

Ottawa Tourism Information

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AID GROUP

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Ottawa Weather

Canada's Capital Region experiences typical Canadian weather, with snowy winters and warm summers. The city also welcomes a mild spring season and a pleasant fall. Here are some average spring and summer temperatures:

Average Daily Highs and Lows

Month	High	Low
April	11°C/ 52°F	0°C/ 32°F
May	19°C/ 66°F	7°C/ 45°F
June	24°C/ 75°F	12°C/ 54°F
July	26°C/ 79°F	15°C/ 59°F
August	25°C/ 77°F	14°C/ 57°F
September	20°C/ 68°F	9°C/48°F



Getting around Ottawa

Once you arrive in Ottawa, you will find it to be one of the easiest cities to get from one place to another. Your travel options are numerous. Public transit is readily available in the form of buses and light rail, and numerous tour bus and riverboat companies offer great ways to see the city. In fact, there are even companies that combine both options, utilizing vehicles that convert from buses to boats.

Public Transportation

There are two city bus systems in Canada's Capital region. OC Transpo operates buses in Ottawa-Carleton on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River. La Société de Transport de l'Outaouais (STO) operates buses in the Outaouais region on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River.

- [OC Transpo Web site](#)
- [STO Web site](#)
- [OC Transpo](#) operates Ottawa's useful bus network and a light-rail system known as the O-train. Bus rides cost \$3.65 (\$1.90 for children under 13) and you can pay on the bus. Make sure you have the exact change on you. You can also purchase a day pass (\$8.50) from the driver, and buy books of six tickets (\$9.90) at convenience stores. Adults pay \$5.15 on express routes. Be sure to take your ticket when boarding and paying; it allows you to transfer to

other buses for a period of 90 minutes. The [Capital Information Kiosk](#) has bus maps.

- The O-train does not currently stop downtown. It will become more useful when the Confederation Line is completed in 2018, providing a link between Parliament and the VIA Rail Station.
- Ottawa and Hull/Gatineau operate separate bus systems. A transfer is valid from one system to the other, but may require an extra payment.

Recreational Trails & Pathways

Ottawa has an abundance of parkland, pathways and wide, safe sidewalks to help you navigate your way around the city. Within Ottawa, there are approximately 170 kilometres of paved pathways, dedicated specifically to those wishing to use "foot" power as their mode of transportation. Either by walking, jogging, inline skating or cycling, one can enjoy the beauty of Ottawa, without fear of navigating through motorized traffic.

[National Capital Commission: Biking Country Web site](#)

Taxi Service in Ottawa

Taxi service is plentiful in Ottawa, with numerous taxis often found lined up at taxi stands (particularly outside major hotels and principal office buildings downtown). It's also very possible to hail a cab on the street. The two large taxi companies offering city-wide service are **BlueLine** (613-238-1111) and **Capital Taxi** (613-744-3333). There's a \$2.85 "drop charge" upon entering an Ottawa taxi, plus a distance charge of 15 cents for every 101 metres of travel. This translates to a typical 5 km (3 mi) journey costing just over \$10. If you're wanting an estimation of how much a cab ride will cost, visit <http://ottawa.taxime.ca>.

A separate taxi service operates on the Quebec side of the National Capital Region in Gatineau, where the principal taxi companies are **Crown** (819-777-1645) and **Regal** (819-777-5231). Only Gatineau-based cab companies are allowed to be hailed on the streets of Gatineau, or may pick up passengers at a taxi stand; however, Ottawa companies may pick up passengers in Gatineau who have called for a taxi and who are returning to Ottawa. Ottawa taxi companies do drive passengers to locations across the river in Gatineau without any surcharge - similarly, Gatineau taxi companies deliver passengers to Ottawa locations, including the Ottawa airport, for no additional fee.

Car Rentals

There are several car rental companies that operate from the Ottawa International Airport. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.

- Avis – (613) 739-3334 | [Visit Web site](#)
- Budget – (613) 521-4844 | [Visit Web site](#)
- Enterprise – (613) 248-0005 | [Visit Web site](#)
- Hertz – (613) 521-3332 | [Visit Web site](#)
- National/Alamo – (613) 737-7023 | [Visit Web site](#)

Bicycle

Right on the Rideau Canal bike path, the friendly staff at Rent-A-Bike will set you up with a bike and offer tips about scenic trails. The Capital Information Kiosk has bike maps.

Ottawa's vast [Capital Pathway Network](#) has options for all cycling skill levels and ages including families, beginners and experts. It's easy to be an environmentally-friendly tourist in Ottawa – just travel between attractions by bike and soak up the scenery along the way!

To ride by numerous iconic sites, follow the [Sightseeing Cycling Route](#) which takes you on a relatively flat and leisurely ride of approximately 7.5 km (4.6 miles) in and around downtown Ottawa. You'll see the Rideau Canal (Ontario's only UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Bytown Museum, Parliament Hill, the Canadian War Museum, the Canadian Museum of History, the National Gallery of Canada and more.

