



VIA destinations

GUIDE

fall | winter 2007

Bonne fête Québec!

The provincial capital
turns 400 in 2008

+ HARVEST FESTIVALS COAST TO COAST

WEEKEND GETAWAYS
What to do in Montreal, Ottawa,
Toronto and Vancouver

FAMILY HOLIDAYS
Winter fun for
the whole gang

VIA 
VIA Rail Canada

viarail.ca

A chance to win
a train trip! (see p. 2)



Why indulge yourself when you can get someone to do it for you?

With priority boarding, spacious seating, delicious meals with wine, pay-per-use wireless access to the Internet and a power outlet for your computer, *VIA 1* premium class has plenty to offer those who want a truly satisfying travel experience. But it's the attentive service that'll put a smile on your face and keep it there.

Want some extra treats? Go to viadestinations.ca

This fall, it pays to go to viadestinations.ca, where you'll find a special offer. And while you're there, don't forget to complete our short online survey, which qualifies you for a chance to **win a \$1000 travel credit.**

VIA 1 - Premium-class service between Windsor, Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Québec City.

Visit viadestinations.ca

™ Trademark owned by VIA Rail Canada Inc.

A MORE
HUMAN WAY
TO TRAVEL

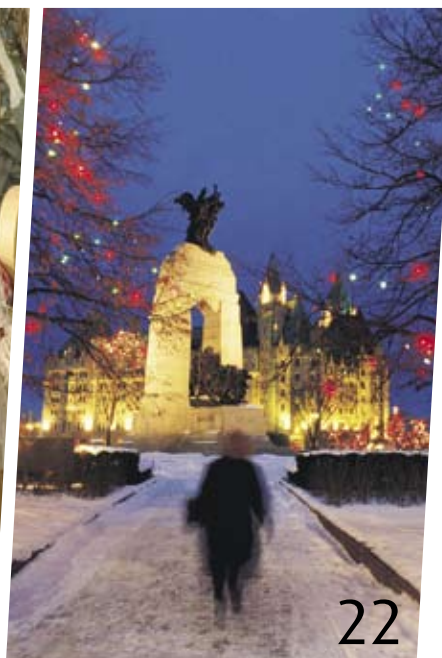

VIA Rail Canada 



10



18



22

QUEBEC CITY 2008

4 Celebrating 400 years of history

The provincial capital is pulling out all the stops for its 400th. We guide you through the high-lights.

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

10 Canada's big cities

Sightseeing, dining, and entertainment in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver.

FALL FESTIVALS

18 Bountiful harvest

Every fall, Canadians celebrate local flavours and colours.

FAMILY VACATIONS

22 Cool weather, hot weekends

Make the most of winter with these hot activities and special events, both indoors and out.



ON THE COVER
PHOTO:
RICHARD CUMMINS / CORBIS

EDITORIAL Publisher Richard Beaudry Editor-in-chief Luc Boulanger Editorial Assistant Laïla Maalouf Translator Matt Sendbuehler Copy Editors Karen Loeb, Matt Sendbuehler Proofreader Robin Williamson **PRODUCTION** Art Director Chantal Levesque Graphic Designer Michèle Cloutier **ADVERTISING** Sales Director Sylvain Venne Coordinator Mélissa Cusson, 514 904-6552 National Sales, Montreal Representatives Manon Beaudry, Joanne Fyen, Marie-Ève Trudel National Sales, Toronto Canadian Primedia Sales Inc. 416 544-4622, ext. 2501, rclark@primediasales.com Representatives Anne Waring, 416 652-9038, ext. 23, anne@mascom.ca, Dennis Threndyle, 416 662-4395, denthren@rogers.com Quebec Sales Office Representative Diane Gagnon, 418 569-0222, productionsmidpile@videotron.ca **PRINTING** Imprimeries Transcontinental Published by Les Éditions Gesca ltée, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gesca ltée. VIA destinations magazine is distributed free of charge to passengers of VIA Rail Canada Inc. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of VIA Rail Canada Inc. | Registration and Copyright National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Québec ISSN 1710-369X | All rights reserved. Contents of VIA destinations magazine cannot be reproduced without the written authorization of Les Éditions Gesca ltée. President André Provencher General Director Richard Beaudry. Les Éditions Gesca, 44 St. Antoine Street West, Montreal (Quebec) H2Y 1J5, 514 904-6556, 1 877 997-4654, viamag@editionsGesca.ca

LES ÉDITIONS
GESCA

VIA Rail Canada

CCAB
CPA WORLDWIDE

Quebec City Enters Its Fifth Century

In 2008, Quebec City will pull out all the stops to mark its 400th anniversary. Most of the festivities are planned for the summer, but the party's gala kickoff happens on New Year's Eve. SYLVIE RUEL

On July 3, 1608, Samuel de Champlain landed near the present-day site of Quebec City to lay the foundations of the first permanent French colony in North America. Four centuries later, Quebec is one of the most beautiful cities on the continent. Once the capital of Lower Canada, and now of Quebec, this city with European charm to spare has done a good job of preserving its heritage. These conservation efforts were rewarded in 1985, when Quebec City's historic district was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

With the 400th anniversary of its founding just around the corner, Quebec will be looking its finest as it welcomes the world. Visitors are sure to be smitten the moment they arrive at the downtown train station. The city and its buildings will be festooned with banners and bunting, and the newly revitalized banks of the St. Lawrence will be revealed. And, of course, there'll be a very big party underway, with activities great and small to be found all over the city throughout the year.

