

# Destination Canada

Oh, it's big all right. Damn big. And we're not referring to Canada's size (a whopping 10 million sq km, making it the world's second-largest country). What we're talking about here is the handle on a Canadian beer case – big enough to fit your hands, even with mittens on. If you think that's impressive, consider Canada's other mondo attributes. Its terrain is filled with them, from mammoth mountains to hulking glaciers to immense polychromatic skies. Then there are the creatures that roam the terrain and its waterways – grizzly bear, moose, polar bear, humpback whales – each one huger than the next.

Is it any wonder this nation is envied by so many? Small, liberal countries admire its grandness (So much land! A G8 member!). Large, conservative countries admire its tolerance (Gay marriage! Open immigration!).

Canada is impossible to dislike, but go ahead and give it a shot. You don't like festival-packed cities that offer the world's best quality of life? Motor to a wee Atlantic fishing village, accessible only by boat. You don't like cloud-poking mountains to hike, ski or snowboard over? Try a slow ride through the wheat-waving prairies. You want a nosh lighter than Alberta beef or Arctic whale blubber? Pick up ripe peaches and cheeses from the local farmers' markets.

See? That's Canada – polite and accommodating to the nth degree. Though it's a wonder everyone is so nice, given the weather. It's cold, as in world's-coldest-country cold (based on average temperatures nationwide), which explains the mitten-sized beer case handles. Snag, a town in the Yukon, recorded North America's coldest temperature ever: minus 62.8°C.

Voltaire may have written off Canada as 'a few acres of snow' back in the mid-18th century, but those 'few acres' have yielded vast amounts of oil, timber and other natural resources, that in turn have propelled Canada to a very enviable standard of living.

Of course, the country has a few issues. The most pressing ones are shaping up to be immigration, provincial squabbling, and striking a balance between economic growth and protecting the environment.

Let's look at immigration first. Canada takes in the world's largest per capita annual immigration numbers – around 250,000 people a year, of whom 43% go to Toronto. While this is cool in multicultural terms – allowing you to shop for Buddha trinkets in Vancouver's Chinatown, chow on curry in Toronto's Little India, or sip a Vietnamese café au lait in Montréal – it also causes growing pains. Mainly, it's becoming difficult for Canada to maintain its high-caliber social and physical infrastructures in the face of such relentless population growth.

Then there's the issue of how to reconcile the divergent interests of Canada's provinces and territories. The only shared sentiment seems to be that the federal government is insensitive to their particular needs. In the past, the tension was greatest in francophone Québec, which periodically has threatened to secede from confederation. But the grumbling is now getting loudest from the western provinces and territories, which desire more control over their crazy-huge amounts of natural resources.

For instance, Alberta's oil wealth is gushing, and the province would like to keep all its nice new money to itself rather than float the faltering economy of Ontario, where manufacturing is down in the face of cheap

## FAST FACTS

Population: 33 million

Unemployment rate: 6%

Median family income: \$67,600

Hours TV watched per week: 21.4

Life expectancy: women 83.7 years, men 76.9 years

Canadians who speak only French: 13.3%

Annual beer consumption: 77 L per person over age 15

Annual potato consumption: 15.8kg per person

Amount of world's diamonds produced: 15%

Defense budget: \$10.9 billion

imports from China and beyond. The Northwest Territories would like to have more of a say-so regarding its diamond, gold and natural gas profits, rather than just serve as low-hanging fruit to fill Ottawa's baskets. Even the mild-mannered Atlantic provinces are bickering about federal claims to fishing and mineral rights off their shores.

Could these provinces be next to mount secession movements? There's talk in the air. And the Clarity Act actually makes it possible. This law from 2000 states that the federal government has to enter into negotiations if there is 'a clear expression of the will of the population of a province...to cease to be a part of Canada and become an independent state.' Sovereignty hopefuls can thank Québec for that opportunity.

Natural resources are also at the crux of our third issue. Yes, they're helping the Canadian economy to kick ass. By late 2007, the loonie was practically on par with the US dollar and still on its way up – the first time this has happened in three decades. And oil and natural gas are driving the bus. But an economy reliant on natural resources is tricky, because the resources are bound to run out (memo to Canada: see past history of fur and codfish industries). And then what?

Furthermore, the processes for extracting and developing the resources come at a high environmental price. The massive expansion of Alberta's oil sands production has been tagged as the single biggest factor behind Canada's wretched performance in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The repercussions can be felt in the country already – just ask the local polar bear who are getting mighty pissed off (and hungry) as their icy habitat shrinks and their seal dinners drift away.

Right now it's the federal government that has to figure all this out, led by the new group filling Ottawa's halls – a Conservative group, oddly enough. After 12 years of center-left Liberals running the show, the Conservatives won the majority in the 2006 elections. They racked up 124 seats compared to 103 seats for the Liberals, with the separatist Bloc Québécois getting 51 seats and the left-leaning New Democrats getting 29 seats. Corruption and a 'culture of entitlement' finally did in the Liberals. Stephen Harper became the new prime minister, but he leads Canada's smallest minority government since Confederation (if you go by proportion of seats). However, Canadian minority governments don't usually survive long, so don't be surprised if somebody else is at the helm by the time you read this.