Another option is to head west on the [Ottawa River pathway](#) which stretches for more than 31 kilometres (19.3 miles) along the water, past attractions such as the Ottawa Locks, Parliament Hill and the Canadian War Museum. Keep going and you'll be rewarded by balanced rock sculptures as well as sandy beaches and parks beyond.

If you head south on the [Rideau Canal pathway](#) instead, you'll have the option to stop in the lively Glebe neighbourhood and the Lansdowne area, followed by picturesque residential properties and gardens near Dows Lake and Little Italy.

Continue exploring the paths just beyond downtown to reach other treasures like the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, Hog's Back Falls, breweries and quaint communities.

Travel Options for an extended stay

Toronto

If you wish to extend your visit and travel from **Ottawa to Toronto** there are several travel options.



- Toronto, the capital of the province of Ontario, is a major Canadian city along Lake Ontario's northwestern shore. It's a dynamic metropolis with a core of soaring skyscrapers, all dwarfed by the iconic, free-standing CN Tower. Toronto also has many green spaces, from the orderly oval of Queen's Park to 400-acre High Park and its trails, sports facilities and zoo. www.seetorontonow.com
- Driving by car will take approximately five hours depending on traffic.
- Trains operate several times per day to Toronto Union station from Ottawa and also take about five hours. For more information and to book tickets visit the Via Rail website (<http://www.viarail.ca/en/explore-our-destinations/trains/ontario-and-quebec/toronto-ottawa>).
- Greyhound (<https://www.greyhound.ca/>) offers daily buses from Ottawa to the Toronto bus terminal and takes about five hours on the express bus.
- Air Canada, Porter Airlines, etc. offer hourly flights to and from Ottawa. Flying time is approximately one hour
<https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home.html>

Montreal

Montréal is the largest city in Canada's Québec province. It's set on an island in the Saint Lawrence River and named after Mt. Royal, the triple-peaked hill at its heart. Its boroughs, many of which were once independent cities, include neighbourhoods ranging from cobblestoned, French colonial Vieux-Montréal – with the Gothic Revival Notre-Dame Basilica at its centre – to bohemian Plateau.

<https://www.mtl.org/en>



Ottawa to Montreal:

- Driving by car will take approximately 2-1/2 hours depending on traffic.
- VIA Rail operates a train from Montreal to Ottawa every 30 minutes. The journey takes approximately 2 hours. (<http://www.viarail.ca/en/explore-our-destinations/trains/ontario-and-quebec/toronto-ottawa>)
- Alternatively, Greyhound Canada operates a bus from Ottawa to Montreal hourly <https://www.greyhound.ca/>. The price is quite reasonable.
- Flights from Ottawa to Montreal and return are approximately 45 minutes, and service is hourly. Air Canada and Porter Airlines are primary choices.
- Air Canada <https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home.html>
- Porter Airlines <https://www.flyporter.com/en-ca/>

Algonquin Provincial Park, for some adventure

<https://www.ontarioparks.com/park/algonquin>



When you think of quintessential Canada, it might very well be Algonquin Provincial Park that you see in your mind: maple-dotted hills that turn into a blaze of crimson, gold, and orange in fall; thousands of glassy lakes, clear rivers, craggy ridges, solitary moose, and calling loons. It's a stunning outdoor playground made up of more than 7,650 square kilometres of parkland and you can only get to know it from a canoe, horseback, or on foot — hiking or snowshoeing, depending the season.

Ontario's very first park and its largest, Algonquin is in the middle of the province, between the Ottawa River and Georgian Bay. Though it contains incredibly pristine wilderness, it's only three hours from Toronto and about four-and-a-half from Ottawa. Outdoor aficionados call it some of the best camping in the world, whether in a backcountry tent or cozy pine cabin. You might call it your outdoor adventure central basecamp during your visit. Just get your park permit, check the weather forecast, and gear up.

Algonquin Park is one of the most popular camping destinations in the world, but you don't have to be fond of tents and back packs to enjoy a visit to this iconic destination. Plenty of resorts are located within the park itself or just on the periphery, allowing you to experience the breath-taking beauty of this place, without having to sacrifice some of the comforts you prefer.

http://www.algonquinpark.on.ca/visit/park_lodges_outfitters/index.php

<http://www.algonquinpark.com/lodges.html>

Plenty of fine dining can be found in or near the park, including the kitchens at Barlett Lodge and Arowhon Pines, the personal chef preparing locally-sourced meals, including fish

Camping in Algonquin Park

Camping is one of Algonquin Park visitor's most popular activities. Camping opportunities include [drive to camping](#) (developed campgrounds, yurts, ranger cabins, and RV camping) and [backcountry camping](#) (canoeing, ranger cabins, backpacking, paddle-in campsties)

[Make A Reservation](#)

Arts and Entertainment in Ottawa

Year-round, you'll find lots to do and take in, including performances in premiere arts venues like the National Arts Centre (NAC). Ottawa is also a city that loves festivals, and it's worthwhile to check the calendar for the [Ottawa Jazz Festival](#), <http://www.chamberfest.com/>, [RBC Bluesfest](#), and other events that might be taking place during your visit.

