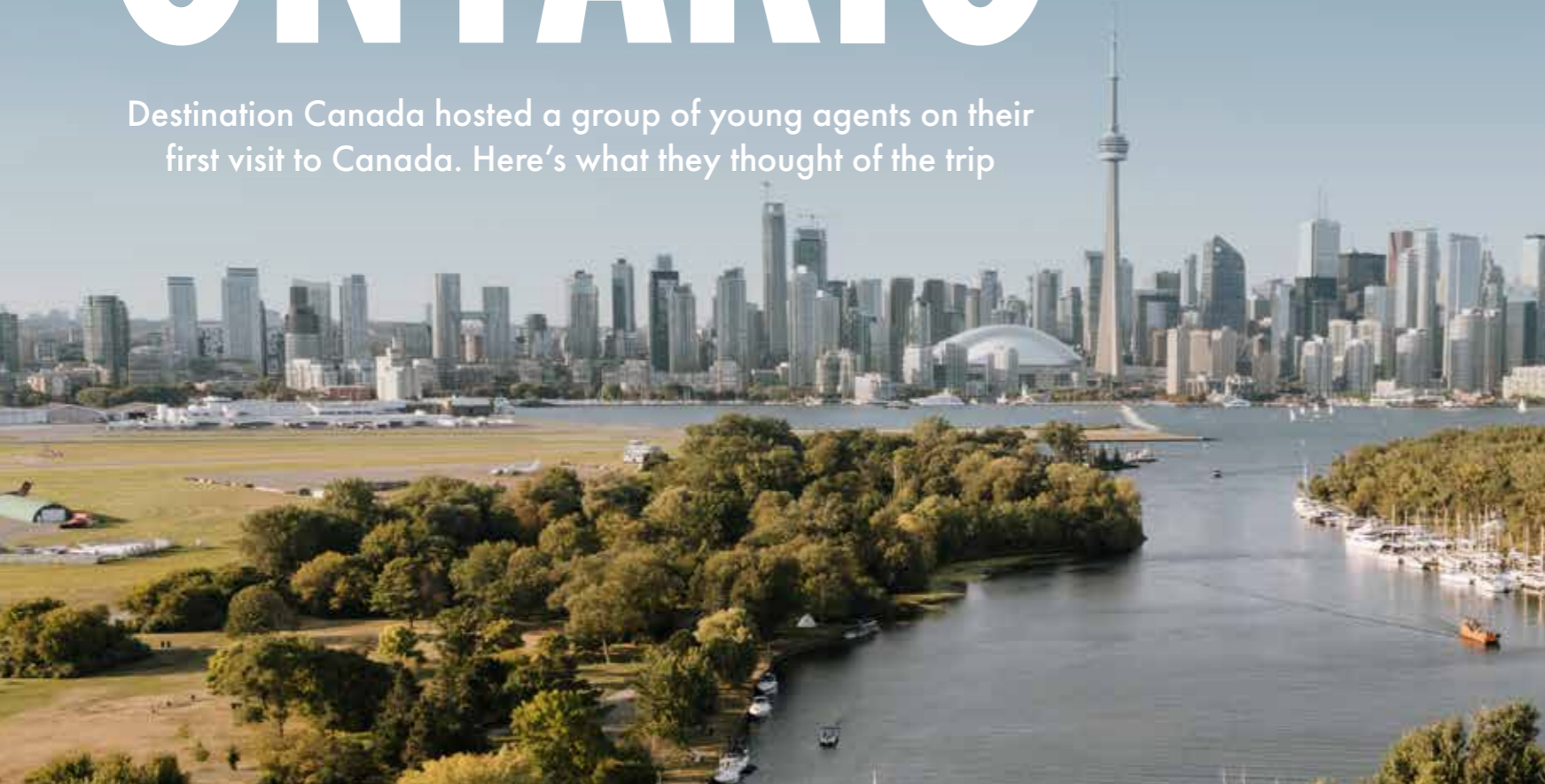


FIRST-TIME FAM TO CANADA: ONTARIO

Destination Canada hosted a group of young agents on their first visit to Canada. Here's what they thought of the trip



Is Canada one of the few places in the world where the reality is actually better than Instagram? That's what a group of 17 agents set out to discover on a Destination Canada fam trip in October, aimed at those who had never visited the country. Travel Weekly joined the group to find out what agents thought before and after the trip. Here are some of their highlights.

