AN INTRODUCTION TO
OTTAWA
CANADA’S CAPITAL

OTTAWA FAST FACTS
• Canada’s capital city is located in the province of Ontario at the Québécois border. Flying times: 1 hour east of Toronto, 1 1/2 hours north of New York City, 25 minutes west of Montreal, and 7 hours (direct) from London, England
• Impressive yet intimate metropolitan area of 1.3 million English and French speaking residents and growing multicultural communities
• Attributes: national and historic sites, cultural attractions, a beautiful natural setting supporting year-round recreation and adventure, a relaxed urban rhythm with distinctive neighbourhoods, and a very walkable downtown

EXTRAORDINARY CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS
Rich in cultural treasures and attractions, Ottawa invites visitors to experience the best of Canada all in one place. The Canadian Museum of History (formerly Canadian Museum of Civilization) celebrates Canadian and world cultures. The Grand Hall, on the main level of the museum, houses an exhibition of six Pacific coast First Peoples house façades connected by a shoreline and boardwalk, and the largest indoor collection of totem poles in the world. Housed inside a beautiful heritage building, the Canadian Museum of Nature features awe-inspiring exhibits that bring everything from the ocean to dinosaurs into focus. Beautiful modern galleries, amenities, rental spaces, and a 3D cinema await.

Located in the heart of downtown next to the Rideau Canal, the National Arts Centre is Canada’s premier showcase of the performing arts. The NAC presents full seasons of English Theatre, French Theatre, Dance and Orchestra. In addition to in-house productions, the Centre plays host to variety and Broadway programming plus special festivals.

The National Gallery of Canada, houses the country’s national art collection and hosts outstanding special exhibitions.

MUST-SEE LANDMARK CAPITAL SIGHTS
Famous national landmarks and historic sites greet visitors around every corner in Canada’s capital, and foremost among them is Parliament Hill. It’s the seat of Canada’s federal government and the setting for pomp and celebration including Canada Day (July 1) and the daily Changing of the Guard ceremony in the summer. Parliament offers free daily tours and elevator rides to the top of the soaring Peace Tower for a spectacular 360º view of the city.

Experience the unforgettable Sound and Light Show—a thrilling thematic journey through Canada’s history projected in spectacular detail against the backdrop of the Parliament Buildings, presented nightly in the summer.

The Rideau Canal, Ontario’s only UNESCO World Heritage Site, winds through the heart of Ottawa, and is filled with pleasure boats, canoes and kayaks. In the winter, the Rideau Canal is transformed into the world’s largest ice skating rink (7.8 km/4.8 miles in length)!

View itineraries, presentations, images and videos online.

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URBAN EXPERIENCES
Surprisingly intimate with a very walkable downtown, Ottawa is an urban setting that’s relaxed, friendly and welcoming. The eclectic ByWard Market district just east of Parliament Hill is a visitor favourite: a farmers’ market and shopping district by day, with chic dining, outdoor cafés and lively clubs and pubs by night.
Ottawa’s culinary scene is alive with a community of chefs gaining national and international acclaim and opening innovative restaurants! The Savour Ottawa initiative encourages and promotes the use of locally grown and produced foods and their appearances on local menus.

For a change of pace, the Casino du Lac-Leamy in Gatineau offers exciting gaming and entertainment.

SPORTS, RECREATION & ADVENTURE
Ottawa is a natural for sports and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. May’s Ottawa Race Weekend attracts thousands of top national and international runners and includes a marathon, half marathon, 10K, 5K, family 2K, a kids’ marathon and walkers’ events. During spring, summer and fall, Ottawa has hundreds of kilometers of paved recreational paths that welcome cyclists, inline skaters and runners.
Canada’s capital region is a cycling enthusiast’s dream destination, with over 600 kilometres (370 miles) of recreational pathways linking natural areas, parks, gardens and national sites. Bring your own bike or rent one here and see the capital on two wheels.
The capital’s many waterways are ideal for kayaking, canoeing and boating, and the upper Ottawa River is one of the top 5 white-water rafting rivers in the world. Ottawa has more great golf courses within an easy drive of downtown than any other Canadian city.
In winter, Ottawa is a skier’s delight, with cross-country trails right in the heart of the city, and downhill skiing under an hour’s drive from downtown. Gatineau Park, just across the Ottawa River from downtown Ottawa, is a mecca for cross-country skiing enthusiasts, with over 200 kilometres (124 miles) of groomed trails and heated shelters.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS
Ottawans enjoy festivals all year long!

February – Winterlude
North America’s greatest winter celebration includes ice sculptures, ice skating, snow playground and indoor fun.

Late February to April – Celebrate the sweet Canadian treat of maple syrup.

May – The Canadian Tulip Festival features a million tulips blooming around town.

Late June – TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival features the finest jazz musicians from Canada and around the world.

June 29 – July 1 – Canada Day
A huge celebration of Canada’s birthday on Parliament Hill and throughout downtown.

Early to mid-July – RBC Bluesfest One of the largest music festivals in North America including 6 stages with a very eclectic lineup of top-tier talent.

Late July to early August – Ottawa Chamberfest is the largest international chamber music festival in the world.

Mid-September – City Folk Festival
A four-day celebration of music, dance and visual arts.

Fall – As the leaves turn colour each autumn, Gatineau Park hosts Fall Rhapsody, welcoming hikers, cyclists and casual strollers for nature awareness programming.

Early November – The Ottawa Wine and Food Festival features a full array of wine tastings and kitchen demonstrations.

Other festivals celebrate our multicultural communities, dragon boats, beach volleyball, Pride week, hot air balloons, writers, animation and more.

CONTACT US AT TRAVELTRADE@OTTAWATOURISM.CA
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