Beyond the NAC, here are two additional theatre options if you have more time: [Arts Court Theatre](#), and [Ottawa Little Theatre](#)

National Arts Centre

<https://nac-cna.ca/en/>



The National Arts Centre collaborates with artists and arts organizations across Canada to help create a national stage for the performing arts, and acts as a catalyst for performance, creation and learning across the country.

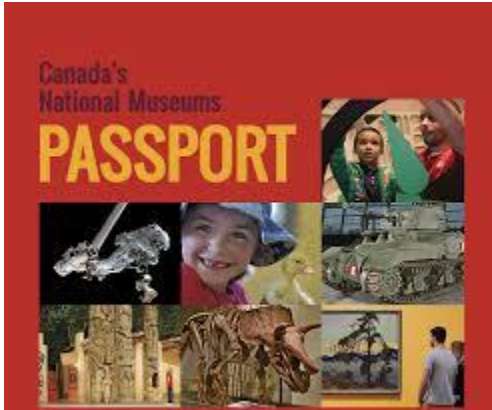
A home for Canada's most creative artists, the NAC strives to be artistically adventurous in each of its programming streams – the *NAC Orchestra*, *English Theatre*, *French Theatre*, *Indigenous Theatre* and *Dance*, as well as *NAC Presents*, which showcase established and emerging Canadian artists.

The NAC is the only bilingual, multidisciplinary performing arts centre in Canada, and one of the largest in the world.

Enjoy [free programming](#) at the National Arts Centre (NAC)! The NAC regularly offers events for all ages including Toddler Tuesdays, Seniors Pop-up Painting, music shows and meditation

Museums and Galleries

Museum Pass – 3 Museums in 3 Days!



As Canada's capital, Ottawa has a substantial amount of history and culture that can captivate a new tourist or even the most experienced traveller. Immerse yourself in Ottawa's eclectic neighbourhoods and downtown core and enjoy our nationally renowned cultural institutions. The myriad of museums and galleries offer a glimpse into everything from Canada's social and military history, to buildings that house impressive aircraft collections and explain technological breakthroughs, to astounding natural

wonders and world-class art.

Seven national museums located in Ottawa–Gatineau are part of **Canada's National Museums Passport**: The National Museums Passport can be purchased at the museums listed above or at the Capital Information Kiosk (90 Wellington St.) for \$35 CDN. You can learn more about the passport here: www.museumspassport.ca

The Museums Passport is valid for general admission over 3 consecutive days starting from the day of your first visit. Available for \$35, it is valid for 3 visits to museums of your choice among the 7 participating national museums presented on this website. Each accompanying child (age 17 and under) receives a 30% discount on general admission. Questions? Contact 1-844-878-8333.

Ottawa has many museums with interesting exhibits. There is something to offer every visitor.

National Gallery of Canada



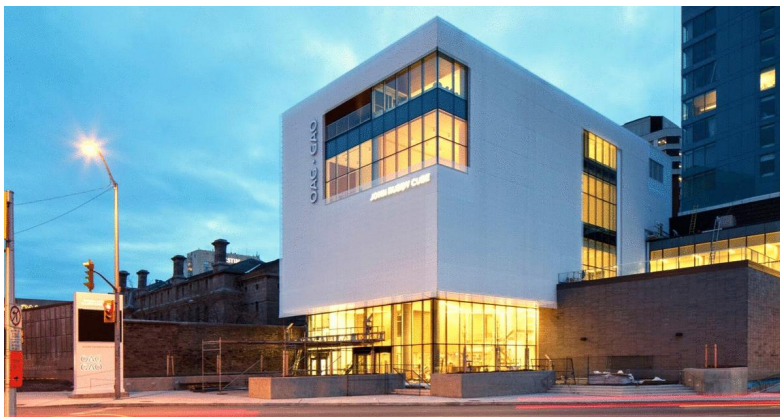
<https://www.gallery.ca/>

Admission to the permanent collection at the Gallery is free on Thursday nights from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Or, if you visit a special exhibition, you also get access to the permanent collection. The Gallery has a large and varied collection of paintings, drawings, sculpture and photographs and indigenous art. Although its focus is on Canadian art, it holds works by many noted American and European artists. It has a strong contemporary art collection with some of Andy Warhol's most famous works. In 1990 the Gallery bought Barnett Newman's Voice of Fire for \$1.8 million, igniting a storm of controversy. Since that time its value has appreciated

sharply. In 2005, the Gallery acquired a painting by Italian Renaissance painter Francesco Salviati for \$4.5 million. Its most famous painting is likely The Death of General Wolfe by Anglo-American artist Benjamin West. The Canadian collection, the most comprehensive in Canada, holds works by Louis-Philippe Hébert, Tom Thomson, the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, Alex Colville, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Jack Bush.

