

Canadian summer holidays

Get out on the road again and dig even deeper into the fabulous corners of Canada

by **Doug Wallace**

Over the past couple of summers, vacationing Canadians got a great taste of the treasures right in our own backyard, reacquainting ourselves with all the wildlife and natural beauty Canada has to offer. This summer, keep that spirit alive with one or two of these exciting escapades.

QUEBEC Îles de la Madeleine

You don't have to go to the Caribbean to find a secluded white-sand beach. Quebec's Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence offer several kilometres of white sand and sandstone cliffs, a peaceful retreat of eight major islands. Visitors discover the archipelago by hiking and biking the trails; taking to the sea with fishing, kayaking, windsurfing and boat tours; and learning about the region's Mi'kmaq ancestry.

Must-do: It's impossible to visit Îles de la Madeleine and not become engrossed in the area's art galleries, craft studios and ceramic workshops. As well, you get in on some of the best home cooking you have ever tasted.

Best route: Air Canada flies to the islands during the summer, and the regional PAL Airlines makes regular flights in from destinations in Eastern Canada.

TOURISMEILESDELAMADELEINE.COM



PHOTOS, MATHIEU DUPUIS/LE QUÉBEC MARITIME

TOP RIGHT PHOTO, TRAVEL ALBERTA/MIKE SEEHAGEL
BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



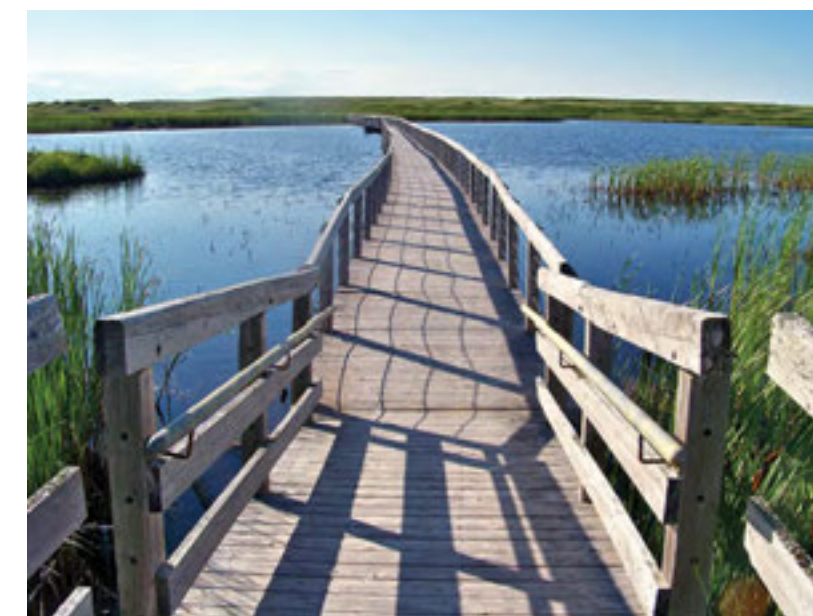
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND Greenwich Dunes Prince Edward Island National Park

Northwestern P.E.I. is the site of a protected area of wetland and surrounding parabolic dune system. Home to all sorts of critters, the extensive Greenwich Dunes Trail system includes three routes, all doable in a day. The best-known, the 4.4-kilometre Dunes Trail, starts off in the woods, moves to a wooden boardwalk and then a floating boardwalk over a pond, and climaxes at giant sand dunes and an amazing beach. The interpretive centre covers the region's geology and history, including 10,000-year-old evidence of human inhabitation.

Must-do: Go all out for the day and drive an hour south of the Dunes to Point Prim, a peninsula on the south coast, to check out P.E.I.'s oldest lighthouse.

Best route: The Greenwich trailhead is a one-hour drive northeast of Charlottetown.

TOURISMP.EI.COM



ALBERTA Dinosaur Provincial Park

Canada's biggest badlands are also its most fecund fossil fields for dinosaurs. See fossils in the wild via the guided interpretive programs of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ongoing palaeontology and research projects bring out the explorer in everyone. There are trails to hike and tours to take on this nature reserve, too, with camping just a short hop away.

Must-do: This road trip is a two-parter. The town of Drumheller is home to the Royal Tyrrell Museum collection of dinosaur fossils, one of the most complete in the world. It's also where you'll find a giant model T. rex. Climb inside and take in the surrounding badlands from its jaws.

