

# ADVENTURES

## IN TRAVEL By Mike Cohen



### BUFFALO, NEW YORK

My family and I recently spent some time in Buffalo, New York ([www.visitbuffaloniagara.com](http://www.visitbuffaloniagara.com)) visiting friends. According to Ellen Goldstein of the Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo, their newest and just completed demographic study indicates that there are 12,500 Jews in western New York. Erie County, Amherst, East Amherst and Williamsville are suburbs with large Jewish populations.

According to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Buffalo's "A History of the Jews in Buffalo":

*The first Jew to arrive in the Buffalo area was during the war of 1812, when Captain Mordechai Myers was assigned to the region. In 1825 the politician and Playwright Mordechai Manuel Noah bought Grand Island (just north of Buffalo) and established it as "Ararat," a refuge for the Jewish people. It did not attract many residents and the idea was soon abandoned.*

Retail destinations include malls like the Walden Galleria, Boulevard Mall, Eastern Hills Mall and the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls. We saw a movie at the Regal Transit Center Stadium 18 & IMAX at 6707 Transit Road in Williamsville, a mere 10 minutes from our hotel. I always enjoy seeing a movie at the Regal chain ([www.regmovies.com](http://www.regmovies.com)); as the name of the complex says, this is stadium seating. There is a large parking lot and very friendly staff.

In terms of accommodations, we were very fortunate to come across the brand new Staybridge Suites Buffalo Amherst, at 1290 Sweet Home Road, adjacent to the SUNY University at Buffalo's north campus. Resting on the eastern shore of Lake Erie, the suburb of Amherst provides great access to entertainment, restaurants, and attractions. Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF) is eight miles away. It turned out to be an excellent location, having only opened last fall.

This is an extended-stay and pet-friendly hotel; it offers studios, one bedroom and two bedroom/two bathroom suites, as well as an indoor saltwater pool, a fitness room, an in-season BBQ pavillion with grills and complimentary guest laundry. You also get a full hot breakfast each morning, along with evening social receptions (Tuesday through Thursday). We chose the two-bedroom option and for three of us it offered the kind of personal space one is not normally accustomed to during a family stay in a hotel. With a king size bed (and one amazingly comfortable reading chair) in the master bedroom, two double beds in the other, and a pull-out couch in the living room, two families could happily share the premises. We also appreciated the 24-hour free coffee, tea, hot chocolate, milk, juices and soft drinks, as well as the "Great Room," where you can hang out with business associates, and the "Den," filled with books, games and lots of comfy nooks.

Each hotel room is furnished with a 42-inch flat screen HD TV, DVD players, iPod docking stations,

alarm clocks, and fully equipped kitchens that include pots, pans, and utensils. There is good workspace and wireless internet. This property even has additional storage units available on each floor. You can call 1.877.660.8550 for reservations or do so online at [www.staybridgesuites.com/amherstny](http://www.staybridgesuites.com/amherstny).



A room at the new Staybridge Suites Buffalo Amherst

### THE OTHER BURLINGTON

During the course of my life I have visited Burlington, Vermont many times, while never setting foot in Burlington, Ontario ([www.tourismburlington.com](http://www.tourismburlington.com)). That all changed recently when, en route to Buffalo, New York, we decided it would be nice to stop over somewhere on the way. Burlington is conveniently located between Toronto and Niagara Falls. We stayed at a beautiful Homewood Suites at 975 Syscon Road. The spacious suites come complete with fully equipped kitchens, including a two-burner stove and full-size refrigerator. Guests can choose between studios or one-bedroom and two-bedroom suites that feature separate living and sleeping areas. You can relax with a coffee in front of the fire in the hotel lodge area and grab any last-minute items at their 24-hour convenience store. Pets up to 25 pounds are welcome. There is complimentary high-speed wireless internet access and a heated indoor pool.

Mornings start out with a hot full breakfast, while complimentary evening dinner and drinks are offered as well, Monday through Thursday between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. This proved to be very convenient when we checked in. They even offer a complimentary grocery shopping service.

Burlington has a small Jewish community. The closest synagogues are in Hamilton and Oakville. In 1982, the Jewish community of Burlington merged with the Beth El congregation of Oakville. This amalgamation changed its name to Shaarei-Beth El. By 1986 the original Oakville synagogue proved to be too small and so new additions were added to the original building. The congregation became affiliated with the Reform movement in 1988.

### TORONTO'S HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

There was only one thing missing when I made my first ever visit to the Hockey Hall of Fame ([www.hhof.com](http://www.hhof.com)): a section of noted Jewish hockey

players. Located downtown in Brookfield Place, at the corner of Yonge and Front Streets, visitors are told to allocate several hours to explore Toronto's premier hockey attraction and I did just that. Montreal fans will enjoy experiencing a replica of the Canadiens dressing room at the old Forum, complete with sweaters of such greats as Ken Dryden and Guy Lafleur. There are small and large TV monitors in various sections and the Habs room.