Ottawa Art Gallery



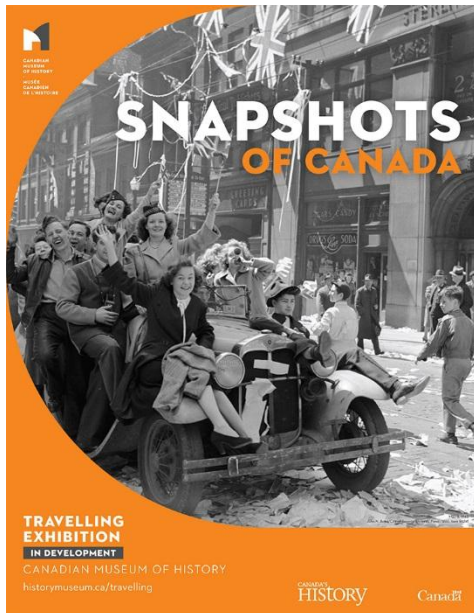
OAG fosters connections between artists and the diverse members of Ottawa's broader community.

Admission is pay-what-you-can.

<https://oaggao.ca>

Ottawa Art Gallery offers free guided exhibition tours to groups of six or more visitors. Tours are an engaging learning experience animated by a knowledgeable gallery educator. Participants are encouraged to ask questions and actively discuss the artwork on display. **Duration** 45 – 90 minutes

Canadian Museum of History



<https://www.historymuseum.ca/>

Gorgeous architecture and world-renowned exhibitions convene to create Canada's most-visited museum. Located on the banks of the Ottawa River — with a stunning view of Parliament Hill, the National Gallery of Canada, and downtown Ottawa.

The museum provides detailed insight into 20,000 years of human history. Let your eyes wander high into the sky as you take in the world's largest indoor collection of totem poles, walk through the largest and most comprehensive exhibition about Canadian history ever created, and sit back to enjoy a CINÉ+ film. Free Thursdays from 4– 8:00 pm

Canadian War Museum



<https://www.warmuseum.ca/>

This museum covers Canada's military past. From conflicts occurring on Canadian soil, to issues calling for the nation's involvement worldwide, all details are chronicled here. The new building has made the exhibitions all the more immersive, with details engrained in the architecture every step of the way.

Canadian Museum of Nature



This is Canada's national natural history and natural sciences museum in Ottawa. Its four main collections, which were started by the Geological Survey of Canada in 1856 and now include ca. 14.6 million specimens, are Botany, Mineralogy, Paleontology and Zoology. (free admission on Thursdays from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.)

<https://nature.ca/>

Canada Agriculture and Food Museum

<https://ingeniumcanada.org/agriculture/index.php>

The Canada Agriculture and Food Museum is located at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm, which traces its roots to 1886 and is the world's only working farm in the heart of a capital city. The museum provides visitors with a unique opportunity to see diverse breeds of farm animals important to Canadian agriculture past and present, and to learn about the food they eat. In addition to breeds common to Canadian agriculture, such as Holstein dairy cows and Angus beef cows, the Museum also has Canadienne dairy cows, Goodworth pigs, and Clydesdale horses. Many other breeds of dairy and beef cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, poultry, goats and rabbits round out the collection. Admission is free every day between 4 and 5 pm.



Canada Aviation and Space Museum



This Museum engages visitors with the wonder of flight through its spectacular collection, [educational programming](#), activities, and special events. The Museum focuses on aviation in Canada, but within an international context, from its beginnings in 1909 to the present day. As Canada's contribution to aviation expanded to include

aerospace technology, the Museum's collection and mandate grew to include space flight. The [Collection](#) itself consists of more than 130 aircraft and artifacts (propellers, engines) from both civil and military service. It gives particular, but not exclusive, reference to Canadian achievements. The most extensive aviation collection in Canada, it is also considered one of the finest in the world. <https://ingeniumcanada.org/aviation/index.php> (free admission daily from 4 – 5 p.m.)

Canada Science and Technology Museum



<https://ingeniumcanada.org/cstm>

The largest of its kind in Canada, the Canada Science and Technology Museum fulfills its mission through its collection, its permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions, as well as special events, school programs, and workshops.

The Museum lets visitors experience science and technology first-hand, as they discover artifact-rich exhibitions featuring marine and land transportation, communications, Space, computer technology as well as many unique objects from its national collection. Science and technology has changed Canada and the lives of Canadians. This transformation of Canada, from the period of early exploration and settlement to the present, has been marked by many achievements in science and technology.

Bytown Museum



www.bytownmuseum.com

Housed in Ottawa's oldest stone building, the BYTOWN MUSEUM explores Ottawa's history from the early years of Rideau Canal construction, through the rough and tumble days of Bytown, to its emergence as Canada's capital and beyond. Included with admission is a six-language audio guide available in English, French, German, Spanish,

Mandarin and Japanese. Just steps from the Ottawa Locks on the Rideau Canal, Admission on Thursdays is free after 5:00 p.m.

