, and dessert. Yes, all unlimited. Pack the stretchy pants!

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One culinary experience you can't miss is a church lobster dinner.



Red sand cliffs on Prince Edward Island

Visit Charlottetown

The birthplace of Confederation in Canada, Charlottetown is teeming with old historic Victorian homes, has a walkable downtown core, boasts excellent restaurants, and has an impressive theatre scene.

Make a point to walk along the waterfront at Victoria Park, sample the famous PEI seafood at the Water Prince Corner Shop, enjoy a pint of beer at the Gahan Brewery, and meander your way through town with a Cow's ice cream cone in hand.

Road-tripping The Maritimes: New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia

Start in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada's oldest incorporated city. Head east along the Bay of Fundy and visit the Fundy Trail and Hopewell Rocks Provincial Park.

Spend a day in Moncton before crossing Confederation Bridge to Prince Edward Island. Take three to four days to explore Canada's smallest province, including a visit to Prince Edward Island National Park, the singing sands at Basin Head Beach, Green Gables Heritage Place, cycle a portion of the Confederation Trail, and indulge in Cow's ice cream and a traditional lobster supper at New Glasgow Lobster Suppers.

From PEI, take the ferry to Nova Scotia and make a point to check out Annapolis Royal, Kejimikujik National Park, the historic town of Lunenburg, the iconic Peggy's Cove Lighthouse, and wrap up your trip in Halifax.

If you have an extra few days or a week, head over to Cape Breton Island and tackle Canada's most famous road trip, the Cabot Trail.

Newfoundland

Newfoundland's natural beauty and people are what sets it apart from other provinces. Between a reconstructed Viking village and icebergs floating off the coast, this unique province shouldn't be missed.

Gros Morne National Park

This UNESCO world heritage site located on the western coast of Newfoundland has a variety of terrain to explore. From the barren tablelands to the lush coastal cliffs, the park has over 62mi (100km) of hiking trails to enjoy.

The biggest draw to the park is the Western Brook Pond, a 10mi (16km) long body of water that was carved during the last Ice Age. Visitors can enjoy a two hour guided boat tour that travels between the towering cliffs to the base of the pond and back. Stay



St John's

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dinner.



L'Anse aux Meadows

in one of the campgrounds or book a room in one of the many communities nestled around the park, including Rocky Harbour, Woody Point, and Norris Point.

L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site

North of Gros Morne National Park is the second UNESCO World Heritage Site found on Newfoundland, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site. This particular site has notable historical significance, as it's here that the first known European settlement of the New World was built.

Visitors can wander through a reconstructed Viking village and see what life would have been like over 1,000 years ago.

Iceberg Alley

This is the only province where icebergs make a yearly appearance. During the spring and summer months, icebergs can regularly be seen from the coast along "Iceberg Alley", a stretch of area from the coast of Labrador down to the northeast coast of Newfoundland.



Skerwink Trail

Hiking trails

Hikers can tackle one of many notable trails including the East Coast Trail (linking 32 historic communities across the Avalon region), the Skerwink Trail near Port Roxton, and a section of the International Appalachian Trail.

Newfoundland is also known for its abundance of wildlife and visitors may just be lucky to see moose, puffins, and whales during their time on the island.



Labrador city

It's not the easiest city to get to, requiring a flight, a ferry ride from Newfoundland, or a long drive through the remote parts of Quebec, but Labrador City is worth a visit for those who love to venture off-the-beaten path. Go sport fishing in the summer and snowmobiling in the winter.

Torngat Mountains National Park

If you're really feeling up for the adventure, make the trip up to Torngat Mountains National Park on Labrador's far north coast. It's only accessible via plane from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but the landscape is truly out of this world.

Here is where you'll also catch the spectacular northern lights. The Inuit have called this home for thousands of years and also run the base camp, offering the opportunity to learn about their way of life, first-hand.

Road-tripping St. John's to Port-Aux-Basque

Those who venture as far east as Newfoundland are rewarded with one incredible road trip. This 550+mi (900km) road trip spans the width of the island, starting in St. John's and finishes in Port-Aux-Basque.