What Canadians discuss around their dinner tables come election time – and what they discuss even when it's not election time – is the nation's much-cherished but ailing universal health care system. To be sure, the quality of care is high and getting treatment for minor ailments is easy. But try seeing a specialist or getting a hip replacement and you could be on a waiting list for months. Although no one will admit it, a two-tiered system is in place, and those with deep pockets can access additional – often quicker – care in private facilities.

Still, a free, portable health care system that's available to everyone – rich and poor alike – is quite a feat. To many citizens, it's at the very root of what makes Canada great. So are progressive views on same-sex marriage and marijuana use. The former is entirely legal; the latter is legal only for medicinal use, though broader decriminalization bills flutter through Ottawa from time to time. And don't forget this is a country that has a card-carrying Marijuana Party that puts up a candidate for national elections. True, it's not taking over the prairies any time soon (it received .06% of the popular vote in 2006), but its very existence says something about the local mindset.

**'After 12 years of center-left Liberals running the show, the Conservatives won the majority in the 2006 elections'**

In general, Canadians are also liberal about abortion (it's legal). Issues they cast a critical eye toward include gun control (most prefer restrictions), child care issues (increased funding is appreciated) and taxes (too high). As you'd expect, the Liberals and Conservatives have different views on all these topics, but they don't diverge as drastically as similar parties in other countries. Even after the Conservatives took the helm in Ottawa, they left most 'liberal' concerns alone. Harper and his posse may not be the number-one fans of pot-smoking gays who want to get married, but heck, why bother changing now?

Canada likes to think of itself as peaceable, and it keeps its military involvement fairly low-key. The country has a total of 2900 troops overseas, with most of those in Afghanistan working for the NATO-led International Assistance Security Force. As of August 2007, 70 soldiers had died in the operation. When it comes to actual peacekeeping for the United Nations, the country contributes 126 military personnel to UN missions, ranking it 55th out of 108 troop-contributing countries.

Don't take our word for this stuff, though. Ask the Vancouverite sitting next to you, or maybe it's a Newfoundlander, or whomever you meet on the roads in between. Take a pull on your beer, dip into the *poutine*, draw your fleece up tighter and feel the warmth surround you. It's nice here, eh?

# Getting Started

Canada's tourism infrastructure has something for everyone. Backpackers, jet-setters and those in between will all find their needs and expectations met. One important thing to keep in mind is the country's immense scale: distances can be deceptively long and travel times slow due to single-lane highways and even a lack of highways (such as on the east and west coasts, when ferries take over for roads). Don't try to pack too much into your itinerary and do consider limiting your explorations to one or two regions in depth.

## WHEN TO GO

You can visit Canada at any time of year, but most people arrive in summer when temperatures are pleasant and much of the action moves outdoors. Just what constitutes 'summer,' though, varies by region. In southern Canada, it generally refers to the period between Victoria Day (late May) and Labour Day (early September). In the northern regions, however, summer starts as late as mid-June and ends, often abruptly, with the first snowfall in early to mid-September.

In most areas, March to May and September to October bring fewer tourists and often surprisingly pleasant weather. Fall, which finds forests cloaked in a spectacular mantle of color, is a great time to visit.

Canadian winters are long, cold and dark. With most outlying attractions closed, your explorations are pretty much limited to the ski resorts and cities. Québec City, Toronto and Winnipeg are among those cities hosting big winter carnivals.

## COSTS & MONEY

Accommodations are likely to be your biggest expense, but as fuel prices rise, transportation ranks up there too. Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia are more costly than other provinces, but not as bad as the three northern territories (Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut). Your dollar will stretch furthest in Québec, the Atlantic provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

In most regions, single travelers who rent a car, stay in decent B&Bs and eat at least one daily meal out will spend \$175 or so per day. The total cost is only a little bit more for a couple traveling together. For those on a tight budget, costs can be brought down by staying in hostels or camping, self-catering from local markets, taking public transportation when available and limiting entertainment options. This will reduce your daily costs to around \$80 to \$90.

To break down the expenses you'll incur: comfortable midrange accommodations start at \$80 to \$90 for a double room, usually including breakfast. A midrange restaurant meal with wine or beer costs between \$15 and \$25

See Climate (p847) and Holidays (p850) for more information.

## HOW MUCH?

B&B double room:

\$80-140

Tim Hortons doughnut:

80¢

Hockey game ticket:

\$25-90

Skiing day pass: \$50-80

Pack of cigarettes: \$6-7

See Quick Reference (inside front cover) for additional prices.

## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Your passport (p859). Yes, border-crossing document requirements change from one day to the next, but you'll need a passport to swat bugs if nothing else.
- Bug spray (p876) to prevent mosquitoes and blackflies from feasting on your flesh; especially useful in northern and woodsy regions.
- Your driver's license and vehicle registration papers, plus adequate liability insurance (p868).
- Transportation and sleeping reservations, especially in July and August.
- A camera to capture the moose, mountains and Mounties you're bound to see.

## TRAVELING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged our readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the serendipitous magic independent travel affords. International travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring – but, as always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on both the global environment and the local economies, cultures and ecosystems.

Canada's 'greenest' locales include Vancouver and its surrounding islands in the west and Toronto in the east, but options are tucked in between, too. With a little research, you can certainly travel the country in a responsible way.