Bank of Canada Museum

The [Bank of Canada Museum](http://www.bankofcanada.com) (formerly the Currency Museum of the Bank of Canada) reopened on July 1, 2017 in a totally renovated building. People of all ages can create their own avatar and learn about the important role they play in the economy through hands-on interactive exhibits. Admission to the museum is always free!

The Supreme Court of Canada

The SCC building is open daily (including weekends) from May 1 to August 31 for free tours from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the rest of the year from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for guided tours by appointment only.

<https://www.scc-csc.ca/>



The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court of Canada, the final court of appeals in the Canadian justice system. The court grants permission to between 40 and 75 litigants each year to appeal decisions rendered by provincial, territorial and federal appellate courts. Its decisions are the ultimate expression and application of Canadian law and binding upon all lower courts of Canada, except to the extent that they are overridden or otherwise made ineffective by an Act of Parliament or the Act of a provincial legislative assembly pursuant to section 33 of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) (the "[notwithstanding clause](#)").

Parliament Hill



The impressive Victorian buildings that make up Canada's Parliament are stunning and provide a backdrop to the Changing of the Guard ceremony and a spectacular Sound and Light show on a daily basis, along with seasonal events and displays like the stunning fireworks show on Canada Day (July 1)

Known as **The Hill**, this part of Ottawa is named for the immense, gothic Parliament Building, home to Canada's legislature. The territory officially belongs to the Monarch, and the entire area is truly regal. Iconic buildings flank the public square, with the Peace Tower, emblem of the nation, at its centre.



See the [Changing of the Guard Ceremony](#)! From late June through to late August, you can see this ceremony on Parliament Hill daily at 10:00 a.m. This tradition has been taking place on the Hill since 1959 and is brought to life by a regimental band and pipers. We recommend arriving 15 minutes before the ceremony to find a good spot as this is a popular Ottawa activity.

Take a tour of [Parliament Hill](#)! Free guided tours of the Parliament Buildings are offered daily, roughly from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at half-hour intervals on a first-come, first-served basis (dependent on Parliamentary activity). And make sure to take the elevator to the top of the 92.2-metre (302-foot) Peace Tower to enjoy a dramatic 360-degree view of Ottawa!

Visit the many [monuments located on Parliament Hill](#), including the "Whispering Wall". Have one person sit at one end of the bench and another person sit at the opposite side. Now with no more than a whisper, talk clearly to each other.



The **National War Memorial** stands across the way, an epic arch of granite in commemoration of Canadian veterans. Take a free guided tour and discover the history, functions and art of Canada's Parliament! The iconic Centre Block is home to the Senate, House of Commons and Library of Parliament. For 2017, the Library of Parliament has installed a new exhibit in the Main Library entitled *Foundations: The Words That Shaped Canada*. Explore documents that transformed Canada and see how each one marked a turning point in Canadian history. Tours are available free of charge daily, with exceptions. Schedules and tour routes are subject to change or cancellation without notice due to parliamentary activity. Groups of 10 or more

visitors must book tours in advance.

Rideau Hall



Visit [Rideau Hall](#) (officially Government House). The grounds of the Governor General of Canada's residence are open daily from 8:00 a.m. to one hour before sunset. Explore these beautiful grounds where dignitaries and political figures have planted trees and take a guided tour of the famous stone residence which has been the official residence and workplace of both the Governor General of

Canada and the Canadian monarch since 1867. Enjoy some time to explore this beautiful mansion with its heritage gardens of 10,000 trees, rose arcs and totem poles. In the summer many activities take place such as garden tours, art tours and concerts. All activities are free of charge. Rideau Hall is located across the street from the Prime Minister's home at 24 Sussex Drive.

The Rideau Canal

The Rideau Canal runs through the city, connecting the Ottawa River to Lake Ontario, and spanning about 125 miles. The historic UNESCO-recognized waterway was built in 1832 and is a hub of activity.



The historic Chateau Laurier Hotel stands out above the water in classical French style, towering beside the delightful Major's Hill Park. Further down the canal, you'll come upon Pretoria Bridge, a 20th-century landmark, still used as drawbridge for passing boats. If you want to learn more about the Rideau Canal, hop on a boat tour with Rideau Canal Cruises. They offer 1.5 hour tours at various times throughout the day beginning at 10 a.m., or walk or bike the canal for free.

<http://rideaucanalcruises.ca/en>

Rent a kayak, canoe or a paddle board (or bring your own) and explore the Rideau Canal! Located at 1001 Queen Elizabeth Drive, the [Dows Lake Pavilion](#) offers equipment rentals from Victoria Day weekend throughout the summer.

The Royal Canadian Mint.