NIAGARA FALLS

- Explored Niagara Falls three ways: with Niagara City Cruises, with WildPlay ziplines and on a scenic flight with Niagara Helicopters.
- Gained fresh perspectives of the falls at Niagara Power Station through its new underground tunnel experience and observation deck, followed by an immersive 3D journey at Niagara Takes Flight.
- Enjoyed behind-the-scenes

access to Niagara Illumination Tower, creating their own colour combinations to project on the falls.

- Discovered the charming streets, cafes and restaurants of Niagara-on-the-Lake, home to almost 40 of Canada's oldest wineries.

TORONTO

- Enjoyed a city tour of Toronto, strolling around its lively Distillery Historic District, which is filled with street art, cafes and music venues.
- At Ontario's number-one attraction, Little Canada, seven regions are rendered in miniature. Agents loved the museum so much they never left, leaving tiny 3D-printed figurines of themselves to be placed in Little Canada as a lasting memento of the trip.
- Soaked in city views from 351m



Flying high: 1000 Islands Helicopter Tours

- Hopped aboard a Via Rail train from Toronto to Kingston, enjoying access to a private lounge and views over the Canadian countryside from the train's comfortable business-class carriage.

KINGSTON

- Jumped aboard the historic Kingston Trolley tram to soak up local maritime history at the Great Lakes Museum and SS Keewatin.
- Watched military demonstrations and experienced living history at Fort Henry, Ontario's first Unesco World Heritage Site.
- Learnt about the rich past of Kingston Penitentiary and tales of notorious escapes by its inmates.
- Had Kingston's eerie past and ghostly tales brought to life on a haunted walking tour.
- Discovered the 1000 Islands region with Rockport Cruises, then saw them from above on a flight with 1000 Islands Helicopter Tours.
- Continued their Canadian adventure, departing Kingston with Via Rail bound for the country's capital, Ottawa.



Heathrow: the group prepare to board their Air Canada flight

AGENTS' VIEWS: BEFORE AND AFTER



Lily Jones,
Travel By
Hannah

PRE-TRIP:

"I've sold Canada a lot and clients always return raving about the scenery and people, so I had high expectations. I heard whispers of farm-to-table dining, fresh Atlantic seafood and wine, which I was keen to investigate."

POST-TRIP: "Niagara Falls was my favourite experience. In Toronto, I loved how lively and multicultural it felt. Every corner had a different vibe, and the food was amazing. I was impressed at how different each city felt from the next, even though we didn't travel huge distances. I'd tell clients to pack comfy shoes and leave a bit of flexibility in their plans – there are so many little surprises and side trips worth squeezing in!"



Adele Croft,
Colchester
Travel

PRE-TRIP:

"I was looking forward to visiting Niagara Falls. I've mainly booked escorted tours to the Rockies for older couples, so I assumed Canada as a destination was best suited to older clientele."

POST-TRIP: "My favourite area in Toronto was the Distillery District. It was trendy and great for experiencing live music with small, independently owned bars, shops and restaurants. I was surprised how friendly the Canadian people were and how reasonably priced it was. I'll be encouraging clients to enhance their itinerary by booking helicopter trips, food tours and using the Via Rail service as an alternative to internal flights."



Mya
Fairweather,
Oyster Travel

PRE-TRIP:

"Due to Canada's size and each province's differences, there's a lot I didn't know about the destination. I felt Canada was a country for everybody, with its diverse landscapes, contemporary cities, wildlife, culture and adventure."

POST-TRIP: "Being able to see Little Canada, looking at all the little figurines and the detail in each region was outstanding. Two tips from me are: reserve the dining experience at CN Tower as it includes the observation deck, but you get to skip the queues. And don't pre-book flights between airports as Via Rail is so easy to use and the business-class seats are definitely worth the little extra cost."