HIGHLIGHTS

The 400th anniversary celebrations will showcase the city's different roles over the years, including those of first French foothold in the Americas, key site in the founding of Canada, and landing point for immigrants. The theme of the festivities is first encounters—between Europe and the Americas, natives and colonists, France and Great Britain.

Kicking off the year-long party will be a major concert in Place d'Youville on December 31, 2007 at 11 p.m., featuring stars from around the world. A 45-minute performance will recap the city's history in theatre, dance, and multimedia. There will of course be fireworks and other visual displays at the stroke of midnight.

Although there will be events all year long, the main celebration will be held from July 3 to 6, 2008. At 11 a.m. on July 3, precisely 400 years after Champlain landed, church bells will toll throughout the city,

Photo: Quebec City region / Claudel Huot





surrounding area, province, and country. Happy anniversary, Quebec! A Solemn Mass at the Basilica will be followed by a procession to the Samuel de Champlain monument, the Freedom of the City ceremony, and a large military parade. The highlight of the afternoon will be a major show, to be attended by dignitaries from around the world, featuring projected images, song, and dance. On the evenings of July 3 and 4, the Quebec City Summer Festival will present two exclusive shows to mark the occasion.

July 5 will be another memorable day: the city will be treated to a colossal urban opera by Danielle Roy, who previously co-produced a similar event with director Franco Dragone. "It will be the largest production of the year in Quebec City," notes Roxane Saint-Pierre, the media relations and tourism promotions manager for the Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec, the body organizing the festivities. The opera will tell the story of the city in four parts, with the urban

landscape and multimedia projections on buildings serving as a set. The production will feature major international street-performance troupes, stars of the performing arts, and the local artistic community. Starting in January, the people of the city will be invited to join creative studios dedicated to the event (choreography, scenery, wardrobe, masks, etc.). "About 1,000 artists and extras from Quebec City will be selected to appear in this massive production," says Ms. Saint-Pierre.

The next day, July 6, thousands of people, including all the players from the Urban Opera, will congregate on the Plains of Abraham. The "family gathering" will be photographed from the air to create a pictorial legacy for future generations.

The evening of August 15 will be another high point. A night-



Quebec Winter
Carnaval



Musée des Beaux-Arts du Québec

Photo: Les Photographes Kedj 2004

time show held on the banks of the river, *The Walking Road*, will pay tribute to the St. Lawrence. Produced by a young Quebec City-based artist, Olivier Dufour, the show revolves around the theme of encounters—the encounter of music and dance, fire and water. A huge floating platform will serve as a dance floor. “This colourful show celebrates our ties to the river as a route for access, entry, and growth,” says Marie-Josée Laurence, senior executive director of the Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec.

The river will be even more prominent than usual in 2008. Before festivities get underway, the banks of the St. Lawrence will be revitalized from the Pont de Québec to downtown through the construction of new infrastructure. A 5-kilometre, \$70-million riverside park and the recreational and heritage facilities at several locations are intended to leave a significant legacy to future generations. “In all, \$400 million will be invested in revitalizing infrastructure along the river,” says Ms. Laurence. “This 400th anniversary is an opportunity to enhance an exceptional environment and give the river back to the people of Quebec City.”

The festivities close on October 19 with an exclusive performance by Cirque du Soleil at the Colisée de Québec. The show will include francophone artists from across the country

and around the world and will celebrate the diversity of the world’s French-speaking cultures. The event coincides with the closing of the 12th Sommet de la francophonie. The 15,000 seats will be given away in draws to be held throughout the year.

THE OFFICIAL HUB: ESPACE 400e

From June through September 2008, Espace 400e, on the shores of bassin Louise in the city’s Old Port, will be the official focal point of the festivities. For 120 days, the site will host non-stop activities, including performances, debates, conferences, lectures, and gatherings. A major interactive exhibition entitled *Québec 2008*, all about human migration, is also scheduled for Espace 400e, and will run until the end of the festivities. “It’s estimated that at least five million people have lived in Quebec City or passed through,” Ms. Laurence notes. “And each one has a story. In a place that sometimes seems like an airport, visitors will discover 400 years of history through the prism of the extraordinary stories of individuals and families.”