Visit the [Royal Canadian Mint](#). Have you ever wondered how coins are made? Find out at the Royal Canadian Mint, Canada's national mint, on historic Sussex Drive. Founded as a branch of the British Royal Mint in 1908, the Mint produces circulation coins for Canada and other countries, as well as commemorative coins sold worldwide. Since 1976, Canadian and foreign circulation coinage has been produced at the Royal Canadian Mint's production plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba. . Weekday tours are recommended when you can catch a glimpse of workers transforming sheets of metal into coins. Admission is \$6 per adult (\$4.50 on weekends); \$3 per child 5-17 (\$2.25 on weekends); \$5 per senior 65 and over (\$3.75 on weekends); \$15 per family (2 adults, 4 children; \$11.25 on weekends). Children 4 and under are free.

Notre Dame Basilica

www.notredameottawa.com



Notre Dame Roman Catholic Basilica National Historic Site of Canada is a large Gothic Revival cathedral, built of ashlar limestone, whose twin towers mark the entrance to Lowertown, one of Ottawa's earliest neighbourhoods. It is prominently located on Sussex Drive, between St. Patrick and Guigues streets, across from the National Gallery of Canada, in Ottawa's Lowertown area. As the physical and spiritual centre of Ottawa's Catholic community, the cathedral is flanked on its south side by the Archbishop's Palace and on its north side by the former College of Bytown and the Mother House of the Grey Nuns. The formal recognition consists of the cathedral on its legal property at the time of designation. Notre-Dame Roman Catholic Basilica was designated a national historic site of Canada in

1990 because: it is an exceptional example of the Gothic Revival style in Canadian architecture. CONSTRUCTION DATE(S) 1842/01/01 to 1897/01/01

Attractions and Tours

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride Centre



Visit the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride Centre](#)! The RCMP invites visitors to tour the stables and Visitors' Centre year-round (Tuesdays and Thursdays from September through April; daily from May through August).

There is a possibility during a visit of seeing the Musical Ride horses and riders practise when they are not away on tour.

Admission: **Free**

May – August: seven days a week / 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

September – April: Tuesday and Thursday / 10:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Hop-on-Hop-off



<http://www.ladydive.com/english/>

If you are limited on time or wish to see as many of the sites as possible this is a great option. Guided commentary is provided onboard and stops are located at all the main tourist sites. The double decker bus will transport you to popular sites and you will discover the history of over 75 preferred sites such as the Parliament Hill and Rideau Canal. The multilingual guided tours let you “hop off” at the sites you want to explore a little longer and then “hop back on” as many times as you wish throughout the length of

the tour to resume your adventure. Visit all of the region’s important sites with a 1-Day Pass, or take your time with a 2-Day Pass. This 75-minute tour is narrated from start to finish and is available in 8 languages: French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Japanese or Russian.

Choose from London style open top double decker buses or turn-of-the-century trolleys. Tickets can be purchased directly on the bus).

Ottawa Free Tours

<https://www.ottawafreetour.com/>

Free walking tours! Their Capital City tour runs on select dates from April through October.

Indigenous Ottawa

Tours & Experiences



Ottawa Aboriginal Experiences: <https://www.aboriginalexperiences.com/>

Venture to Victoria Island in the Ottawa River for a glimpse into Aboriginal culture at the First Peoples' village. Journey back in time. Be educated, entertained and enlightened through art, culture, and traditional foods such as bison and venison.

Aboriginal Experiences offers visitors a unique look at First Nations' culture in a native village, including traditional native cuisine, powwow dance performances, guided tours, and craft workshops. Programs offer a rare opportunity to experience the rich culture, teachings and history of Canada's First People from their perspective. Authentic, hand-crafted souvenirs and gifts available on site at this native village located on beautiful Victoria Island in the shadows of Parliament Hill. Experience an authentic Aboriginal meal, complete with bannock; a staple bread of many Indigenous groups. Also, take in a dance performance and Aboriginal craft activities. And if you'd like to experience the Ottawa River as the First Peoples and early explorers once did, canoe-paddling activities are also offered. Make sure to have a camera ready!

Open May 1 to October 31 for groups of 25 or more.

Indigenous Walks

Launched in May 2014, these guided [walking tours](#) discuss Ottawa's art, culture, history and landscape from an [Indigenous](#) perspective. Running through the spring, summer and fall, the tours are given by Jaime Koebel, an Apeetagosan/Nehiyaw (Métis/Cree) woman who resides in Ottawa. Choose from an Introductory Tour, a Parliament Hill Tour, an Indigenous Women Tour and the "Very Scary Tour."

Monuments

Valiants Memorial:

Following on Canada's military history, just east of the National War Memorial in Ottawa's downtown core, you'll find the Valiants Memorial. This monument pays tribute to several Canadians in our nation's history, including **Thayendanegea**, who was also known as Joseph Brant.

During the bloody conflict of the American Revolution from 1775-1783, Brant – a well-known Mohawk warrior and principal war chief of the Six Nations – led his people in support of the British. After the war, Brant brought his people to Canada and settled in what is now Brantford, Ont.