### Getting There & Away

If you wish to avoid flying to Canada, you have options, especially if visiting from the US. Amtrak ([www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)) trains connect Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal to neighboring US cities. Greyhound ([www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)) buses connect many additional Canadian and US towns. Flights from other countries are rather unavoidable. Though not a solution to the problem, you can offset your carbon emissions with Vancouver-based Offsetters Carbon Neutral Society ([www.offsetters.ca](http://www.offsetters.ca)).

### Slow Travel

Try skipping the cross-Canada plane journey in favor of traveling slowly. VIA Rail ([www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca)) has a continuous route between Toronto and Vancouver that takes three days and chugs through spectacular scenery. Greyhound Canada ([www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca)) makes the same trip, shaving a couple hours off the time. In Québec you can rideshare (see p870). Or focus your trip on a small region of Canada instead of dashing from one coast to the other.

Local transportation is taking the initiative in certain cities: for instance, Vancouver's Yellow Cab taxis use low-emission vehicles, while Whistler's public buses are switching to hydrogen fuel cell models.

### Accommodations

If you see a hotel with a 'green key' rating, it's a property that has gone through the Hotel Association of Canada's voluntary audit to assess sustainability practices. It's a step in the right direction, though bear in mind it is based on self-reporting by the hotels. See [www.hacgreenhotels.com](http://www.hacgreenhotels.com) for listings. Camp Green Canada ([www.campgreencanada.ca](http://www.campgreencanada.ca)) offers environmentally friendly camping products. As for cool eco-properties, a few of our favorites include:

- Chanterelle Country Inn & Cottages, Cape Breton Island (p411)
- Cree Village Ecolodge, northern Ontario (p220)
- Falls Brook Centre, New Brunswick (p432)
- South Lake Solar Cottages, Prince Edward Island (p474)
- Strathcona Park Lodge, Victoria Island (p727)

### Food

Naturally, the country that unleashed the 100 Mile Diet craze (a book that details a Vancouver couple's attempt to eat only local ingredients for one year) is seething with restaurants serving locally grown, organic, in-season food. Farmers' markets are also common and detailed throughout this book.

Seafood is a popular menu item in Canada, but make sure the species you're ordering is one that's sustainably harvested; check Seafood Watch ([www.mbayaq.org/cr/seafoodwatch.asp](http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/seafoodwatch.asp)) for details. In Vancouver, such fare is marked with an Ocean Wise ([www.oceanwisecanada.org](http://www.oceanwisecanada.org)) symbol on menus.

### Responsible Travel Organizations

Provincial groups that do a great job of promoting sustainable travel include:

- **Green Tourism Association** ([www.greentourism.ca](http://www.greentourism.ca)) Offers ideas for environmentally sound lodging, eating and shopping in Toronto and across Ontario.
- **Saskatchewan Nature and Ecotourism Association** ([www.ecotourism.sk.ca](http://www.ecotourism.sk.ca)) Accredits eco-tourism attractions and businesses that follow set guidelines.

plus tax and a tip. Rental cars cost from \$35 to \$65 a day for a compact-size vehicle, not including gas. Attraction admissions range from \$5 to \$15.

Discounts are widely available to children, students and seniors throughout the country. Many attractions also offer a family admission price, which can save dough for two adults and their brood.

Taxes of 6% to 14% and up are added to nearly all goods and services.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

Get stoked for your journey to Canada by reading the tales of those who've gone before you.

It's minus 40°C and perpetually sun-less when Polly Evans arrives in the Yukon's remote countryside to learn to drive sled dogs. Somehow, she makes the bruising business of mushing sound attractive in *Mad Dogs and an Englishwoman*, filling her pages with mischievous huskies, glistening hoar frost and northern lights that weave red and green across the sky.

Victoria Jason is another plucky female with a chilly Far North tale. The Inuit referred to her as *Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak* (*kabloona* means 'stranger'), which became the title of this grandmother's compelling book about her 7500km paddling expedition from Churchill, Manitoba, to Tuktoyaktuk on the Beaufort Sea from 1991 to '94.

Love-him-or-hate-him author Farley Mowat spins a good yarn in *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float*, about sailing his schooner *Happy Adventure* around Newfoundland. The boat's eternal leak only enhances exploits involving rum-running, heavy drinking and hanging out with various coastal characters.

Humor, magic and sly literary conceits make David McFadden's *Great Lakes Suite*, a collection of vignettes about trips he took around Lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario, hallucinogenically funny and poignantly insightful. He also regales readers with a chronicle of wanderings around The Rock in *An Innocent in Newfoundland: Even More Curious Ramblings and Singular Encounters*.

Walter Stewart first zipped across the Trans-Canada Hwy in 1964. Thirty-five years later he did it again, and this time he wrote a book about what he saw. In *My Cross-Country Checkup: Across Canada By Minivan, Through Space and Time*, Stewart moves beyond clichés as he explores the Evangeline legend in Nova Scotia, the real Lucy Maud Montgomery of Green Gables and the Irving oil empire, among other Canadian touchstones.

Finally, *Sacre Blues: An Unsentimental Journey Through Québec*, by Taras Grescoe, is an often laugh-out-loud book that introduces readers to the hilarious and maddening foibles of the Québécois. Linguistics, unsavory lust for *poutine* and the province's reputation as 'Canada's smoking section' are all artfully skewed by the author's dry wit.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Canadian Tourism Commission** ([www.canada.travel](http://www.canada.travel)) From Alberta to the Yukon, this official tourist information site is packed with details on all aspects of travel to and within Canada.