From June 20 to July 29, Espace 400e will host *Le Moulin à images*, an outdoor multimedia show by Robert Lepage and his production company, Ex Machina. The gigantic 40-minute

display about the city's history and growth will be shown every day at sunset for 40 days. It will be projected on a mega-screen some 600 metres long by 40 metres tall: the grain elevators that line bassin Louise. The extraordinary creation will be visible from numerous vantage points, including major hotels, the observatory, and cruise ships sailing up the river.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS GET INVOLVED

The city's cultural organizations and institutions will also be putting together a variety of events and activities to commemorate the anniversary. "Around the time of the millennium celebrations, the people were consulted on what should be done for the 400th anniversary, and all the major organizations and other key players expressed a desire to take an active part in this celebration, not just be spectators," says Ms. Laurence. The Quebec Winter Carnaval, for example, will stage two all-new nighttime parades, while a snowboarding competition, the Coupe du monde de surf des neiges de Québec, will hold a spectacular downtown event. Other established events, such as the Grands Feux Loto-Québec fireworks competition, Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France, and Expo Québec will adjust their annual programs to mark the anniversary.

Many cultural institutions also have special events in store. The city's museum of fine arts, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, will present an exclusive exhibition of 275 treasures from the Louvre, as well as a tribute to visual artists with close ties to the city (June 5, 2008 - October 26, 2008). The Musée de la civilisation will contribute with two exhibitions

focusing on city life, including a rooftop extravaganza staged in partnership with Cirque du Soleil director Franco Dragone. The city's opera company is getting in on the act with an operatic version of the hit rock opera *Starmania* by Michel Berger and Luc Plamondon; the production will then tour the world. Plus, on March 15, 2008, the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec will present the entirety of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8 (Symphony of a Thousand)*, performed by 150 musicians and an 850-voice choir. The majestic masterpiece is rarely performed with a full complement of musicians.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Quebec City will also play host to a number of important international events in 2008, and each one will mark the quadricentennial in some way. From May 1 to 18, the city welcomes the 88th annual IIHF World Championship, showcasing the world's 16 best national hockey teams—the first time the tournament will be held in Canada. The city is also the site of the 49th International Eucharistic Congress (June 15 to 22), the 4th World Youth Congress (August 10 to 21), and the 12th Sommet de la francophonie (October 17 to 19).

First Nations will also participate, with the Huron-Wendat Nation serving as host nation. Most events will be held in the community of Wendake, about five minutes from downtown Quebec.

INFORMATION:

Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec
418 648-2008
www.quebec400.qc.ca



GARE DU PALAIS TRAIN STATION

The Palais train station is the downtown Quebec City terminus for VIA Rail and the region's finest urban train station. Built in 1915, it was designed by Montreal architect Edward Prindle in the Château style, which was popularized by the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 20th century. Other examples are found in Vancouver and New Brunswick. Prindle's aim was to create a building in harmony with the city's picturesque setting, French-colonial architecture, and major landmarks. To that end, he looked to the châteaux of France's Loire valley for inspiration.

The building is the city's second most significant of its kind, after the Château Frontenac. Its 8-metre-wide entrance is framed by two turrets. Stained glass panels display the coats of arms of seven major Canadian historical figures, including Montcalm, Wolfe, Frontenac, and Talon, who all had a major impact on the city's history. After being closed in 1975, the station was fully restored and re-opened in 1985; it retains its original interior.



Info: viarail.ca

Other events

JANUARY

Urbanopolis: January 16 to April 19, Musée de la civilisation. An exploration of the main issues facing cities in the future.

Les grands d'aujourd'hui racontent ceux d'hier: In this series of twelve performances, prominent Quebecers celebrate the historical figures who inspired them. October 2007 to November 2008.

Travelling with Samuel de Champlain from Brouage to Quebec: January through October, 2008. This wandering minstrel show revisits key moments from the life of Samuel de Champlain and his journey from Brouage, France to Quebec.

Le duel des fondateurs: This historical show features Samuel de Champlain and Pierre Dugua de Mons duelling for the right to the title of city founder.

FEBRUARY

Pentathlon des neiges de Québec: This unique winter pentathlon takes place from February 21 to 24. Over four days, competitors will gather on the Plains of Abraham and at a new skating rink for cycling, foot-races, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and skating.

Jeux nationaux d'hiver Québec 2008: From February 26 to March 1, over 1,000 athletes will compete in these provincial winter games.

MARCH

Québec vue par le cinéma: From March 20 to 30, the Festival de cinéma des Trois Amériques presents a competition in which students are invited to make a short film about Quebec City and its people. There will also be screenings of some of the classic films that feature the city and its environs.

À Québec pour toujours, la marque de Champlain: Starting March 26 at the Place-Royale interpretive centre, this exhibition highlights Champlain's contributions to the founding of Quebec City, France's first permanent North American colony.

APRIL

Le rendez-vous: Productions Strada, Théâtre Petit Champlain. A unique musical show created by acclaimed composer and world musician Montanaro.