National Aboriginal Veterans Monument:

Located in Confederation Park across from the Lord Elgin Hotel, this monument honours the contributions of Aboriginal Canadians in war and peacekeeping operations.

More than 7,000 Aboriginals served in the First and Second World Wars as well as the Korean War. An unknown number of Inuit, Métis and non-status Aboriginals also served Canada. The monument, designed by Lloyd Pinay and unveiled on June 21, 2001 (National Aboriginal Day), was made possible by the National Aboriginal Veterans Association (NAVA) and donations from many Canadians.

Festivals

Summer Solstice Aboriginal Arts Festival:

This festival takes place in Ottawa's Vincent Massey Park each **June**. In honour of National Aboriginal Day (June 21), you'll find some of Canada's best Aboriginal talent here performing music, dance, theatre and more. There's even a pow wow competition featuring drums and various forms of Aboriginal dance! This festival is family-friendly.

Outdoor Sights and Activities

There are over 110 miles of paths and parks for hiking, jogging, or running.

- Go [cycling](#), in-line skating, running or walking anytime on over 600 kilometres (373 miles) of beautiful recreational pathways that link natural areas, parks, gardens and national historic sites. Plus take advantage of [Sunday Bikedays](#) from late May to early September, when more than 50 kilometres (31 miles) of parkways are closed to motorists.
- See [John Ceprano](#)'s rock sculptures at Remic Rapids along the Ottawa River! Every spring (continues through fall, until the sculptures are dismantled by the winter elements), John creates unique sculptures by only using rocks that are available on site. These amazing creations are the perfect backdrop for pictures in the early morning or evening light!
- Explore [Mer Bleue Bog](#)! Enjoy the walking paths and explore one of the largest bogs in southern Ontario. Ecologically, Mer Bleue is an especially valuable example of a northern ecosystem – more typical of the Arctic than the Ottawa Valley – and it has been designated an internationally significant wetland under the United Nations' Ramsar Convention.
- Participate in [yoga on Parliament Hill](#)! On Wednesdays from May to August, visitors and residents alike can participate in free “guerilla yoga” classes on Parliament Hill's front lawn from noon to 1:00 p.m. Up to 1,000 people participate on a weekly basis.
- Rama Lotus Yoga hosts various [free outdoor yoga events](#): lunchtime yoga at Ottawa City Hall's Marion Dewar Plaza from noon to 1:00 p.m. on Tuesdays from early July to the end of August; and full moon yoga at Lansdowne Park starting at 8:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m. on select dates.
- Take a hike in [Gatineau Park](#)! Located just a 15-minute drive north of downtown Ottawa, Gatineau Park offers more than 165 kilometres (102 miles) of trails, with most being available year-round. Admission to the park is free. For more hiking ideas, visit our [Hiking in Ottawa](#) page.
- Catch a movie in a downtown park! Located on Somerset Street West (near Lyon Street), Dundonald Park is home to [Centretown Movies](#) on Friday and Saturday nights in July and August. Bring a lawn chair and some munchies.
- Discover Ottawa's [Garden Promenade](#)! The website organizes beautiful gardens and green spaces by type and by geographical location with interactive routes and maps for easy exploring.
- Have a picnic! Buy fresh bread, fresh cold cut meats, cheese and vegetables from the farmers and stores in the ByWard Market, then have an impromptu picnic in Major's Hill Park or at Nepean Point (located behind the National Gallery) for a spectacular view. The point is a beautiful spot to take pictures of Parliament Hill, the Ottawa River, Victoria Island, Jacques Cartier Park, and the [Canadian Museum of History](#).



OWLRafting (whitewater rafting)

If you have time, be sure to go whitewater rafting down an untouched wild section of the Ottawa River with OWL rafting (<http://owl-mkc.ca/owl/event/family-rafting-single-day-adventure-Ottawa-river-2/>). The tour lasts approximately six hours which consists of 4 – 5 hours of rafting followed by a 1-hour return trip aboard OWL' Pontoon Boat Cruise. OWL Rafting is located approximately 90 minutes from Ottawa.

Explore Ottawa Neighbourhoods and Restaurants

ByWard Market



<http://byward-market.com/en/home/>

For nearly 200 years this rollicking public market has played host to artisans, farmers and craft merchants who converge year-round to sell their specialty items and wares. The downtown, just a short walk from Parliament Hill, also houses numerous cafés and some of the city's best pubs

and restaurants. And when the streetlights turn on, the market becomes one of the spots in Ottawa to grab a late night drink and catch some live music.



Downtown Rideau - Arts, culture, shopping

Downtown Rideau is where you want to go to see a play, check out a gallery crawl, or pick up the latest fashions. It's the 23 blocks east of the canal around Rideau Street, and just one block from Parliament Hill. Culture vultures will find everything they love here, like concerts at Mavericks, festivals, special events, plus high end, indie, and big name retailers like Simons, Urban Outfitters, Nordstrom, and Hudson's Bay at the CF Rideau Centre. This district houses the Ottawa Art Gallery, National Arts Centre, Arts Court Theatre, and Ottawa Little Theatre.