Following the Trans-Canada Highway, this trip will take you from colorful urban cities to remote seaside villages. Catch sight of whales and icebergs off the coast, and come face-to-face with the towering cliffs at the Western Broke Fjord in Gros Morne National Park.

Notable areas off the highway to explore include the communities of Trinity, Bonavista, Twillingate, and the charming Fogo Island.

New Brunswick

The uninitiated refer to New Brunswick as a ‘drive-by’ province, but those in the know come for the food, mix of diverse cultures, and all the adventure you can pack into mountains, marshes, and warm salt-water beaches.

Road-tripping the Bay of Fundy

As you whizz around the Bay of Fundy, plan to stop twice at the iconic formations of the Hopewell Rocks – once at low tide to chase sandpipers through the squishy mud flats, and again around six hours later for the astonishing sight of the world’s highest tides. In between, stop for chowder in St. Martin’s before you don your boots at the gateway to the Fundy Trail.

Local experiences

Discover the *joie de vivre* of the



Stonehammer Geopark, New Brunswick



Hopewell Rocks at low tide

Acadiens on the northeast coast of the province. Lobster shacks dot the roadways, selling by the pound. Eat like a local, and crack open the shell using nothing but your hands. Keep your eyes open for France’s *tricolore* with a yellow star – the Acadien flag flies gaily in the region.

Pick up a jug or a washboard and join the kitchen party at the Alma childhood home of Molly Kool, North America’s first female sea captain.

Mount Carleton Provincial Park

Slow-travel through some of the world’s oldest mountains in Mount Carleton Provincial Park. Go by canoe or foot, and forget you’re in the 21st century. Keep your eyes open when the sun goes down; in this Dark Sky Preserve, you’ll marvel at the light of the moon and stars.

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Lobster shacks dot the roadways, selling by the pound. Eat like a local, and crack open the shell using nothing but your hands.

PRAIRIES & NORTH

Spy whales from Maine

Spy whales and a glimpse of the state of Maine from a boat in the Bay of Fundy. Touring outfits line the dock off the main street in Saint Andrews by-the-sea, where you can choose a small boat for your best chance at a close-up.

Parlee Beach

You won't believe you're in Canada when you wade at Parlee Beach near Shediac. With powdery sugar-sand and the warmest saltwater in the country, check in here for the ultimate beach day.

Optical illusions and reversing rapids

Just try not to laugh as "magic" pulls your car up Moncton's Magnetic Hill, where an optical illusion is caused by the rising and descending terrain.

In Saint John, where the river meets the bay, you can watch the baffling phenomenon of the reversing rapids, where the river reverses its flow.

A foodie's guide to New Brunswick

Head to Miramichi with your hip-waders and try your hand at catching bass or fresh Atlantic salmon for dinner.

New Brunswick's known for its seafood, but for fresh flavors from the land, try savory sautéed fiddleheads with a tart blueberry wine. The tender curds sold as squeaky cheese make a rich road snack.

You may be familiar with the concoction known as poutine, but for an authentic Acadian dish, order the



Cape Enrage

poutine râpée (a boiled potato dumpling stuffed with salt pork and served bathed in stew).

Adventure in New Brunswick

Saint John's Go Fundy Tours runs guided kayaking excursions to the Stonehammer Geopark where you can see geological impressions dating back to the Precambrian Age.

On a clear day at Cape Enrage, you can see Nova Scotia across the water before you rappel 140ft (43m) down the craggy rockface to the fossil beach below.

Hike the Bay of Fundy Footpath

This challenging wilderness trail begins at the suspension bridge at salmon river, meandering 25.47mi (41km) through a series of dense woodland switchbacks and alongside the stunning coastline skirting the boundaries of Fundy National Park.

Best for: Advanced.

How long you need: 3-5 days.

When to go: June to September.

Essential Insurance Tips

We know you like to push your personal boundaries when on the road. And when it comes to pushing boundaries, Canada's contrasting landscapes provides ample opportunity. With this in mind, it's essential that you know how the World Nomads travel insurance policies can cover you, so you can explore with confidence.