Urban Forests: The city's urban forest association leads guided tours of the area's urban forests in spring, summer, and fall. The organization will also hold a photography competition.

MAY

88th annual IIHF World Championship: From May 1 to 18.

Bose® QuietComfort® Acoustic Noise Cancelling® Headphones

Now you have a choice.

Bose began researching noise reduction technology 29 years ago. Since then, we've been leading the industry in advancing the category we created.

QuietComfort® 3 headphones represent the latest achievement. They rest on your ears rather than surrounding them. And while they are smaller than our highly acclaimed QuietComfort 2 headphones, there is no compromise in noise reduction, sound quality or comfortable fit. So now you have a choice: QC™2 headphones for around-ear use, and QC™3 headphones if you prefer a smaller, on-ear alternative.



Fold-flat design for easy storage.

Hear the difference Bose® technology makes. You will notice a dramatic decrease in engine roar on a plane. And our customers tell us that they use these headphones at home and at the office, too. Although the noise reduction will be more subtle than it is on planes, you should notice



**On-ear
QC™3 headphones**

**Around-ear
QC™2 headphones**

distractions fading softly into the background. You'll enjoy your music with our best-sounding headphones ever.

Try them for 30 days, risk free. Use our Excitement Guarantee to hear the performance for 30 days. Both QC2 and QC3 headphones offer the same total (active plus passive) noise reduction and the same acclaimed audio performance. Your choice should be made on whether you prefer around-the-ear or on-the-ear headphones.

**FREE
shipping
with your
order.**

To receive a FREE information kit, return this coupon today or call 1-800-736-5916, ext. BZ202.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____
HOME PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Mail to: Bose Ltd., 9133 Leslie St., Suite 120, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4N1

Yes, please send me more information about Bose products, including the QuietComfort headphones.

BOSE®
Better sound through research.

©2007 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. Free shipping offer not to be combined with other offers or applied to previous purchases, and subject to change without notice. Risk free refers to 30-day trial only and does not include return shipping. Delivery is subject to product availability.



Restaurant Au Pied de Cochon in Montreal's Plateau

Cool Cities

Feel like chilling out? Head for Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, or Vancouver. These cities have turned so cool, they're hot. With a renaissance in each city's arts and culture—from music to theatre to galleries and museums—they've become the new must-have experiences.

TOBY SALTZMAN

Montreal

Cool city scenes

Just lingering among the locals at an outdoor terrace, you can count on Montreal's contagious *joie de vivre* to put a stylish French swagger in your step. Explore the cobbled enclave of Old Montreal, the site of the original city founded in 1642, where you'll find 19th century factories transformed into modern offices, along with boutique hotels, stylish eateries, and vintage buildings like the 1685 St-Sulpice Seminary. Mid-day, the coolest spots are near the new Cité du Multimédia digital animation studios and communications companies, when the fashionistas spill out to grab lunch at Le Cartet or Cluny Art Bar. Later, you'll find the scenesters clustered in the St. Lawrence waterfront park called the Quays of the Old Port. Hot spots are Café des Éclusiers for martinis and views of sailboats; Bistro Origine for organic meals; and Terrasse Bonsecours for hearty appetizers.

Cool culture

Montreal may be dubbed "the new Seattle" for the intense original rock music born at clubs like Casa Del Popolo or La Sala Rossa, but the city is globally celebrated for the Montreal International Jazz Festival (www.montrealjazzfest.com). Year round, top jazz names appear at the Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill (www.upstairsjazz.com) or The House of Jazz

(www.houseofjazz.ca). To see acrobats training for the mind-boggling antics of Cirque du Soleil, visit the circus school and performing arts pavilion at TOHU (www.tohu.ca).

Cool cuisine

Even cool cats occasionally munch a hot smoked meat sandwich at Schwartz's deli or cool homemade sandwiches at Olive & Gourmando. But for mindblowing meals, they try Toqué!, Au Pied de Cochon, Club Chasse et Pêche, or the new Vauvert in Hôtel St-Paul.

Cool clubs and bars

Some of the liveliest bar and lounge scenes are in chic boutique hotels. Check out the W Hotel Montreal or Hôtel Le Germain. For great martinis, mojitos, and a bite to eat, visit Suite 701 at Hôtel Place d'Armes, one of the coolest hotels in Old Montreal.

Cool Hotels

Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth (right above Central Station): www.fairmont.com/queenelizabeth
 W Hotel: www.whotels.com/montreal
 Hôtel Le St. James: www.hotellestjames.com
 Hôtel Opus: www.opushotel.com
 Hôtel Gault: www.hotelgault.com
 Hôtel Place d'Armes: www.hotelplacedarmes.com
 Hôtel Le Germain: www.hotelgermain.com



Ottawa's Rideau Canal is the world's longest skateway.