Christopher
Sheldon,
Triangle Travel

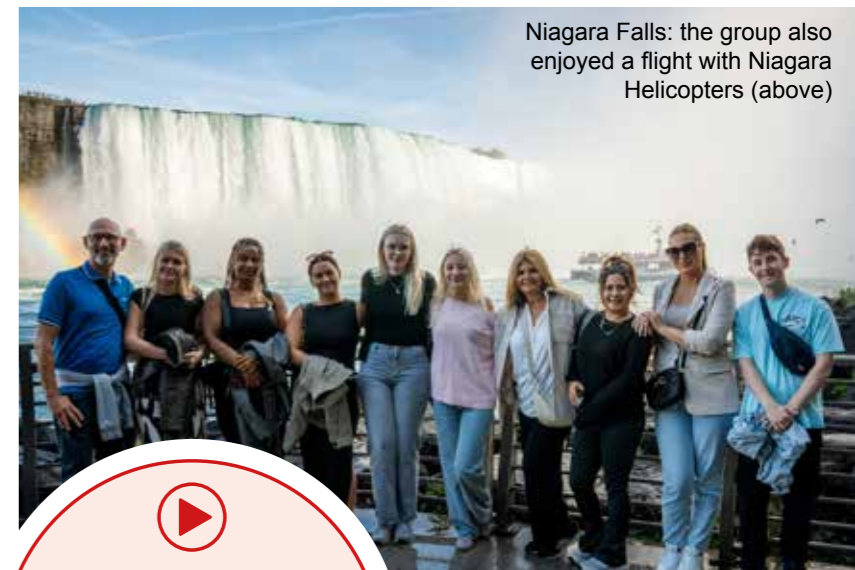
PRE-TRIP:

"I've sold popular options such as Rocky Mountaineer and self-drive holidays to Canada, but sometimes I'm unsure what there is in the cities. I'm really looking forward to the scenery and excited to try poutine for the first time."

POST-TRIP: "I absolutely loved Little Canada, looking at all the little figurines and the detail in each region was outstanding. Two tips from me are: reserve the dining experience at CN Tower as it includes the observation deck, but you get to skip the queues. And don't pre-book flights between airports as Via Rail is so easy to use and the business-class seats are definitely worth the little extra cost."



ADVERTISING FEATURE

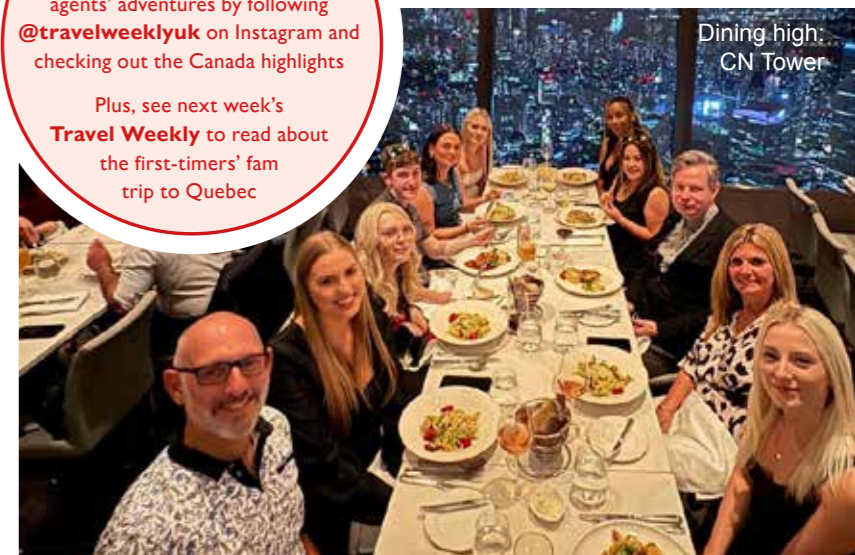


Niagara Falls: the group also enjoyed a flight with Niagara Helicopters (above)



Watch videos of the agents' adventures by following [@travelweeklyuk](#) on Instagram and checking out the Canada highlights

Plus, see next week's **Travel Weekly** to read about the first-timers' fam trip to Quebec



Dining high: CN Tower

FLY WITH AIR CANADA

Air Canada operates up to 26 flights a week from Heathrow to Toronto, while for clients needing regional flights, there are seasonal summer services from both Edinburgh and Manchester. On board, guests can expect varied inflight entertainment, meals and a flight time of less than eight hours. Find out more at: [aircanada.com](#)

Become a Canada expert:
[canadaspecialist.co.uk](#)



FIRST-TIME FAM TO CANADA: QUEBEC

Destination Canada hosted a group of young agents on their first visit to Canada. Here's how they found the trip



Montmorency Falls

Canada's glorious autumn colours and historic French cities make for eye-catching social media content, but does it live up to the hype? A group of 17 agents found out for themselves on a Destination Canada fam trip in October, with none of them having visited the country before. *Travel Weekly* joined the group to see how agents' perceptions matched the reality. Here are some of their highlights.