**Environment Canada** ([www.weatheroffice.gc.ca](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca)) Is it raining in Regina? Snowing in Whistler? Foggy in Halifax? Check here for the forecast.

**Government of Canada** ([www.gc.ca](http://www.gc.ca)) The mother of all Canada websites, with information both national (immigration rules, national anthem lyrics) and regional (ice conditions off Labrador, provincial tourism offices) in scope.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Fire up travel news and summaries about the Great White North.

**Podcast Alley** ([www.podcastalley.com](http://www.podcastalley.com)) Type in a Canadian city or province, and hear podcasts covering niches from weed in Vancouver to restaurants in Montréal to hockey in St John's.

**Sierra Club of Canada** ([www.sierraclub.ca](http://www.sierraclub.ca)) The environmental group's website provides background on local concerns such as declining caribou populations in Manitoba and the tar ponds in Nova Scotia.

# TOP 10



## TOP TEN BASHES

Our favorite parties are listed below, but this is just a fraction of the rawkin' good times that go on throughout the year. For a list of more events, see p849. For food fests, see p65.

- Winter Carnival, Québec City (p310; February)
- Festival du Voyageur, Winnipeg (p551; February)
- Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival (p667; March)
- Festival de la Chanson/Song Festival, Tadoussac (p327; June)
- Calgary Stampede (p601; July)
- Dawson City Music Festival (p802; July)
- Caribana, Toronto (p126; July-August)
- Festival Acadien, Caraquet (p459; August)
- Royal St John's Regatta (p500; August)
- Celtic Colours, Cape Breton Island (p405; October)

## TOP TEN SCENIC DRIVES

Try to keep your eyes at least partially on the road as you ramble these highways and byways. More scenic drives are highlighted throughout the regional chapters.

- **Cabot Trail, Nova Scotia** (p406) Snaking road past mountain vistas, sparkling seas and dramatic cliffs
- **Haines Hwy, Yukon** (p794) Glaciers, snowy peaks, frothy rivers and eagles en route to the Far North
- **Hwy 17 along Lake Superior's Northern Shore, Ontario** (p199) Fjord-like passages, hidden beaches and primeval forests
- **Hwy 37A to Hyder/Stewart, British Columbia** (p779) Vintage toasters and converted-school-bus restaurants along with the requisite glaciers
- **Icefields Pkwy, Alberta** (p616) Sheets of the frozen stuff, plus sapphire-blue lakes
- **Niagara Peninsula Wine Country, Ontario** (p149) Lush, juicy vineyards from Toronto to Niagara Falls
- **Old River Road (Rte 102), New Brunswick** (p430) Farmhouses, hay barns and wildflowers alongside an island-filled river
- **Rte 132, Québec** (p338) Rocky shores, glinting silver churches and wooded hills from Ste Flavie to Forillon National Park
- **Rte 199, Québec** (p351) Wee coastal road past sand dunes and fishing villages on the Îles de la Madeleine
- **Sea to Sky Hwy, British Columbia** (p685) Heart-leaping, humbling drive from Vancouver's ocean to Whistler's mountains

## TOP TEN ROAD-TRIP ALBUMS

These artists – some old, some new, spanning genres and provinces – will provide the proper soundtrack for your trip. Load up the iPod, hit shuffle, and 'keep the car running,' as the first group on our list sings. For more on local music, see p59.

- Arcade Fire *Neon Bible*
- Be Good Tanyas *Hello Love*
- Feist *The Reminder*
- Great Big Sea *Road Rage*
- Neil Young *Massey Hall 1971*
- Rush *Moving Pictures*
- The New Pornographers *Mass Romantic*
- The Tea Party *Edges of Twilight*
- The Tragically Hip *Fully Completely*
- United Steelworkers of Montréal *Broken Trucks and Bottles*

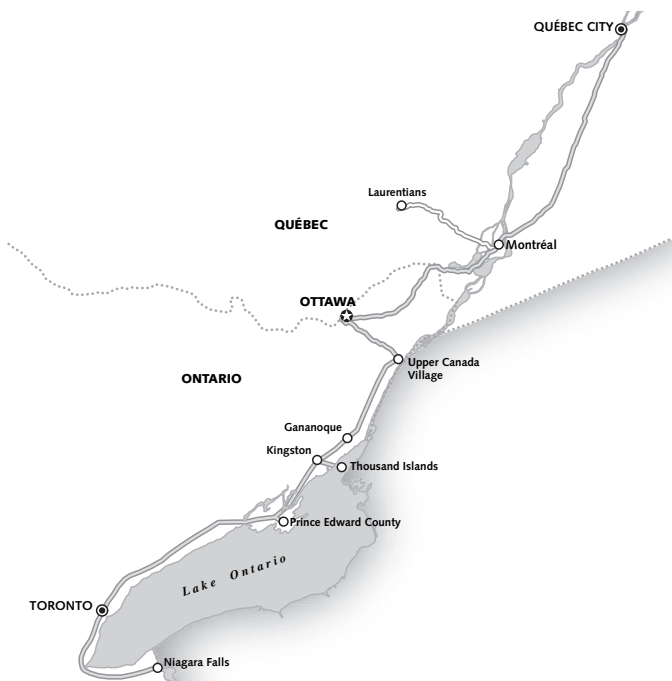
# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

