

DREAMSCAPES

TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE

Winter/Spring 2024

THE WELLNESS AND ISLANDS EDITION

ON LOCATION

TAHITI +
MARTINIQUE

ALSO INSIDE

NOVA SCOTIA
NASSAU PARADISE ISLAND
OTTAWA GETAWAYS

CHASING SEASONS IN OTTAWA

SHIFT GEARS FOR A CAPITAL CITY BREAK. IT'S A CLASSIC GETAWAY.

BY FIONA TAPP



As the season transitions, Ottawa, our enchanting National Capital, seamlessly bridges the gap between winter's icy embrace and spring's vibrant renewal. Locals love to get outdoors and embrace the cold; after all, in winter, the city is one of the coldest capitals in the world and residents have found endless ways to enjoy it. That explains why it hosts the annual Winterlude (February 2nd–19th, 2024), a free family-friendly festival dedicated to all things icy.

You can snowshoe, skate on the frozen Rideau Canal, and warm up with hot cocoa at cosy cafés around town. Or as spring blooms, watch how Ottawa emerges from the quiet beauty of winter ready to enjoy a season of bike rides, outdoor markets and the world-famous Canadian Tulip Festival.

Come for a romantic city break or bring the whole crew for a family vacation in Ottawa. No matter the weather or season you'll find activities aplenty.

SKATE THE CANAL

The world's largest naturally frozen skating rink comes to life each winter in the capital. The Rideau Canal Skateway stretches for 7.8 kilometres and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Typically open from January to early March (weather-dependent), huts line the canal where you can change into your skates. Prepare to glide along the ice or stick to strolling along the pathways and enjoy the frozen canal views from above.

If you're feeling the cold, head inside for family fun at Funhaven, where you'll find amusements, bumper cars and Ottawa's only rollercoaster! Older kids will enjoy a challenge at Escape Manor on Elgin, where you can choose from a



PHOTOS: OTTAWA TOURISM | CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE/MARTIN LIPMAN | OTTAWA TOURISM/TAKU KUMABE

range of escape experiences or play a round of Darts Reimagined, an immersive game, where your scores are automatically calculated, no math required.

CYCLE IN SPRING

Try out a different set of wheels by taking an early spring bike ride through the ByWard Market or along the Rideau Canal. Local outfitter Escape Bicycle Tours of Ottawa offers small group tours suitable for different ages and fitness levels. Try the two-hour Ottawa Express Bike Tour for a leisurely ride on flat, safe bike paths through lively neighbourhoods like New Edinburgh, east of downtown. Or try an interactive experience with the bike rental company's scavenger hunt and download an app that directs you around real-world sights in Ottawa by bike, as you're presented with challenges and riddles to solve.

WHY GO NOW?

Ottawa's sleepy reputation is undeserved and as a genuine four-season destination, you'll find plenty to do year-round. The winter and early spring seasons offer fewer crowds and cheaper prices, so why not plan your city getaway to the capital?

VIEW CANADIAN HERITAGE + COME FROM AWAY

Ottawa is home to seven of Canada's nine national museums including the Canadian Museum of History, just a short walk over the Alexandra Bridge in Gatineau, Québec.

There, you can see Canada's Sports Hall of Fame collection, also known as the Order of Sport Collection. View over 100 years of Canadian sporting history. Look for hockey legend Maurice Richard's jersey and hockey stick. You'll have until October 6th to see everything.

Enjoy Canada's nature—all under one roof—at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Housed in a handsome, turreted "castle" just minutes from Parliament Hill, the museum is home to world-class galleries featuring fossils, mammals, minerals, birds, aquatic life, and Canada's Arctic. Get ready for Bug Adventure, the newest exhibit, running from March 15 to October 14. Enter the extraordinary world of bugs in an immersive, larger-than-life exhibition—from the design team that created *The Lord of the Rings* and *Avatar*!

And when it comes to productions, the hit musical, *Come From Away*, is set to hit the Babs Asper Theatre at the National Arts Centre later in the year (August 14–September 1). It'll be your chance to see the incredible true-life story that chronicles how folks in Gander, Newfoundland invited 7,000 grounded passengers who 'come from aways' into their lives in the wake of 9/11.

WHERE TO DINE

The nation's capital offers an array of dining experiences to delight the most discerning of palates. However, if you're travelling with the family



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and want to eat downtown, you can't go wrong with Zak's Diner on Elgin. The diner-style menu offers towering pancakes, burgers, poutine and their famous milkshakes. At the popular and historic ByWard Market you can enjoy tacos, fajitas and more at the Blue Cactus Bar & Grill, or visit Cocotte Bistro for an upscale date night featuring a "sea-cuterie" of ocean delights including smoked salmon, shellfish and seared tuna.

Don't leave Ottawa without trying a BeaverTail! This popular deep-fried Canadian pastry, topped with candies or savoury options as you like, was invented there in 1978. It's one of the sweet stops you can enjoy on the C'est Bon self-guided food tour where you use an app to discover and sample market restaurants and food stands.

STAY IN STYLE

Located close to popular sights including Parliament Hill, the National Arts Centre, the Rideau Canal, Confederation Park and the ByWard Market, the Lord Elgin Hotel opened in 1941 and provides elegant and spacious rooms in the heart of the action.

TREAT YOURSELF

Take a swim in the indoor pool at the Lord Elgin or for a totally pampering experience spend the day at the Holtz Spa on Rideau Street. Opt for the Romance Package to enjoy a fireside couple's massage and pedicures for two. **DS**



TRAVEL PLANNER

Ottawa Tourism ottawatourism.ca

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