Ottawa

Cool city scenes

Ottawa is celebrating its 150th anniversary as Canada's capital with the globe's coolest award: a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for the Rideau Canal. As iconic to the Capital as the majestic Parliament buildings, the 202-kilometre scenic waterway, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary (www.rideau175.org), was the most ambitious engineering project of its time. Spring to fall, joggers and cyclists stream by its shaded banks. Winters, when the canal freezes over, an 8-kilometre swath becomes the world's longest skateway. Year round it's dotted with terraces where you can imbibe the view over a chill Chardonnay or hot latte. The loveliest are behind the National Gallery and the National Arts Centre, or you can nip across the Ottawa River to the Museum of Civilization.

Cool culture

There's always something great going on in Ottawa. The capital's culture thrives with a provocative mix of architecturally important galleries, museums, and arts venues. The glassy edifice of the National Gallery of Canada—a structural masterpiece—is renowned for its permanent collections, but worth revisiting every time it hosts an international exhibit. The angled architecture of the two-year-old Canadian War Museum and the moody exhibits within speak volumes about the chaotic nature of war and the survival of the human spirit. The National Arts Centre is a gem of a venue for the symphony, opera, ballet, jazz, and everything from plays to rock concerts. Across the river, in Gatineau, the artfully curved Museum of Civilization relates the history of Canada

and cultures around the world, starting with the awe-inspiring Grand Hall and its totem poles and coastal-B.C. First Nations houses.

Cool cuisine

Treating international heads of state to superb flavours has long been a labour of love for Ottawa's best chefs. You never know who you may see eating prime bison in the Chateau Laurier's Wilfrid's Restaurant. Overlooking Parliament Hill, it is an elite institution for Canadian cuisine. Equally sumptuous: Le Cordon Bleu Signatures Restaurant and Le Baccara at Casino du Lac Leamy in Gatineau. Among the hottest reservations in town: the Courtyard; Beckta Dining and Wine; and Ei8hteen. Any night the ByWard Market buzzes with trendy eateries; try Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro or Domus Café.

Cool clubs and bars

At the end of the business day, rub shoulders with the cognoscenti at Zoe's Lounge in the Chateau Laurier or the Parliament Pub. Later, try Vineyards Wine bar Bistro or Blue Cactus Bar & Grill.

Cool Hotels

Built as Ottawa's original railway hotel, the grand Fairmont Chateau Laurier (www.fairmont.com/laurier) is famed for hosting royalty and international dignitaries.

ARC The Hotel: www.arcthehotel.com
Hotel Indigo: www.ichotelsgroup.com
Hilton Lac-Leamy: www.hiltonlacleamy.com
Lord Elgin: www.lordelginhotel.ca
Minto Hotel: www.mintosuitehotel.com

The VIA Rail Station is a 15-minute ride to the city centre.

Toronto

Cool city scenes

Toronto is all aglow with a new cultural aura flourishing amidst the eclectic mix of evolutionary architecture and revolutionary new festivals—the Luminato Festival of Arts and Creativity has held its first edition and Nuit Blanche its second—on the heels of its famed Toronto International Film Festival, a magnet for celebrities every September. The revamped cityscape is best seen from the top of the CN Tower, the world's tallest free-standing structure at just over 553 metres. But to feel Torontonians' new local pride, linger a while in a chic neighbourhood establishment in Yorkville, Queen Street West, the Distillery District, Greektown, or Little Italy.

Cool culture

Bloor Street, home to some of the world's most exclusive boutiques, meets Avenue Road at the apex of Toronto's new cultural corridor. Here, architect Daniel Libeskind's awe-inspiring Crystal addition to the original 1912 Royal Ontario Museum juts skyward with luminous glass- and aluminum-clad peaks. Inside the Crystal, massive galleries will showcase exceptional artifacts of Canada's First Nations, China, Japan, and Korea, as well as treasures of art, archaeology, and natural science. Completed at a cost of \$250 million, it is one of the most challenging construction projects in North America for engineering complexity.

Across Avenue Road, the new Gardiner Museum is itself a modernist architectural jewel box, housing more than 2,900 rare works of ceramic art. (By the way, the Gardiner and ROM gift shops are the coolest sources of genuine craft souvenirs.) Heading south, the brand new Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts (home to the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet) is stunning when its floating staircase shimmers through illuminated glass walls. Downtown, the Art Gallery of Ontario is itself a work of art in progress, with the transformative Frank Gehry-designed addition nearing

completion. Nearby, the Ontario College of Art & Design's addition of the Sharp Centre for Design looks like an ingenious pencil box suspended in air on coloured pencils. Cultural hubs are scattered all the way down to Harbourfront Centre (site of literary festivals and events), including theatres from the luxurious Princess of Wales and Royal Alexandra to the historic Canon, where *We Will Rock You* wows crowds with cool musical sets.