Two weeks/Toronto to Québec City

Start in multicultural mecca **Toronto** (p103), and wallow in the wealth of architecture, art and shoe museums, restaurants and nightclubs. Day-trip to pounding **Niagara Falls** (p152), then begin your eastward haul. The Loyalist Parkway (Hwy 33) rambles shore-side in pastoral **Prince Edward County** (p229) and eventually pulls into colonial **Kingston** (p230). From there, the misty, mansion-covered **Thousand Islands** (p236) dot the St Lawrence River; **Gananoque** (p236) makes a good break in their midst. Stop at **Upper Canada Village** (p238), a re-created 1860s town, before heading to **Ottawa** (p238), Canada's capital, to get your culture fix at the national museums. Save room for next stop **Montréal** (p258), where the blend of French joie de vivre and North American can-do spirit seduces via Euro-cool clubs and foodie-beloved restaurants. Had your fill? Swing over to the **Laurentians** (p288) to hike, cycle or ski yourself back into shape. Finish in **Québec City** (p301). The charismatic old town, walled and dramatically poised on a bluff, will leave an impression long after you return home.



Travel through Canada's Central Corridor, swooping up its largest cities, mightiest waterfalls and prettiest little islands. This 1450km journey can be 'done' in 10 days, but add a few more and you'll connect more deeply with the people and landscapes of Ontario and Québec.

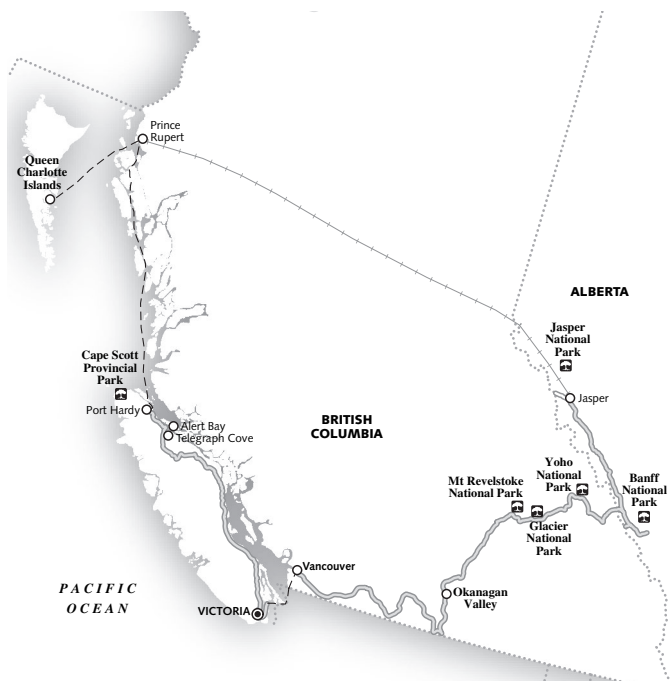


## BEST OF THE WEST

Three to four weeks/**British Columbia & Alberta**

Start with a couple of days in mountain-meets-sea **Vancouver** (p651), where you'll be spoiled by urban hiking, biking and other activities, plus western Canada's best cuisine scene. Hop on a ferry to **Victoria** (p697), fill up with tea and crumpets, then rent a car and head up-island. Northern Vancouver Island delivers raw, remote BC in all its glory. Stop at **Telegraph Cove** (p728) to spot whales and bear, **Alert Bay** (p729) to absorb First Nations culture and **Cape Scott Provincial Park** (p730) to hike wind-bashed coastline. Pull up in **Port Hardy** (p729) when you're ready to catch the ferry for an unforgettable journey through the Inside Passage to **Prince Rupert** (p770). As you glide past ice-caked peaks and forest-draped islands you'll see eagles, whales, porpoises and seals traveling alongside. Prince Rupert is the jump-off point to the mist-shrouded and mysterious **Queen Charlotte Islands** (p773), with old-growth forests, ancient aboriginal villages and spooky totem poles – if you've got an extra five days, this is a must-do. Otherwise, it's time to board VIA Rail's *Skeena*, which chugs past rivers, lakes and mountains on its two-day journey from Prince Rupert to **Jasper** (p631), where you should rent another car. The national parks of Jasper and **Banff** (p618) form the dramatic core of the Canadian Rockies. You'll want to spend several days hiking, gawking at glaciers, kayaking and staying downwind from grizzly bear. From here, head west back into British Columbia for more 'ah'-inspiring mountain scenery in **Yoho** (p758), **Glacier** (p757) and **Mt Revelstoke** (p757) national parks. Finally, work your way back to Vancouver via the lake-studded **Okanagan Valley** (p741), famous for its fruit orchards and wineries.

