



The City of Ottawa has Everything a Holiday can Offer

by Mike Cohen

As Canada's capital, Ottawa is the perfect place to experience some of the country's best attractions, celebrations and flavors in one welcoming city. With its unique blend of urban and rural beauty, year-round outdoor activities, and vibrant neighbourhoods, the Ottawa region is best explored over several days or more. Since I often go there for family reasons, an extended trip is usually on the agenda as was the case this past summer.

Parliament Hill is the most visited Ottawa attraction. Guided tours are free and include the Senate, House of Commons, East Block and Parliament: The Immersive

Experience. Ottawa cultural attractions, museums and galleries invite visitors to experience the best of Canada all in one place. Whether it's the stunning National Gallery of Canada, with world-class art on display, or the dramatic Canadian War Museum, these are the experiences that bring Canadian culture to life for any visitor. A historic farmers' market and shopping district by day, a favorite gathering place of restaurants and clubs by night is the ByWard Market, just east of Parliament Hill. A historic waterway filled with boaters spring through fall and the world's largest naturally frozen skating rink in winter, the Rideau Canal winds through the heart of Ottawa

before connecting with the Ottawa River through dramatic stepped locks right next to Parliament Hill. Ottawa is a city of celebrations, offering visitors a year-round calendar of parties, festivals and special events.

The Capital's premier performing arts venue, the National Arts Centre, presents a full lineup of music, dance and theatre, plus popular touring acts and shows. Ottawa also has a thriving local theatre scene, including the Great Canadian Theatre Company, Ottawa Little Theatre, The Gladstone and La Nouvelle Scène.

Looking for a top-notch place to stay? Check out the magnificent Brookstreet Hotel in Kanata, about a half hour from Parliament Hill. This luxury property is noted for outstanding dining, incredible entertainment, luxurious accommodations, inspired green initiatives and world class golf and fitness facilities. Be sure to try the Perspectives Restaurant for breakfast, lunch, supper or weekend brunch. The heated outdoor salt-water pool and the area surrounding it truly is a slice of paradise and therefore a big draw in the summer months. The hotel is now completing an impressive \$11 million renovation project, transforming its guestrooms into a haven of luxury and comfort.

Ottawa is also home to the National Hockey League Senators, the Canadian Football League Redblacks as well as pro soccer, basketball and baseball teams.

The culinary scene in Ottawa is in full bloom, with a thriving community of Ottawa chefs and diverse restaurants making names for themselves both at home and abroad. So, let me recommend three top-notch dining establishments in the Byward Market, Starling Restaurant Bar, The Métropolitain Brasserie and Somewhere Dine Bar as well as Cocotte at the Metcalfe Hotel. I am a big breakfast fan, so check out the Wellington Diner, Nate's Deli on Sparks Street and Zola's in the west-end. Each of these places are also open for lunch and dinner. ■

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