Best route: Fly to Calgary and drive 1.5 hours east. ALBERTAPARKS.CA, TRAVELDRUMHELLER.COM

**MANITOBA
Churchill**

The best place in the world to see polar bears is very popular during summer months. The isolated community of Churchill in northern Manitoba has been a polar bear gathering place for close to 4,000 years, archaeology suggests. This rugged region is a treasure trove of natural history and wildlife wonder: See droves of beluga whales who have headed into Hudson Bay to mate, and watch polar bears play-fight or ... actually fight. Summer temperatures here average a pleasant 20°C.

Must-do: Make time for a full-day jet boat tour to renowned Hubbard Point, a cape northwest of Churchill, where polar bears take their own “summer vacation” to lounge around on the rocks.

Best route: Fly from Winnipeg to Churchill via Calm Air, anchoring your trip to the schedule of one of several tour companies.

CHURCHILL.CA, TRAVELMANITOBA.COM



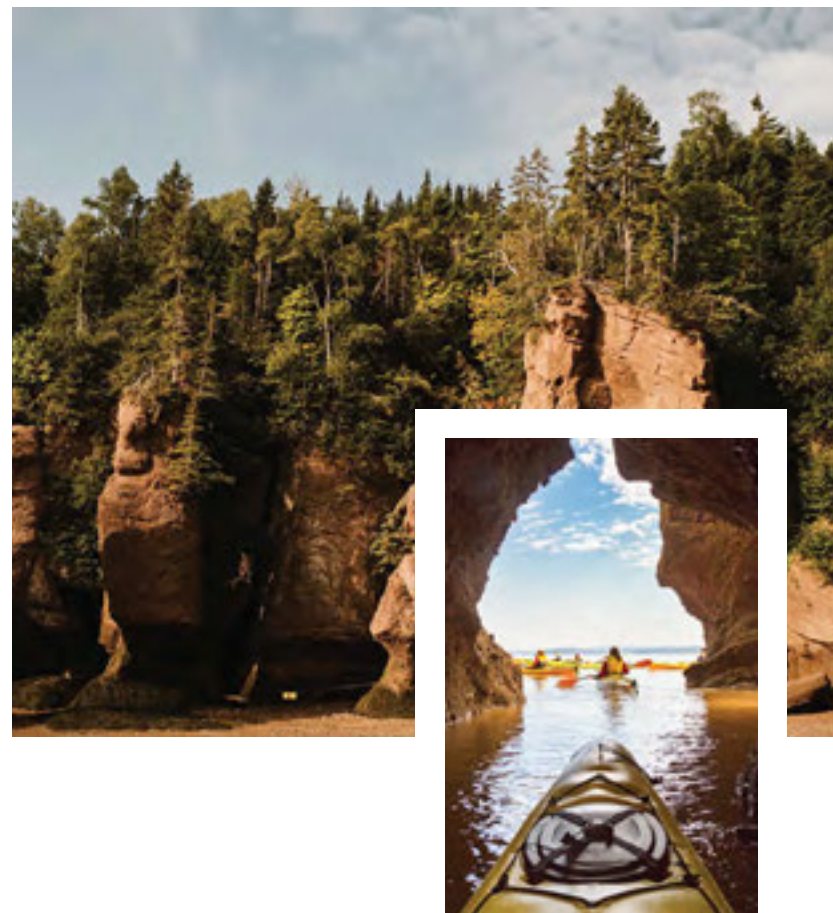
**NEW BRUNSWICK
Hopewell Rocks
Bay of Fundy**

Created by tidal erosion beginning more than 300 million years ago, the Hopewell Rocks consist of more than 20 sea stacks that appear and disappear every six hours in the Bay of Fundy, thanks to the world’s highest tides. These gypsum and limestone formations along two kilometres of coastline look like enormous flowerpots. Self-guided tours deliver well-groomed trails, secluded vistas, natural forest and ocean-floor access – but be sure to check the tide schedule beforehand. Allot time to see both the high- and low-tide environments to appreciate the height and range of the tidal cycle. And pack a picnic.

Must-do: An interpretive centre provides info on geology, tides and wildlife, which can include shorebirds, raccoons, groundhogs and porcupines, with the occasional deer, moose and coyote. There are also opportunities for rafting and kayaking.

Best route: Drive about two hours east from Saint John.