I like to stay downtown when visiting Toronto and for my family nothing beats a two-bedroom suite at The Grand Hotel and Suites ([www.grandhotel.toronto.com](http://www.grandhotel.toronto.com)), located at the corner of Jarvis and Dundas. This is a great area to select as a base since the location is very dynamic. First and foremost, the amazing Eaton Centre ([www.toronto.eatoncentre.com](http://www.toronto.eatoncentre.com)) is just a few blocks away. The Grand Hotel and Suites is only fourteen years old and still looks spanking new. It features 177 extraordinary guest suites. For families, the junior two-bedroom suites feature spacious living room/work areas separated from the two bedroom areas by sets of French glass doors with vertical blinds. The bedroom areas contain king and queen-size beds, LCD TVs and dual-line telephones with data port. A separate living area contains a double sofa bed, TV, DVD Player, CD Player and a work desk with a dual-line telephone. There is a fully equipped kitchenette with a microwave, fridge, coffeemaker and cutlery. We got one of the recently refurbished rooms. You can slip into a plush bathrobe, use the iron and ironing board, and enjoy the convenience of the laptop-size in-room safe. The kitchenette is a definite bonus and something kosher guests in particular will find useful as they can prepare some of their own meals. A very large Metro supermarket is just a block and a half away.

Finding a kosher restaurant in downtown Toronto is no easy task, so you will probably have to venture towards Highway 401. The Shore Club ([www.theshoreclub.ca](http://www.theshoreclub.ca)) on Wellington Street turned out to be a real treat. Owned by noted Jewish restaurateur David Aisenstat, this vibrant restaurant and cocktail bar offers up lively ambiance. The

Shore Club (which also has an Ottawa location) is memorable for its atmosphere, professional service, and outstanding cuisine. Located in the new RBC Dexia Centre, the restaurant is situated in Toronto's bustling Entertainment District, making it an ideal pre-performance dinner destination. It's also within walking distance of the financial district, Rogers Centre, and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Valet parking is available next door at the Ritz Carlton. You are in for an outstanding culinary experience, with such choices as Salmon Wellington, maple-glazed king salmon, smoked Alaskan black cod, herb-dusted sea bass, and stuffed rainbow trout, as well as numerous steakhouse favourites, twenty-one options for sides, and some great desserts.



*The Jewish-owned Shore Club of Toronto.*

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has a vibrant, growing Jewish community of over 180,000. At last count, there were some 118 synagogues. In the downtown area you will find the First Narayever Congregation at 187 Brunswick Ave, just a few steps north of Harbord Street. This is a warm and welcoming traditional-egalitarian synagogue. The Annex Shul, co-founded by Bram Belzberg and Richard Meloff and based at the Wolfond Centre on Harbord Street, is another congregation serving the downtown area. ([www.narayever.com](http://www.narayever.com))

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## Helpful TRAVEL Websites



### ACCOMMODATIONS

[www.visitflorida.com](http://www.visitflorida.com)  
[www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com)  
[www.Hostelz.com](http://www.Hostelz.com)  
[www.HomeExchange.com](http://www.HomeExchange.com)  
[www.BedandBreakfast.com](http://www.BedandBreakfast.com)  
[www.Yapta.com](http://www.Yapta.com)  
[www.HomeAway.com](http://www.HomeAway.com)  
[www.WhichBudget.com](http://www.WhichBudget.com)

### CRUISES

[www.cruiseshipcenters.com](http://www.cruiseshipcenters.com)  
[www.montrealcruises.com](http://www.montrealcruises.com)  
[www.royalcaribbean.com](http://www.royalcaribbean.com)  
[www.nci.com](http://www.nci.com)  
[www.carnival.com](http://www.carnival.com)  
[www.hollandamerica.com](http://www.hollandamerica.com)  
[www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com)  
[www.disneycruise.disney.go.com](http://www.disneycruise.disney.go.com)  
[www.oceaniacruises.com](http://www.oceaniacruises.com)

### GREAT DEALS

[www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)  
[www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com)  
[www.expedia.ca](http://www.expedia.ca)

[www.selloffvacations.com](http://www.selloffvacations.com)  
[www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)  
[www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)  
[www.travelzoo.com](http://www.travelzoo.com)  
[www.travelocity.ca](http://www.travelocity.ca)  
[www.airfarewatchdog.com](http://www.airfarewatchdog.com)  
[www.flightstats.com](http://www.flightstats.com)  
[www.points.com](http://www.points.com)  
[www.tripcentral.ca](http://www.tripcentral.ca)  
[www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