Elgin Street - Dining



Aside from the neighbourhood around the ByWard, which houses one hot restaurant after another (Khao Thai, Play food & wine, Ahora, Cacao 70, to name a few), you'll want to eat out on restaurant and bar row, aka Elgin Street, too. The section between Market and Bank is brimming with imaginative eateries sandwiched between stately monuments. The crown jewel is Beckta Dining & Wine in the renovated Grant House, but

other must-eats are quirky ElCamino (no reservations), and local institution Elgin Street Diner — enjoy breakfast all day here.

Chinatown - Multi-cultural



Canada is about embracing multiculturalism and you'll see that everywhere in Chinatown. It's a colorful district melding Chinese with Indian, Korean, Spanish, Thai, Korean, Filipino, and Middle Eastern traditions, foods, and wares. Shop, browse, eat, and meet the locals. Be sure to dine at

aptly named So Good Restaurant, serving an enormous menu of Szechuan, Asian, and vegetarian dishes. Go for the tofu and squid.

Parliament Hill - VIP zone



If you want to rub elbows with politicians, starlets, and CEOs, downtown is the place. The neighborhood includes the upscale Parliament Hill area and Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where you'll find VIPs among locals skating, cycling, jogging, or paddling

along the picture-perfect parks lining the waterway. Lounge at the Fairmont Château Laurier, a longstanding meeting place for big deal makers, world leaders, and royals.

Wellington West – Parks



The entire Rideau Canal area is a beautiful park, but if you're looking for an urban spot with lots of green space, head to Wellington West, a formerly rough 'hood near the Ottawa River that's become the new "it" destination. This district includes Hintonburg and Wellington Villages with all their graceful homes, colorful local-minded shops, galleries, creative studios, cafes, and trendy restaurants, even a retro bowling

alley. The parks are also not to be missed. Enjoy a picnic or stroll in Champlain Park or Hintonburg Park, next to the lovely St. Francois D'Assise church.

Little Italy



Centrally located Little Italy is ideal for biking with its tree-lined streets and pretty cycling paths. You can pedal along the Ottawa River or Rideau Canal. Then park, lock, and take 10 — or two hours — on a cafe patio people watching and sipping some good coffee before browsing the interesting boutiques. Of course, there are many

tasty Italian eateries, but don't miss a meal at French MeNa Restaurant, a stand out for its exquisite fare, including vegetarian dishes. The neighborhood is between Dow's Lake and the War Museum in west Centretown, easy to access from anywhere in Ottawa. Festivals are also a blast here, especially June's Italian week and September's GrapeFest, where urbanites stomp grapes like the good ol' days.

The Glebe



If you're a coffeehouse devotee, The Glebe is your place. This laid back neighbourhood with a granola reputation is actually filled with young families, singles, seniors, and students — and they are serious about their java. There are attractive Victorians alongside row houses, condos, and infill, alongside character-filled cafes.

Get a bagel at Kettleman's Bagel Co. and get caffeinated at faves like Morning Owl Glebe, Café Morala, Happy Goat Company, and Bridgehead.

Shopping in Ottawa



From large Ottawa malls to exclusive Ottawa shops and boutiques, to unique gift and souvenir stores, shopping in Ottawa is a favoured activity of visitors and residents alike. Downtown shopping provides a host of shopping opportunities, from the 150-store CF Rideau Centre to the boutiques and craft shops of the ByWard Market, the Downtown Rideau district, and Sparks Street – the country’s first and oldest pedestrian shopping mall. West Ottawa includes great outdoor stores and a major Ottawa shopping centre – Bayshore Shopping Centre – while east Ottawa is home to two popular Ottawa malls – St. Laurent Shopping Centre and Place d’Orleans.

[CF Rideau Centre](#)

Those who are looking for a shopping mall in the heart of the city will find exactly what they need at CF Rideau Centre. This massive indoor mall with 180 leading international and local retailers (and counting!) is perfect for visitors who want the big names in fashion, beauty and entertainment. With a total investment of \$360M, renovations and expansion efforts are taking place until 2016.

- Current stores include: Forever 21, Aritzia, Sephora, Zara (to expand to 30,000 square feet to include women, men, children and home departments), Nespresso, Coach, BCBGMAXAZRIA, Michael Kors, Bose, Magpie Jewellery, Harry Rosen, Banana Republic, Victoria’s Secret, Pink, J. Crew, Purdy’s Chocolates, Bath & Body Works, EXPRESS, David’s Tea, and many more.
- Also, CF Rideau Centre just opened its newly expanded wing. Here, you’ll find [new stores](#) such as a **Zara** flagship store, **Simons**, **Anthropologie** and **terra20**, to name a few.