THEHOPEWELLROCKS.CA
TOURISMNEWBRUNSWICK.CA



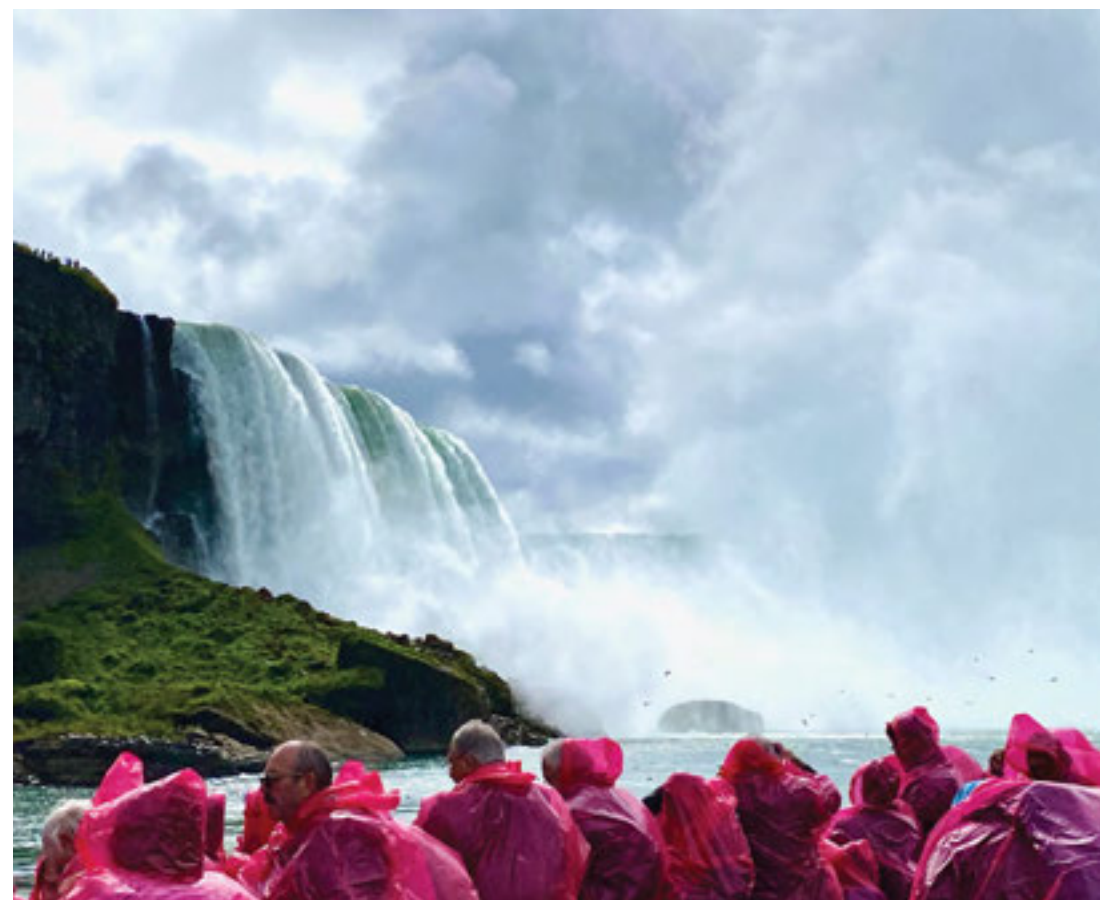
**ONTARIO
Niagara Falls**

The Honeymoon Capital of the World is way cooler now than it’s ever been. Visitors can check out new Indigenous Niagara tours, the highly rated Botanical Gardens and ephemeral Butterfly Conservatory; zip-line beside the falls; or take a helicopter ride over the falls or jet boat ride within the Niagara River’s natural whirlpools. And don’t forget the Niagara SkyWheel.

Must-do: The Niagara power station has been transformed into a museum by day and an immersive light show at night. An unused tunnel was recently turned into a walkway from the station to a new viewing platform at the foot of the falls.

Best route: Daily sightseeing tours from Toronto run the gamut, but stay overnight if you can, to get a real feel for the place without having to rush.

NIAGARAFALLSTOURISM.COM



**BRITISH COLUMBIA
North Vancouver Island**

While whale-watching may seem like a cyclical game of Hit and Miss, Vancouver Island has always been the spot with the best odds. Campbell River, Port Hardy and, in particular, Telegraph Cove are the focal points for marine adventure in these parts. You can spot resident orca whales year-round and humpback whales May to September. Large groups of white-sided dolphins, porpoises, sea lions and harbour seals are also on the marquee.

Must-do: Enjoy bear-watching, kayaking, birding and surfing. Plus, the sunsets here are beyond words.

Best route: Fly into Campbell River from Vancouver Airport, or take the ferry from Horseshoe Bay north of Vancouver to Nanaimo and make the pleasant drive north.

CAMPBELLRIVER.TRAVEL
VANCOUVERISLANDNORTH.CA



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