- Had free time to wander the city, with some agents shopping for souvenirs on its oldest street, Rue Saint-Paul, while others hopped on the metro and explored Montreal's Underground City.
- Watched an immersive display of lights and music after dark at the Aura Experience inside Notre-Dame Basilica.

QUEBEC CITY

- Hopped aboard a Via Rail train to Quebec City, enjoying the private business-class lounge, onboard breakfast and views of the autumn colours along the way.
- Strolled among the French-inspired architecture and historic alleys on a walking tour around Old Quebec, and rode the city's funicular up to the iconic Fairmont Le Château Frontenac for views over the St Lawrence River.



Admiring Château Frontenac

MONTREAL

- Got their bearings in Montreal on a city tour that whisked them from Downtown to Old Montreal and up to Mount Royal, for sweeping views over the area from Kondiaronk lookout.
- Toured the McCord Stewart Museum, taking in photography exhibits, art installations and the Indigenous heritage of the city's past and present.

- Got an adrenaline rush at Parc de la Chute-Montmorency, ziplining over Montmorency Falls at 83 metres above ground, before descending gently by cable car to admire the falls from below.
- Visited the Indigenous site of Wendake, which features a replica longhouse, to learn about the culture, cuisine and history of the Wendat people who call the region home.

- Became further immersed in First Nations culture at Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations, home to the Huron-Wendat Museum and rooms inspired by Indigenous heritage.
- Had a taste of authentic Wendat gastronomy at Sagamité restaurant, dining on venison, elk and bison and other native ingredients.
- Deep in the forest after dark, agents experienced Onhwa' Lumina, a 1.2km enchanting light trail of immersive projections and Indigenous music, which help visitors learn about the Wendat clans, legends and beliefs.
- Drove around Parc Omega, a safari park in the Outaouais region, where bison, boar and elk roam free. Agents had the chance to feed free-roaming deer and spend time with wolves and bears against the backdrop of Canada's fiery autumn foliage.



Agents show their love for Quebec

AGENTS' VIEWS: BEFORE AND AFTER



Leilani Bell,
Triangle Travel

PRE-TRIP:

"I thought Canada would be similar to the US, especially the cities and the food – I expected there to be lots of fried foods. And I thought Canada would be really cold!"

POST-TRIP: "I was shocked how European the cities felt, particularly Quebec where everyone speaks French. I also expected blistering cold but we had endless sunshine! My favourite experience was Wendake, learning about the Indigenous community, and Parc Omega was amazing – I've always wanted to see bears. Montreal gave me mini-New York City vibes: lots of shops and beautiful streets, and Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth was one of my favourite hotels."



Louise Oliver,
Saga

PRE-TRIP:

"I expected Canada to be lovely and safe, based on client feedback. I also didn't know much about its cities, as the Rockies are so heavily advertised compared with eastern Canada."

POST-TRIP: "I loved the food – we tried deer, bison and elk, which you wouldn't get anywhere else. Quebec City was beautiful, perfect for someone who's been to Europe but wants that familiarity, and Montmorency Falls and Wendake are still easily accessible from the city. Parc Omega was my highlight, seeing all the animals, like deer and wolves, up close, and a little blonde bear who we all loved! It was great to see classic Canadian wildlife."



Nicola Burgess,
Newell's Travel

PRE-TRIP:

"Canada brings to mind outdoor living, like hiking in the woods, camping and winter sports, but I wasn't sure what differentiated the cities from each other. Canada is so big so it can be hard to sell cities without knowing more about them."

POST-TRIP: "Wendake was fascinating, learning about Canada's history. In Montreal, I walked up to Mount Royal and the views were amazing; a fun fact I learnt was that buildings in the city aren't allowed to be built higher than this. Quebec City was picturesque and quaint, but I'd recommend not just sticking to the cities. You can easily go and visit places like Wendake that offer an even more wholesome experience."



Alice Howe,
Premier Travel

PRE-TRIP:

"I thought Canada would be cold, but I knew to expect colourful trees and beautiful scenery. The west coast is more popular so I wasn't sure what the cities would be like; I expected them to be full of skyscrapers."

