

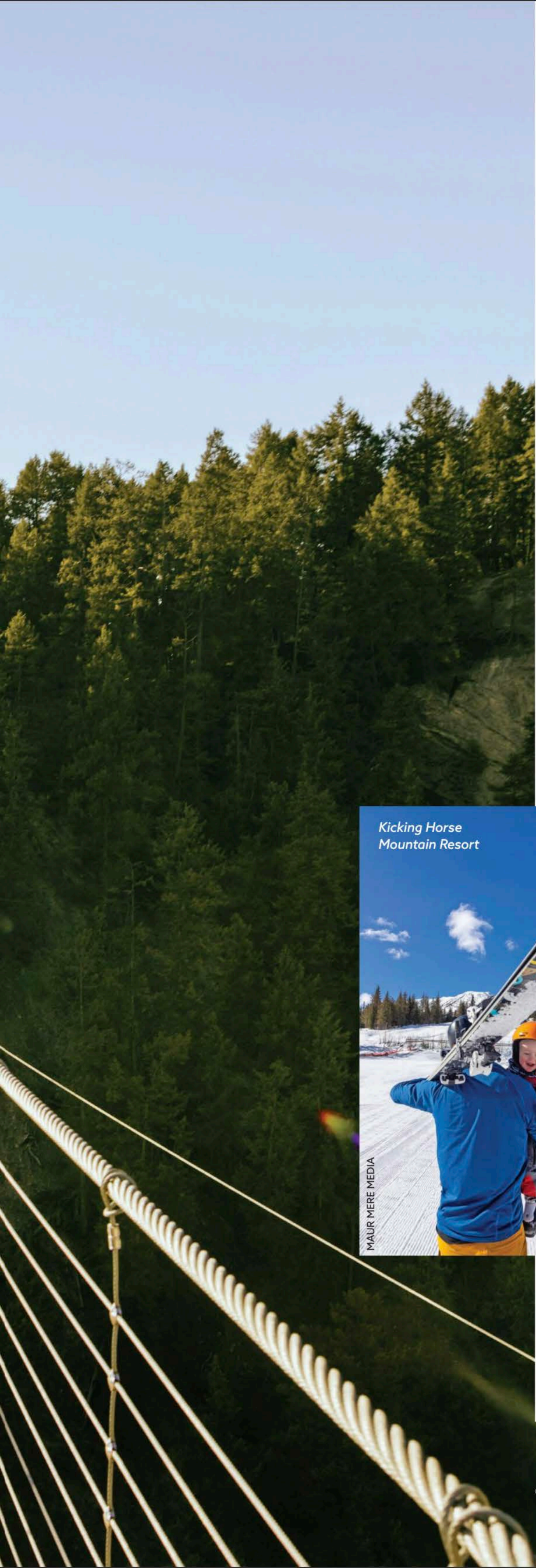


WHERE TO NEXT?

**FIVE GREAT JOURNEYS
THAT MAKE US WANT TO
HIT THE ROAD IN 2025.**

By Linda Barnard





As much as we love our corner of Vancouver Island, here at YAM we're also passionate travellers. But where should we go next? With the whole wide world to choose from, planning your journeys for 2025 can be a tough decision. So we looked to these top three trends for some inspiration.

- **Set-jetting:** Culture fans are seeking to experience the places where popular shows and movies were set or filmed, such as Thailand (*White Lotus* Season 3) or Malta (*Gladiator 2*).
- **Authenticity:** From culture to food, travellers are after genuine, local experiences, whether it's a pasta-making class in Bologna or an immersive food tour of Mexico City.
- **Sustainability:** Low-impact travel is top of mind for many people, who are seeking trips that respect the planet while helping strengthen communities.

With that in mind, here are five destination suggestions, each with its own travel style, for 2025. We think they may entice you to start packing.

FOR FAMILIES GOLDEN, B.C.

Surrounded by six national parks, Golden is a multi-gen recreation hotspot for a family-friendly mountain vacation in all seasons.

More than 100 years ago, the Canadian Pacific Railway bet on the Rocky Mountains becoming a tourist draw and hired Swiss mountain guides to help turn visitors into enthusiastic holiday mountaineers.