**Vancouver, the Inside Passage and the Rocky Mountains: prepare to feast on a smorgasbord of scenic delights on this 3000km trek through British Columbia and Alberta. Allow at least three weeks for the route, which circles around via boat, car and train.**



## ROADS LESS TRAVELED

### CABOT & VIKING TRAILS Two to Three Weeks/Halifax to L'Anse aux Meadows

Spend a couple of days in **Halifax** (p363) enjoying the cosmopolitan life, then hit the road to Cape Breton Island. In between raft the tidal bore's waves in **Maitland** (p396) and climb the 13 sand dunes at **Pomquet** (p404). As you approach Baddeck (about halfway up the Cape Breton Island) hook up with the Cabot Trail, a well-marked 300km loop through the region, and head northwest to **Chéticamp** (p407), a deeply Acadian town. Soon you'll enter **Cape Breton Highlands National Park** (p408); look for moose and nesting bald eagles throughout your drive here. When you reach **Pleasant Bay** (p409), you can watch whales or chant with monks at the local Tibetan monastery. It's always nice to stretch your legs with a hike at **Meat Cove** (p410). And don't forget to get your art fix at the studios along the **St Ann's Loop** (p411) before arriving in industrial North Sydney for the **ferry** (p532) to Newfoundland.

It's a six-hour sail over the sometimes-rough swell of the Cabot Strait to **Port aux Basques** (p530). Alight and drive north to **Gros Morne National Park** (p521), rich with mountain hikes, sea kayak tours, fjords and weird rock formations. Take the Viking Trail from here to its awe-inspiring endpoint: **L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site** (p524), North America's first settlement. Leif Eriksson and his Viking pals homesteaded the place 1000 years ago, and it probably looked much the same then as it does now. After coming all this way, you too will feel like an Atlantic explorer.



Wild, windswept and whale-riddled, this 1400km route unfurls sea-and-cliff vistas you can see right from the car. But it also provides plenty of opportunities to pull over and get the blood flowing with hikes, kayak trips and art studio visits.

## PLAIN & SIMPLE

### Two to Three Weeks/Thunder Bay to Calgary

After checking out the waterfalls and amethyst mines around **Thunder Bay** (p212), take the slow route to Manitoba (via Hwys 11 and 71), stopping at **Quetico Provincial Park** (p217) and maybe renting a houseboat along the way. Once in Manitoba, pull off for a hearty meal in the **Mennonite Heritage Village** (p557) of Steinbach. Next stop: **Winnipeg** (p545), which rockets up from the prairie flatlands and provides an enlivening patch of cafés and culture. To the east lie the odd sand dunes and lizards of **Spruce Woods Provincial Park** (p558). And then you cross into The Land of the Living Skies – aka Saskatchewan. The lakeside capital **Regina** (p570) is the headquarters for the Canadian Mounties, so you'll be canoeing and drinking next to those guys. Al Capone used to hide his bootlegged booze just east in **Moose Jaw** (p576); a warren of smuggling tunnels zigzag underneath the town's streets. If you need a tree fix, head into **Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park** (p576) before cruising over the border to Alberta. Things start to get Dr Seuss-like west of Medicine Hat when weird, mushroom-like columns of sandstone (called hoodoos) start appearing. Dinosaur junkies will salivate over the fossils at **Dinosaur Provincial Park** (p640), and feel their knees buckle at the full-on dino-zeal (including the world's largest concrete reptile) displayed at **Drumheller** (p637). Pull on your cowboy boots before arriving in **Calgary** (p600), a former cow town that's now one of Canada's fastest-growing cities. If time permits, you can head into the Rockies from here and hook up with our Best of the West tour (p32).

Let's be honest:  
there will be lots  
of driving, lots  
of wheat, and at  
times little else.  
But peace and  
quiet is what  
we're after on this  
2000km excursion.  
The Trans-Canada  
Hwy will be your  
main road, slicing  
through lake-  
pocked Ontario  
and prairie-coated  
Manitoba, Sas-  
katchewan and  
Alberta.



# TAILORED TRIPS

## FUEL FOR FOODIES

Un-notch the belt before moseying out to eat in Canada's three largest cities – each is a gourmet haven. **Toronto** (p132) describes its food as global, fusion and pan-everything; basically, it's a wild mash-up of international flavors. **Vancouver** (p670) calls its chow West Coast cuisine, meaning seafood-based with local produce cradling it; sushi is also much-adored. And **Montréal** (p278) loves a good bottle of wine along with its inspired French fare.

Speaking of vino, Canada is flush with wine-making regions – enough to drive Bacchus batty trying to choose which to visit first. The **Niagara Peninsula** (p149) pours reds, whites and very fine ice wines. The **Okanagan Valley** (p746) is on par with all manner of wines, plus cherry, peach and apricot orchards. The **Cowichan Valley** (p710) on Vancouver Island also joined the party recently, thanks to its small wineries and cheese-, cider- and brandy-makers.

The Atlantic provinces dish up their own treats, and it's no surprise they come from the sea. Foodies around the globe salivate over giant scallops from **Digby** (p388); moist, briny oysters from **Malpeque Bay** (p486), and squirty lobsters from towns such as **North Rustico** (p480) on crustacean-crawling Prince Edward Island.

Finally, steak lovers should carve into a slab in **Calgary** (p608); Alberta beef is the crème de la crème.



## ADRENALINE SHOTS

Sorry, there's no excuse for sitting on your duff. Winter or summer, Canada is a land of action, with certain towns exceptionally well-gearred year-round.

In the west, **Whistler** (p688) reigns supreme. If you want to ski or snowboard Canada's best, this is it baby; ziplining and mountain biking take over in summer. **Tofino** (p721) amazes with its surfing, kayaking, whale spotting and storm-watching. And **Banff** (p621) does it all in the Rockies: skiing, snowboarding, hiking, canoeing, rafting, horseback riding, mountain biking – phew!