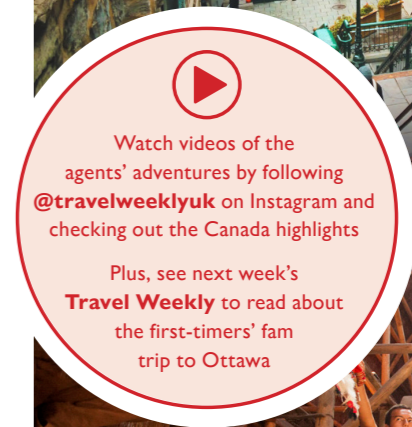
POST-TRIP: "I studied a bit of French at school, so I loved the French culture and language in Quebec City. It was probably my favourite place, mainly for the architecture, although I didn't expect it to be so hilly! The light show in Montreal's Notre-Dame Basilica was great – you wouldn't have even known it was happening but it was amazing inside; and in the Underground City, I didn't expect there to be so many bars and cafes alongside the metro."



Montreal City Hall



Old Quebec



Wendake
Indigenous
site

FLY WITH AIR CANADA

Air Canada operates up to 12 flights per week from Heathrow to Montreal, while for clients needing regional flights, there are seasonal summer services from Edinburgh. The airline also offers direct flights to Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax. At Heathrow, clients can book into the Maple Leaf Lounge for food, drinks and quiet spaces before their journey. On board, they can expect inflight entertainment, meals and a flight time of less than eight hours. Find out more at: aircanada.com

Become a Canada expert:
canadaspecialist.co.uk



FIRST-TIME FAM TO CANADA: OTTAWA

Destination Canada hosted a group of young agents on their first visit to Canada. Here's how they found their experience



Rideau Canal

Canada's buzzing cities and delicious dining scene often go viral, but do they live up to expectations? Two groups of agents who had never visited Canada before joined together in Ottawa after exploring Quebec and wider Ontario separately, for the final leg of their fam trip with Destination Canada. *Travel Weekly* joined them to see how their experience compared with their preconceptions before the trip. Here are some of their highlights in the Canadian capital.



National Gallery of Canada

MESMERISING MUSEUMS

- The group which had explored Ontario earlier in the trip arrived in Ottawa in style after a two-hour business-class journey on board Via Rail from Kingston.
- marvelled at Indigenous artefacts and heritage on a guided tour of the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau. Highlights included the

world's largest indoor collection of totem poles and the Canadian History Hall, which showcases the most comprehensive exhibition of Canadian history ever created.

- Viewed the world's most diverse collection of Canadian art at the National Gallery of Canada, admiring galleries of works ranging from Old Masters artworks to famous contemporary pieces.

- Took a fascinating tour of the Royal Canadian Mint, discovering how coins are made and glimpsing limited-edition pieces. They were also gifted a specially minted 2025 Canadian two-dollar coin celebrating Indigenous artist Daphne Odjig.

EXPLORING THE CITY

- Learnt about Escape Bicycle Tours' cycling routes and how its rentals can take visitors around Ottawa's scenic bike paths on self-guided or locally led tours.
- Boarded a hop-on hop-off bus tour with Gray Line, which winds around the city past key sights such as the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian War Museum and the ByWard Market District.
- Explored Ottawa's spooky side after dark on a walking tour with Haunted Walks Inc, where they were led around some of the city's

ghostly locations and regaled with spine-chilling tales of mysteries and local legends.

SHOPPING AND DINING

- Reflected on their trip at ByWard Taproom, with each group sharing highlights from their time in Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec while enjoying delicious craft beers and local food.
- Tried Ottawa's diverse cuisine on a guided tour of ByWard Market with C'est Bon Ottawa. They learnt more about the market's history and sampled international dishes including homemade tacos, tandoor-baked chicken, sweet BeaverTails pastries and ice cream.
- Had free time to explore, with some agents going sightseeing on Parliament Hill, while others hit Ottawa's boutiques, markets and malls to snap up souvenirs.



Ottawa

AGENTS' VIEWS: BEFORE AND AFTER



Ellie Royle,
Miles Morgan
Travel

PRE-TRIP:
"I've mainly booked clients on trips to Vancouver or on the Rocky Mountaineer, rather than its eastern cities. I expected everywhere to be really cold so I packed lots of hoodies. I was pleasantly surprised that it was 28C while we were there!"