Cool cuisine

The coolest new tables in town offer innovative dishes and wonderful views of Toronto's cultural corridor from Jamie Kennedy at the Gardiner and C5 Restaurant at the Royal Ontario Museum. Scenester eateries include Prego della Piazza; Ki Modern Japanese + Bar; Kultura; Lai Wah Heen at the Metropolitan Hotel; Studio Café at the Four Seasons; Susur; Canoe; and, destined to be an instant hotspot when it opens, Mark McEwan's One Restaurant in the new Hazelton Hotel.

Cool clubs and bars

Toronto is a jazz Mecca with live jazz in clubs 365 nights a year, and a dedicated jazz station, Jazz.FM91. Among the coolest spots: Live@theCourthouse; the Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar; Reservoir Lounge; and Opal Jazz Lounge. The coolest bars: the Lobby Bar at the Four Seasons; Tundra at the Toronto Hilton; and Lobby Lounge on Bloor.

Cool Hotels

The Fairmont Royal York Hotel has a direct underground path to VIA Rail's Union Station. Also a few steps from Union Station, the affordable Strathcona Hotel: www.thestrathconahotel.com
Gladstone Hotel: www.gladstonehotel.com
Pantages Suites Hotel & Spa: www.pantageshotel.com
The Drake Hotel: www.thedrakehotel.ca

Downtown Toronto as seen from the CN Tower



Tourist Information

TORONTO: 416 203-2500 / 1 800 363-1990; www.torontotourism.com

MONTREAL: 1 877 266-5687 / 1 877 BONJOUR;
www.tourisme-montreal.org or www.findyourmontreal.com

OTTAWA: 1 800 363-4465; www.ottawatourism.ca

VANCOUVER: 604 683-2000; www.tourismvancouver.com



VIA Rail offers comfortable, stress-free travel to all these cool Canadian cities.
(1 888 842-7245 or viarail.ca)

An aerial photograph of Vancouver's waterfront at sunset. The image shows a dense cluster of modern high-rise apartment buildings with glass facades reflecting the golden light. In the foreground, several sailboats are docked in the water. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the overall scene is vibrant and urban.

Vancouver

Cool city scenes

Snow-capped peaks, blue waters, and glassy highrises are just some of the sights greeting passengers as the train pulls into Vancouver. The coolest way to orient yourself and catch Vancouverites' passion for the outdoors is by cycling or walking along the seawall. Stop along the scenic route for a snack at Coal Harbour, where a hub of upscale eateries includes Cardero's and Lift. Continue to the Stanley Park seawall and detour to the Prospect Point Café for panoramic views before veering toward False Creek, where the Granville Island Market is an abundant source for fresh fruit and sandwiches. Away from the coast, you'll find a sophisticated city with some formerly tawdry pockets on the cusp of change. Gastown, Vancouver's oldest district, is revitalizing with new restaurants and boutiques, including the Inuit Gallery on Cambie Street, an artistic source for sculpture and jewellery, and Inform Interiors on Water Street, a hive of contemporary design. Granville Street has restated its fashion sense with the opening of the sparkling new 137,000-square foot Holt Renfrew store, brimming with haute designer goods. Yaletown has become a trendy hub for cafés and bars.

Cool culture

Vancouver's sophisticated cultural venues are clustered downtown. Garden lovers should not miss the serene beauty of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden. Most live theatre, opera, and ballet occurs at the Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts and at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The Vancouver Art Gallery houses the city's best collections. Unique institutions are scattered through the city.

The Museum of Anthropology at UBC, arguably one of the world's most interesting museums, is worth the drive. Marine enthusiasts will enjoy the Maritime and Sport Fishing museum on Granville Island. Vancouver's literary culture thrives with over 1,500 writers living in British Columbia, including Douglas Coupland, William Gibson, and Evelyn Lau, so it's no surprise the city garners international attention during the Vancouver International Writers Festival held in October.

Cool cuisine

West Coast atmosphere and fusion flavours abound in Vancouver's significant restaurants. Try C Restaurant (www.crestaurant.com) for scrumptious seafood or its sister establishment, Nu Restaurant, for more casual fare. Other notables include West, Lumière, The Salt Tasting Room, Sanafir, and Shiru-Bay Chopstick Café.

Cool clubs and bars

As the breeding ground of Diana Krall and Michael Bublé, it's second nature for Vancouver to cultivate a fantastic music scene. The coolest jazz club is The Cellar. You'll find the hippest bar scenes at the Waterfront, Four Seasons, and Pan Pacific Hotels, as well as George, which serves up both novel and classic cocktails in a stylish, ultra-relaxing setting.