Out east, Québec's **Laurentians** (p288) let you ski, luge, rock climb and refuel at maple syrup shacks. In Ontario, **Blue Mountain** (p189) offers a batch of activities similar to western cousin Whistler, along with caving and kayaking. Outfitters at **Algonquin Provincial Park** (p224) suit up visitors to canoe, moose-watch, even dogsled.

Further east, in the Atlantic provinces, **Cape Breton Highlands National Park** (p408) is ground zero for coastal hiking and bad-ass (meant literally) cycling. In Newfoundland, **Gros Morne** (p522) adrenalizes in summer (hiking and sea kayaking), while **Marble Mountain** (p528) takes over in winter (skiing and snow-kiting).

And in the middle of the country there's **Churchill** (p561). Kayak with belugas, dogsled over the tundra and, of course, commune (carefully!) with polar bear.



## BACK IN TIME

Fierce Norsemen, fur traders, indigenous warriors, gold diggers...the early days of Canada were tumultuous, calamitous and waaay wild. Historic sites mark the spots.

The first Europeans to see Canada were Vikings who settled in what is now **L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site** (p524) in Newfoundland in around AD 1000. The French built their first settlement in 1608 at **Québec City** (p303), the only North American town with intact fortifications. At the

re-created 1744 fortress of **Louisbourg** (p414) in Nova Scotia, visitors can munch soldiers' rations and bribe guards to get a feel for the good old days. Discussions held at **Province House** (p468) on Prince Edward Island paved the way to Canadian union. The fledgling country soon turned its attention to the vast west, where government forces clashed with the local Métis over land rights. A lopsided battled ensued at Batoche, and Métis leader Louis Riel was captured and hanged. **Batoche National Historic Site** (p585) tells the dark story. **Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump** (p640), a precipice where bison herds leapt to their death, is another classic site.

In 1896, gold was found in the Klondike River. Those shiny, happy times are remembered in **Dawson City** (p799), Yukon.



## GOING GREEN

Eco-friendly experiences for travelers are popping up like organically fertilized mushrooms.

Who can resist a bit of beekeeping, followed by a snooze in plush pine-wood cabins at **Highland View Farm & Cottages** (p413)? Or foraging for your dinner off a Vancouver Island beach with **Outer Coast Seaweeds** (p68)? Perhaps you'll want to stay a month or six and apprentice on an organic farm at **Falls Brook Centre** (p432). Those with less time, say just

a few hours, can take a 'Sustainable Living Tour' with **Sundog Outfitters** (p202) and learn about alternative energy sources and waste composting. Even the Yukon is getting in on the action, with the **Yukon Conservation Society** (p788) offering free nature hikes to help visitors appreciate the local environment.

It's not green in the countryside only. Toronto has reclaimed a clutch of former industrial sites and turned them into **parks and greenhouses** (p119). And Vancouver is lauded for local, sustainable eating habits. Many of its top restaurants, such as **C Restaurant** (p671) and **Raincity Grill** (p671), source ingredients so they leave as small an eco-footprint as possible.



# The Authors



## KARLA ZIMMERMAN

**Coordinating Author,  
Newfoundland & Labrador**

During her years covering Canada coast to coast for Lonely Planet, Karla has become an Honorary Newfoundlander (with a rum-soaked certificate to prove it), an Honorary Vancouverite (with a sushi addiction to prove it), and some would say an Honorary Canadian (with a doughnut fixation to prove it). When she's not north of the border, Karla lives in Chicago, where the doughnuts are good but not Canadian good. She writes travel features for newspapers, books, magazines and radio.



## JAMES BAINBRIDGE

**Québec**

The first time James reached the end of a Canadian road was on Galiano Island, while on exchange at the University of British Columbia. When Lonely Planet dispatched him to Québec, he had to drive considerably further to repeat the experience on Rte 138. In the intervening decade, he completed a literature and history degree in Glasgow, worked on magazines in London and Sydney, and contributed to Lonely Planet guides ranging from *India* to *Ireland*. His next Lonely Planet project is *A Year of Festivals*.



## CELESTE BRASH

**Nova Scotia**

'So this is where people from Tahiti go on vacation?' This question was asked of Celeste several times during her first and second voyages through Nova Scotia. Lighthouses and lupine are a far cry from palm trees and hibiscus, but the crisp air and wonderful people made coming back for a second research trip a joy. Satiated, she returned to her island home, husband and two children to eat mangoes instead of blueberries.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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**NATALIE FOLSTER****New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island**

Natalie Folster was born and raised in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She got out as soon as she could. The next decade or so was spent living and working in Africa, the UK, California, New York, the Caribbean, British Columbia (BC) and Ontario before deciding that her father was right. New Brunswick really is God's Country and one of the Earth's special places. She now lives in Saint John, New Brunswick.

**SCOTT KENNEDY****Alberta, Saskatchewan**

Growing up in Calgary, the outdoors has always played a big part in Scott's life. As a kid, hiking and skiing matured into mountaineering, adventure racing and travel. From those adventurous pursuits, writing and photography became the means to share the stories with those not foolish enough to tag along. What's his favorite trip? That's easy: 'the next one.' Scott lives in Queenstown, New Zealand where he tries to avoid nine-to-five work at all cost. For more info go to [www.adventurescope.com](http://www.adventurescope.com).