POST-TRIP: "For me, the highlight of Ottawa was the shopping – being the capital city means there's a really great range of local and international shops. I also thought that our food tour in ByWard Market was a really good way of experiencing the city if you've never visited before. Having come from Quebec and Montreal, visiting Ottawa also gave me an insight into the differences between Quebec and Ontario."



Caitlin Walmsley,
Spear Travels

PRE-TRIP:
"I wasn't sure how much there would be to do in Canada's cities for different types of clients, like families or younger travellers. Clients often don't see past the Rockies, and don't know much about places like Ottawa or Quebec."

POST-TRIP: "I love how easy it was to get around Ottawa – everything was accessible on foot. Walking around Parliament Hill and seeing the monuments is a must, and I'd definitely suggest visiting ByWard Market – it has great food options and local character. I'd also recommend the hop-on hop-off bus for getting your bearings, and trying a classic Canadian BeaverTails pastry served with sweet toppings!"



Mazy Allison,
Ramsay World
Travel

PRE-TRIP:
"The main appeal of Canada is its scenery and friendly people. I was keen to explore cities that might not be as familiar, as a big challenge for clients can be budget – more popular places can often be pricey."

POST-TRIP: "Ottawa was a really great place to spend a few days! It was smaller than I expected for a capital city, but I really recommend visiting the Canadian Museum of History and ByWard Market. The rain stopped us from doing the cycling tour, but I think it would be a great way to explore the city. I'd recommend similar itineraries paired with Montreal and Quebec, because it's easy to explore other cities once you're already there."



Annie Hughes,
Newell's Travel

PRE-TRIP:
"I was especially looking forward to learning more about the different cities, as when I think of Canada, I picture natural landscapes and also multicultural cities."

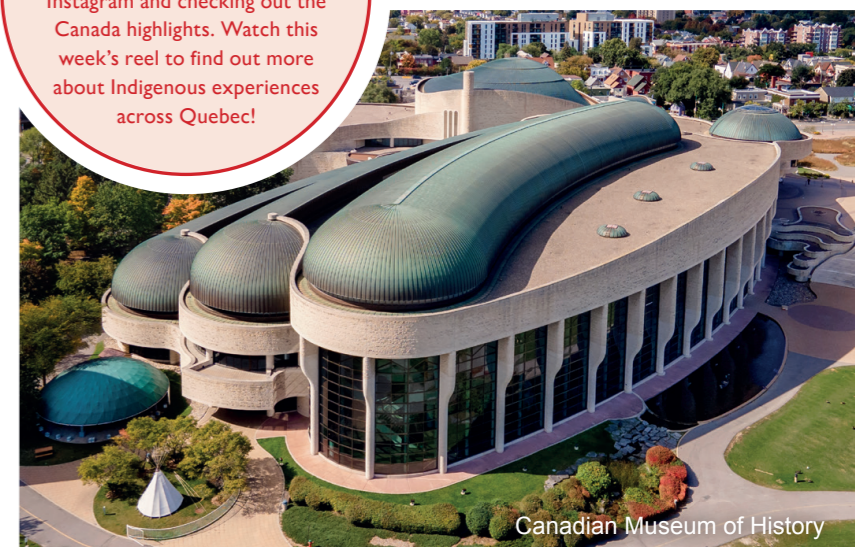
POST-TRIP: "I was really surprised at how welcoming everyone was in Canada – the genuine hospitality we received everywhere made a big impression. I was also amazed by how easy it is to get around, even between major cities. Ottawa was a wonderful surprise – it felt relaxed and picturesque but still full of culture and history. I really enjoyed the guided tour of the art gallery and taking a spooky stroll along the Rideau Canal."



ByWard Market District



Watch videos of the agents' adventures by following @travelweeklyuk on Instagram and checking out the Canada highlights. Watch this week's reel to find out more about Indigenous experiences across Quebec!



Canadian Museum of History

FLY WITH AIR CANADA

Air Canada offers direct flights from Heathrow to Ottawa four times per week in summer and three times per week in winter. The airline also has direct flights to Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax. At Heathrow, clients can book into the Maple Leaf Lounge for food, drinks and quiet spaces before their journey. On board, they can expect inflight entertainment, meals and a flight time of less than eight hours. Find out more at: aircanada.com

Become a Canada expert:
canadaspecialist.co.uk