Cool Hotels

Rooms in the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel have vast windows with gorgeous harbour views. www.fairmont.com Opus Hotel is a trendy boutique hotel in Yaletown: www.opushotel.com Wedgewood Hotel and Spa: www.wedgewoodhotel.com

Celebrating Nature's Bounty

From pumpkins and cranberries to sheep and oysters, harvest festivals across Canada celebrate the bounty of the land and the sea. HÉLÈNA KATZ

NOVA SCOTIA

Windsor-West Hants Pumpkin Festival

This is one festival where bigger really is better. Windsor is one of 20 official weigh-off sites in North America for the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth, an annual competition to grow the biggest gourd. The annual weigh-off is being held on October 6, 2007 to see who has the largest pumpkin, squash, and watermelon. The event attracts growers from across Atlantic Canada and as far away as New York State. Last year's winner was a fellow from Quebec with a pumpkin that clocked in at more than 1,000 pounds. The day also features pumpkin carving, pumpkin painting, and pumpkin dessert contests.

If that doesn't float your boat, try watching about 40 people attempt to paddle their personal vegetable crafts 700 metres from one shore of Lake Pezaquid to the other during the festival's annual pumpkin regatta. After parading their decorated, hollowed-out pumpkin watercraft through downtown Windsor on October 14, participants hit the water. Most people use a canoe or kayak paddle, but a few ingenious souls manage to get a little mechanical help, "if you can figure out how to put a motor on your pumpkin," organizer Diana Dill-MacDonald explains.

October 6 and 14

*Windsor, Nova Scotia, 902 798-2728
www.worldsbiggestpumpkins.com*

Kentville Harvest Festival

The population of the Annapolis Valley swells each October with the arrival of the pumpkin people for the Kentville Harvest Festival. These local creations are made of cornstalk and hay, and have a pumpkin for the head. They're the product of a competition held early in the month to honour the big orange vegetable. Each year brings a different theme, such as fairy tales, around which creators must bring to life their pumpkin people. Afterwards, the colourful folks are displayed throughout the town on the lawns of local residents and businesses and sometimes even on the tops of buildings.

October 6 to 28

Kentville, Nova Scotia

www.town.kentville.ns.ca/explorekentville_events_harvest.cfm

NEW BRUNSWICK

Oyster Festival

If there's one thing Acadians know how to harvest, it's seafood. This festival, in a village on the Acadian peninsula, was launched in 1972 to promote oysters from Caraquet Bay. The event is held each Thanksgiving weekend, in the midst of oyster season. Activities include oyster shucking and oyster eating contests, a ball to crown a festival queen, and an oyster supper.

The object of the shucking contest is to open the most oysters within three minutes. The record so far is 63 oysters in the women's category and 83



Harvest festivals



Windsor-West Hants Pumpkin Festival

Photo : Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage



Ulverton Woollen Mill

among the men. After the shucking comes the oyster eating. Contestants must eat eight already-shucked oysters as quickly as possible without using any utensils. Like the Monty Python skit about a place that serves up spam, spam, and more spam, the festival's oyster supper features oysters as both appetizers and the main course. This can include oysters in soup, on the half shell, au gratin, and breaded. The supper, a highlight of the festival, draws about 300 people.

October 4 to 7

Maisonnette, New Brunswick

506 726-2717 / 506 727-4709

www.festivaldeshuitres.com (in French)

QUEBEC

Wool and Lamb Festival

The theme for this event at the Ulverton Woollen Mill in Quebec's Eastern Townships could well be "eat it and wear it." This festival celebrates the different uses for sheep, from wool to main course. Activities include sheep shearing demonstra-

tions, how to spin wool and make clothes, live entertainment, and an exhibit and sale of wool and local food products. There are also meals featuring locally produced lamb, recipes, and a tour of the mill.

Located on the banks of the Ulverton River, the mill dates back to about 1850 when Scottish settlers arrived in the Eastern Townships. Its turbine-powered machines were in use for about a century and today are part of an interpretation centre demonstrating the production methods used during that era. The mill became a provincial historic site in 1977 and was restored in 1982.

October 6 and 7

Ulverton, Quebec, 819 826-3157

www.moulin.ca

ONTARIO

Bala Cranberry Festival

Cranberries—once called craneberry by European settlers who thought its flower looked like the head of a crane—are one of



Cornucopia

Photo: www.insightphotography.com

the few fruits indigenous to Canada. North American aboriginal people often called this small red berry *atokaor* and used them as a fresh, cooked, or dried fruit staple and as a dye for household goods and crafts. European settlers began using them in their diet because the fruit (which proved to be rich in vitamin C) helped them combat scurvy. Today, North America produces about 318,000 tonnes of cranberries a year.

Bala, 90 minutes north of Toronto in cottage country, has one of North America's largest cranberry bogs. The berries are ready to be harvested by the weekend after Thanksgiving. During this fête to the humble cranberry, visitors can take a wagon tour of the marsh, which is several acres in size, to see the red berry being harvested. The event also includes a chance to taste cranberry crepes, participate in or listen to a loon-calling contest, and enjoy live entertainment and a juried craft market.