**JOHN LEE****British Columbia**

Born in the UK, John moved to BC to attend the University of Victoria to study utopianism in the Department of Political Science. Discovering the paucity of jobs in the utopian field, he transformed his study visa into permanent citizenship and became a full-time freelance travel writer. John is a Vancouver-based journalist since 1999 and his work has appeared in 120 publications around the world, including the *Guardian*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *National Geographic Traveler*. Specializing in Canadian and UK destinations, his favorite BC trek was the wintertime, way-up-north Skeena railroad.

**GRAHAM NEALE****Manitoba**

While working as a cartographer for Lonely Planet, Graham had a desktop aquarium with a fish named 'Manitoba,' so it only seemed natural to pay homage. It also seemed natural to cover one of Canada's least-respected destinations by an unofficial expert on everything Canadian. In this second go-round he gained a whole new appreciation for July Manitoba over April Manitoba. He now fancies himself an official Manitoba expert, and between listening to *Harvest* and praying to Icelandic gods, enjoys stumping life-long residents with Manitoba trivia.



## BRANDON PRESSER

**Ontario**

Born and raised in Ottawa, Brandon was all too happy to explore the motherland. On his journey he saw eight moose, 12 NHL hockey games, took two whistle-stop trains, a bush plane, and uttered 'eh?' 925,831 times (give or take). Brandon also traveled over 10,000km in Murray, his navy blue Hyundai, updating the Eastern Ontario, Georgian Bay & Lakelands, Ottawa and Northern Ontario sections.



## CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

**Ontario**

Charles first made Ontario's acquaintance when he was eight, flying in from Tasmania to assess the local squirrels, swimming pools and his uncle's croissants. He's cultivated a quiet Toronto habit ever since, gradually shifting his focus towards baseball, bookshops and the city's global culinary delights. A lapsed architect, underrated rock guitarist and fearless home renovator, Charles penned Lonely Planet's *Toronto* city guide in 2007, and jumped at the chance to return to T.O. for this book.



## SARAH RICHARDS

**Québec**

Loyal to the mountains and forests of her native BC, Sarah vowed to never love another Canadian province. But when she started her undergraduate degree at McGill University, a torrid love affair with the enticing, exotic flavors of Québec threatened to break her ties with home forever. After graduation, she roamed Asia and Europe for six years, before finding her way back into the arms of Montréal. She blames the soft scents of freshly baked croissants in the wind and the sinful delights of the city's vibrant nightlife for her betrayal.



## AARON SPITZER

**Northwest Territories, Nunavut**

Aaron has a thing for bad latitudes. He was raised in Indiana and at 13 took his first big trip – to Canada's Northwest Territories. A decade later he moved to the polar regions for good, working as a kayak guide in Alaska, a newspaper editor in Antarctica and Nunavut, and a TV news producer in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. He's now editor of *Up Here*, the magazine of Canada's North.



**RYAN VER BERKMOES****British Columbia, Yukon Territory**

Lost – but not in the literal sense – on a backroad of BC or the Yukon is Ryan's idea of real adventure. He's been coming here for more than two decades and is happy to say he's yet to hit a moose, although he's seen hundreds. He's navigated the gorgeous coastal waters, climbed a few peaks and come snout to nose with bears. He's happy to say that should he need to flee his home in Portland, Oregon, he'd come here every time.

**CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS**

**Bruce Dowbiggin** is an award-winning sports journalist and national sports commentator based in Calgary. His columns regularly feature in the *Calgary Herald*. He is the author of five books on hockey and frequently hosts TV and radio programs, including for the CBC. Bruce wrote the Sports section of the Culture chapter.

**Dr David Goldberg, MD** completed his training in internal medicine and infectious diseases at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where he has also served as voluntary faculty. At present, he is an infectious diseases specialist in Scarsdale, New York, and the editor-in-chief of the website MDTravelHealth.com. Dr Goldberg wrote the Health chapter for this book.

**Margo Pfeiff** is a Montréal-based journalist and photographer who grew up in Vancouver and spends an abnormal amount of her time in the country's north. She has worked for *Canadian Geographic*, the *LA Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Globe and Mail*, and is currently writing a book about contemporary life in Nunavut. Margo wrote the Culture text for this book.

**Jennie Punter** has been writing on the arts in Canada for 20 years. A trained classical pianist and reformed rock critic, she now contributes regularly on film for *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national daily newspaper, and works as a producer in documentary film and television. Jennie covered the Arts section of the Culture chapter.

**Brendan Sainsbury**, a displaced Brit and former resident of London, England, woke up one morning living in White Rock, BC, married to a Canadian doctor. His penchant for Canada's national parks began in Waterton Lakes, Alberta; he then headed north to Jasper, where he recently updated the upcoming Lonely Planet guide. Brendan wrote the Canada's National Parks chapter of this book.

**Raymond Schmidt** has never seen a panda, but he's pedaled the high Alps, climbed Canary Island volcanoes and explored his Cuban lineage. But Canada always draws him back. Kayaking 40ft-high waterfalls or cycling the Arctic in winter, he's trying to make it the rest of the way around the world. Raymond wrote the Canada Outdoors chapter for this edition.

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