Skiing and Snow Boarding Travel Insurance

We've got extensive experience helping injured skiers and snowboarders get the medical care they need, and know that the most horrific of accidents can and do happen at the most unexpected times, even to the most talented and experienced powder fiends.

To help give you an idea of the sorts of skiing and snowboarding our travelers love to do, we've compiled a list. However, knowing the carnage that can happen on the hill during the snow season, some of our insurance partners have more limited cover, and not all of these activities are covered on every policy:

- **On and Off Piste in the resort**
- **Terrain Parks (excluding acrobatics)**
- **Cross Country**
- **Nordic Skiing**
- **Back Country**
- **Heli-Skiing**

If you've selected the right policy for the type of skiing you're doing and you're injured, you can be covered for hospitalization, out-patient treatment, and/or medical evacuation (heli-evac and snow patrol). And, if you're wiped out, there can be cover to take you back home, so that you can get medical treatment. Once we get you home, coverage will stop, so any ongoing expenses will have to be picked up by your country's health system, your private insurance, or – without those – yourself.

It's up to you to check how the policy varies, and if and how you can get extra cover for the type of skiing you want to do, so make sure that you read the policy carefully when buying your policy so there aren't any surprises.

Hiking

Apart from your own fitness, one of the first things to consider when hiking is the altitude that you're hiking/trekking to. Altitude sickness can kick in quickly, and heli-evac to get you back down to medical care can be very expensive without insurance. World Nomads travel insurance policies are designed and priced so that you can choose the right one for the altitude you're hiking to, so you can get the help you need when you need it. If you do start to feel altitude sickness or get injured in the mountains, it's essential that you get in touch with our emergency assistance teams straight away, so that they can support you from the time you fall sick or get injured. They'll be able to help you get to the nearest hospital, and – if you're banged up badly enough – even take you home

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It's up to you to check how the policy varies, and if and how you can get extra cover for the type of skiing you want to do, so make sure that you read the policy carefully when buying your policy so there aren't any surprises.

Be Prepared

Weather conditions can change quickly in Canada, so it's best that you're prepared. Search and rescue isn't covered in any of our policies, so make sure you know where you are at all times.

so that you can get the ongoing medical care that you need.

If you visit our [helpdesk](#) or read through the activities section when buying your policy, you'll be able to see the altitude limit that we cover for your particular policy. All plans are different and may require an upgrade to include trekking at certain altitudes. Read the policy wording carefully to choose the right plan and/or adventure sport option for your trip.

Working overseas

Going on a gap year, or working here and there to support your travels? No problem. When you have the appropriate working visa for the country you plan to work in and the appropriate qualification, certification, or license for that work (if you need to have one), there may be cover if you're working in:

- **Non-manual paid or volunteer work, e.g. childcare, teaching and administrative**
- **Paid or Volunteer Manual Work including work with power tools (there are specific height and ability restrictions for obvious reasons)**
- **Paid or Volunteer instructor or guide**

If you wish to extend your working holiday stay, depending on your visa requirements, you may need to leave Canada and then go back in. If you're in that position and need more insurance to keep you going, you can buy a policy online. You'll receive instant confirmation, so that you can show the border patrol that you've got over. If you start the policy on the same day you buy it, you'll automatically be out of your free look/cooling off/refund period, so you won't be able to cancel your policy if you decide you no longer need it.

What you need to consider, is that if you're skiing, snowboarding, or hiking, you'll need cover for that too. So while you may be working behind the counter at the ticket sales booth, if you're skiing on the weekends, skiing to work, or just occasionally hitting the slopes here and there, it's not enough to just list the type of work you're doing.

You'll need to list skiing or snowboarding as an activity too at the time of purchase – it's not something that you can add on after you've bought a policy.

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If you visit our helpdesk or read through the activities section when buying your policy, you'll be able to see the altitude limit that we cover for your particular policy.

All of the information we provide about travel insurance is a brief summary only. It does not include all terms, conditions, limitations, exclusions and termination provisions of the travel insurance plans described. Coverage may not be available for residents of all countries, states or provinces. Please carefully read your policy wording for a full description of coverage.

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