At the newly opened Edelweiss Village+Resort, you can stay in one of the historic, colourful Swiss-style chalets that were built on the edge of Golden to house the mountain guides. They've been turned into comfy-chic lodging.

Kicking Horse Mountain Resort is a short drive from Golden, with skiing, snowboarding, cross-country trails, tubing, snowmobile tours and an outdoor skating rink in the village each winter. Drive about 15 minutes to Yoho National Park to snowshoe or hike to Wapta Falls, or cross-country ski on Emerald Lake.

From late spring to fall, hit the hiking trails or ride 180 kilometres of cross-country bike trails around Golden that range from beginner to expert. There are downhill mountain bike runs at Kicking Horse, too. Stick around for an interpretive tour of the 20-acre Kicking Horse Grizzly Bear Refuge, home to resident grizzly bear Boo.

Take a raft tour, or rent a kayak, paddleboard or canoe at the Columbia Wetlands. This hidden gem is surrounded by towering mountains and home to 200 species of migratory birds.

Walk along Canada's two highest suspension bridges at Golden Skybridge. The all-ages adventure park opened in 2021. Strap in for the two-person Railrider Mountain Coaster. Try the Canyon Edge Challenge Course, giant swing or zipline. There's also a giant kids' playground with tree houses, small suspension bridges and beginner ziplines.

For indoor fun, Golden has two climbing gyms and a five-pin bowling alley.

Start planning: tourismgolden.com



Kicking Horse
Mountain Resort

MAUR MERE MEDIA

Golden Skybridge

CHRIS AMAT



FOR CULTURE LOVERS TOHOKU, JAPAN

Japan's northeast Tohoku region is about 90 minutes northeast of busy Tokyo by high-speed Shinkansen (bullet train). Only about two per cent of tourists to Japan make it to this area, which is known for pristine nature, traditional culture, hot springs baths and isolated temples, so bragging rights are included.

Sendai, a university town with a population of about one million, is a good base for exploring rural Miyagi. It's one of six prefectures (similar to Canadian provinces) in Tohoku and is also the centre of Japan's burgeoning wine industry.

The 1,000-kilometre Michinoku Coastal Trail, which opened in 2021, has day and through-hikes, including one that starts in Kuji, home of the renowned Ama "sea women" free divers.

Tohoku has the greatest number of relaxing "onsen" baths per capita in Japan. Towns and resorts were established around these hot-springs-fed communal baths (segregated by sex) that soothe body and soul. Ginzan is one of the most picturesque onsen towns, set among waterfalls and mountains in Yamagata



Onsen baths in Ginzan, in the Yamagata prefecture.



JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Kaiseki dinner at an onsen ryokan in Japan.

prefecture. The narrow, pedestrian-only streets, small bridges and heritage wooden buildings give it a timeless atmosphere.

Traditional inns, called ryokans, have

their own onsens. Many include indoor-outdoor baths for relaxing in tranquil gardens. After a soak, put on a cotton yukata robe and slippers and indulge in the multi-course, seasonal Kaiseki dinner typically included in a stay. The dishes are works of art and are best paired with excellent locally brewed sake.

Start planning: japan.travel/en/ca



FOR FOODIES ISTANBUL, TÜRKIYE

While this vibrant, 2,500-year-old metropolis at the crossroads of Europe and Asia declares "Istanbul is the New Cool" with its marketing slogan, it can also brag it has the best cuisine on two continents within a single city.

People from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Central Asia, North Africa and Eastern Europe all passed through here. Some stayed. All brought recipes and cooking methods to add to the traditional Anatolian cuisine born in Eastern Türkiye. (In June 2022, the United Nations agreed to change the spelling of the country known in the English-speaking world as "Turkey" to Türkiye, pronounced toor-key-yeh.)

The cuisine is varied and remarkable, whether simple, smoky cag kebab lamb, carved from the spit and piled in a pita at a spice market stall, or a multi-course meal at chef Fatih Tutak's eponymous two-star Michelin restaurant.

The feasting starts at breakfast with platters of salty cheese, olives, yogurt, dried fruit, nuts and rounds of bagel-shaped simit bread crusted with wood-oven-browned sesame seeds.

