



## COZY UP TO CANADA'S NATURAL SIDE

by Josephine Matyas

**A**cross Canada, all roads lead to a camping experience. In a land so vast, with such wilderness at hand, it makes sense that pitching a tent, parking an RV or settling into a lakeside cottage, is a way into the heart of outstanding recreation and breathtaking scenery. The “wow” factor of Canada’s natural surroundings is a route that leads to that once-in-a-lifetime, memorable holiday experience. Many visitors relate to simpler times, when getting away with the family was affordable, with something that appealed to all ages. Camping is about being enveloped by the surroundings, smelling the wildflowers, enjoying a beautiful morning sunrise or watching as stars fill the nighttime sky.

Canada is known around the world for its unspoiled wilderness, sparkling bodies of crystal-clear waters, meandering rivers and an abundance of recreational opportunities for biking, hiking, fishing and just plain relaxing. This fits naturally with a visit to Canada’s parks—the landscape stretches from sea-to-sea-

to-sea, and in that boundless space one can truly find it all: towering mountains, wide grasslands, forests stretching for miles, rocky ocean seashore and the serenity of a pristine rainforest. It can be as quiet and remote as you’d like—check a map for the Arctic or Labrador—or just a stone’s throw from the modern conveniences of the big city. The parklands of Canada fit almost any outdoors travel bill, whether a massive road trip to numerous sites or the simplicity of pitching a tent in one spot.

### THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS A CAMPING SWEET SPOT

Canada’s dramatic landscape is peppered with campsites. Connecting with nature and with the country’s history is always high on the list at Parks Canada locations across the country. Camping is available in one form or another at nearly all of the systems 44 national parks—from easily accessed, front country camping at 28 parks, to backcountry experiences at 40 of the park

locations. Parks Canada's popular **network of oTENTiks**—an A-frame structure that is a cross between a tent and a cabin—is a way to be in the outdoors while having the comfort of a roof overtop and a floor underfoot. Several parks now offer Equipped Campsites for visitors who may not have their own gear or simply want to travel light. The Parks Canada website also includes a Learn to Camp app with recipes, checklists and insider tips. Learn to Camp programs help inexperienced campers get comfortable with the basics of setting up a tent and cooking over a campfire ([www.parkscanada.ca](http://www.parkscanada.ca)).

Each of the 10 provinces and three territories has its own tourism department, dedicated to helping visitors discover the best fit for their camping style.

### THE CAMPING VACATION YOU'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

There are dozens of ways and places to experience a camping holiday. On one end of the spectrum, Canada's provincial and national parks emphasize nature and history with interpretive programs and hiking trails in wilderness settings. However, for travellers who want the conveniences close at hand, a stay at a private campground may be the perfect fit, with facilities from basic sites to resort-style services and amenities.

The country's largest number of private campgrounds is under the umbrella of KOA, a network of properties known for the "KOA Experience" of expansive recreational programs and food facilities. Many KOA campgrounds offer a variety of settings, from traditional forest campsites tucked in the woods, to resort-style services and amenities with Wi-Fi, cable TV, swimming pools and minigolf. The popular KOA Deluxe Cabin experience comes complete with a kitchen, bathroom and linen service for a comfortable camping experience. Select properties have been designated with KOA Kamp Green Recognition for their green campground operations. Many KOA campgrounds are pet-friendly and have off-leash dog parks, an important consideration for those who travel with their four-legged friends.

There is a free online blog with recipes, tips and suggestions from camping experts on topics such as green camping, go-to gadgets, packing, and creating the best RV vacation. A free KOA camping app provides information that can be accessed on the go, with campground details, reservations and driving directions ([www.koa.com](http://www.koa.com)). 🍁



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## 10 UNIQUE WAYS TO CAMP YOUR WAY ACROSS CANADA

- 1 Rogers Pass National Historic Site in Glacier National Park is one of the few places you can camp overnight at a national historic site.
- 2 The Dark Sky Preserves in Jasper National Park and Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, and Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan, are some of the continent's darkest campsites—ideal for stargazing.
- 3 In the Northwest Territories, Ivvavik National Park and Tuktoyaktuk Nogait National Park are fly-in destinations that would appeal to the experienced camper who wants to explore the Arctic's flora and fauna. And Nahanni National Park is especially known for its canoeing routes through wilderness.
- 4 The West Coast Trail in Pacific Rim National Park in British Columbia has backcountry camping in a coastal rainforest setting.
- 5 Hiking trails through the Tablelands at Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland cross over some of the oldest exposed rock on the planet.
- 6 The driving route through Cape Breton Highlands National Park in Nova Scotia is a great road trip route, especially for the RV enthusiast.
- 7 Prince Edward Island National Park is perfect for families, with beautiful beaches and a sandcastle building competition.
- 8 Torngat Mountains National Park in Labrador is an excellent spot to see polar bears, especially along the north Labrador coast. In the spring and winter they travel south on the pack ice.
- 9 Banff and Jasper national parks in Alberta, and Pukaskwa National Park in Ontario, all offer exceptional wilderness and backcountry camping experiences.
- 10 Pristine Kluane National Park in the Yukon beckons outdoorsmen who come to troll the crystal-clear waters for lake trout, Arctic grayling, pike and whitefish. Enjoy hiking, rafting and mountain biking in true backcountry wilderness.