Small dishes of dips, salads and delicious



Traditional Turkish meze.

TOURISM TÜRKIYE

appetizers, called meze, cover the table before the main course. Good luck to the server hoping to find room for the impressively puffed pita bread, fresh from the oven.

Lightly crispy Turkish baklava is often filled with coarsely chopped pistachios. It pairs well with hourglass-shaped glasses of tea. Turks drink more tea per capita than any other country.

In lokum (Turkish delight) shops, towering displays of dozens of varieties of the colourful sweet treat, often studded with dried fruit and nuts, make choosing almost impossible.

Start planning: goturkiye.com

FOR SET-JETTERS BIRMINGHAM, U.K.

Thanks to the hit Netflix show *Peaky Blinders*, the West Midlands region in the centre of England is drawing tourists to Birmingham to see the onscreen home of the ruthless dandies and strong women of the fictitious Shelby family.

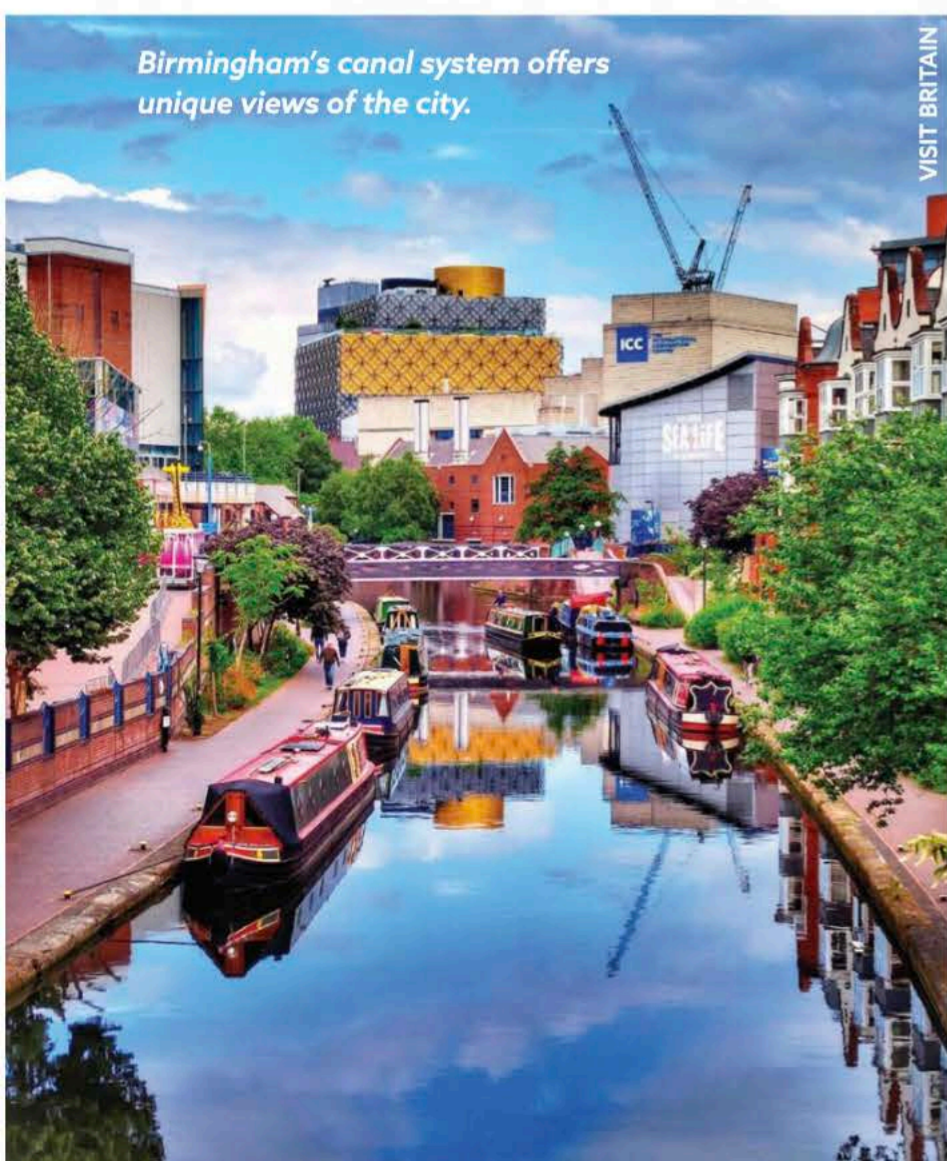
Known as the U.K.'s second city, Birmingham is less than two hours by train from London.

The show's characters were inspired by real-life Brummies, as they call Birmingham locals, including members of *Peaky Blinders*' creator Steven Knight's family. Much of the series was filmed in and around Birmingham, including a new *Peaky Blinders* Netflix movie, due out next year.

Take a walking tour to follow in the characters' footsteps around the former Irish-quarter industrial area of Digbeth. It's now an entertainment and workspace hub, with lots of lively pubs and graffiti art.

The Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, about a 30-minute drive from Birmingham, is also a filming location. There are more than

Birmingham's canal system offers unique views of the city.



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DEPARTURES
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50 replica, relocated or restored homes, shops and industries from the late-19th to mid-20th century.

Kayak or paddleboard in the canal system built to move goods when Birmingham kick-started the Industrial Revolution. The Jewellery Quarter has the biggest concentration of listed Victorian heritage buildings in the U.K., including the Newman Brothers Coffin Furniture Factory. It's now the Coffin Works Museum. Princess Diana, the Queen Mother and Winston Churchill are among the notables whose coffin fittings were made there.

Start planning: visitbritain.com

FOR SUN & SUSTAINABILITY SEEKERS

MAUI, HAWAII

Western Canadians have always had a big love for the Hawaiian island of Maui. But they may be conflicted about travelling there at a sensitive time after the August 2023 wildfires that killed 102 people and destroyed the historic town of Old Lahaina.

Is it OK to come back? Is everything open? Will we feel welcome? The answer is an enthusiastic "Yes!"

Like the rest of Hawaii, Maui's economy depends on the tourism industry. With recovery

underway, Maui has been welcoming visitors back since last November, asking them to travel with compassion.

One way to help support the community is with a morning of volunteer work at non-profit Kipuka Olowalu, part of Mālama Maui Nui (Caring for Maui). Learn about local culture as you help tend a patch of taro, a plant used in many Hawaiian dishes.

Eat, stay and play local by visiting businesses listed on the mauinuifirst.com website.

The five-kilometre golden stretch of Kā'anapali Beach near Lahaina makes a great base for a Maui getaway. High-end hotels have views of the islands of Lanai and Molokai across a turquoise ocean.

Watch Hawaiian green sea turtles glide and dolphins leap on a Teralani Sailing Adventures catamaran trip off Kā'anapali Beach. In winter, this stretch of ocean is prime



Maui is back and excited to welcome visitors.

HAWAII TOURISM

humpback-watching area as the cetaceans return with their young.

Take a day trip up more than 3,000 metres to the summit of dormant volcano Haleakalā, the highest point on the island. On the way, visit Maui's Upcountry region, passing farmland and small, historic towns.

The 'Iao Needle is a remarkable place. A paved walkway leads up to a dramatic, forested spire that punches up 365 metres from the valley floor.

End your day at Haleakalā for sunset, seeing the orange glow of the sun while having the unique experience of standing above the cloud line.

Start planning: gohawaii.com/ca



BUSINESS PROFILE

SAMYA SPA

Authentic Ayurveda and Organic Spa

Nestled in the heart of Old Town, Samya Spa is a new organic wellness centre beautifully crafted within the historic Yarrow Building. Led by the skilled hands of Radhika Jenson, it brings a fresh approach to Ayurveda in Victoria.

As a seasoned Registered Ayurvedic Practitioner, Radhika blends modern organic therapies with traditional Ayurveda, offering treatments accessible to clients from all walks of life, free from theological ties. Her warm approach, paired with her team's expertise, creates an unparalleled escape. From rejuvenating facials to rare therapies seldom found outside India, every service is thoughtfully tailored to your needs.



Radhika Jenson, owner

1016 Broad Street | samyaspa.com | 250-382-3253