October 12 to 14

Bala, Ontario, 705 762-1564

www.balacranberryfestival.on.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cornucopia: Whistler's Celebration of Wine and Food

Chefs, sommeliers and restaurateurs visit Whistler for this weekend-long party for foodies. The celebration includes gala tastings, luncheons, elegant winemaker dinners at local restaurants, seminars, and parties. The signature Crush! Gala Grand Tasting tends to sell out quickly. There is also a mini-tasting series on wines. This year's event includes a field trip to a farm with a chef to see where food really comes from. There will also be panels and seminars on wine and cheese with B.C.'s Natural Pastures Cheese Company, and on coffee and chocolate with Victoria-based Rogers' Chocolates.

November 8 to 12

Whistler, B.C., 1 800 WHISTLER

www.whistler.com

www.whistlercornucopia.com

Hot Weekends

Indoor and outdoor activities to fill you with warm feelings throughout the cold season. CAROLE SCHINCK



Photo: National Capital Commission

FESTIVALS, EXHIBITS, AND SHOWS

Halifax

From November 27 to January 13, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* comes to the Neptune Theatre. The musical includes the famous title song, immortalized by the 1954 movie starring Bing Crosby.

www.neptunetheatre.com

Don't miss *A Rockin' Family Christmas*, presented by The Soda Shoppe Gang & The Burke Family. The popular Gang is donating all profits to charity. December 1 and 2, Dalhousie Arts Centre. www.artscentre.dal.ca

At the same venue, Symphony Nova Scotia presents another Christmas classic, *Handel's Messiah*, on December 21 and 22. www.symphonymovascoltia.ca

The Christmas Festival of Trees, November 30 to December 2, is an annual tribute to Nova Scotia's Christmas tree of choice, the balsam fir. Includes the perennial favourite, St. Nick's Wonderland, with its theme-decorated trees. Natural Resources Education Complex, Middle Musquodoboit.

Quebec City

Throughout 2008, the provincial capital will celebrate its 400th anniversary in grand style. The theme: first encounters—between Europe and the Americas, First Nations and colonists, France and England, lovers, residents, and visitors from around the world. The official kickoff happens on December 31, 2007 in Place d'Youville with fireworks and sound and light shows. www.monquebec2008.com

Montreal

The Main Exhibition Greenhouse at the Botanical Garden features the 51st edition of Christmas at the Garden, from December 7 to January 7. A wonderland of colourful plants provides the backdrop for plays and choral, jazz, and classical concerts.

From November 14 to December 23, the Sir George Étienne Cartier National Historic Site hosts the thematic exhibit *A Victorian Christmas*, which includes a theatrical presentation on the origins of various holiday traditions.

www.pc.gc.ca/cartier

Avenue Mont-Royal, in the heart of the city's lively Plateau

neighbourhood, presents *Joyeux Décembre!* from December 8 to 24. The jam-packed calendar includes a torchlight parade, concerts, and more.

www.joyeuxdecembre.com

Ottawa

The ever-popular Christmas Lights Across Canada returns from December 6 to January 6. Like every year, Parliament Hill, major museums, and monuments and attractions on Confederation Boulevard will sparkle with 300,000 multicoloured lights. The route includes Wellington Street, Mackenzie Avenue, Elgin Street, and Sussex Drive in Ottawa; Laurier Street in Gatineau; and the Portage and Alexandra bridges. www.canadascapital.gc.ca

Toronto

More than 22 Toronto neighbourhoods are participating in this year's 41st Cavalcade of Lights, from November 17 to December 31. The illuminated fountains and shimmering trees culminate with the display in Nathan Phillips Square, where you'll find the official City Hall tree and its 100,000 lights, as well as concerts and fireworks shows. www.toronto.ca/special_events

In South Asia, Diwali, the "festival of lights," is a popular occasion for large public gatherings. The Gerrard India Bazaar brings all the colour and pageantry to Toronto from November 9 to 11, with Bollywood movies, henna body art, traditional sweets, and clothing. www.gerrardindiabazaar.com

Dorothy and her friends skip merrily down the Yellow Brick Road in this new theatrical adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre For Young People, November 5 to December 30. www.lktyp.ca



Calcade of Lights (Toronto) Photo: Ontario Tourism

Edmonton

The Festival Of Trees, November 29 to December 2, is simply magical. Over 37,000 people are expected to visit the Shaw Conference Centre to admire the hundred-odd Christmas trees and 150 spectacular new decorations created for the 2007 edition.

www.festivaloftrees.ab.ca

Meanwhile the Bright Nights Winter Family Festival shows off 500 giant displays in Hawrelak Park from November 24 to January 6.

www.festivalcity.ca

Concerts, skating, bonfires, and fireworks are all on the agenda for the New Year's Eve Downtown Festival in Sir Winston Churchill Square and four indoor venues. December 31.

www.eventsedmonton.ca

Calgary

The International Christmas Market returns from November 16 to 25. This holiday craft fair offers a festive atmosphere and 150 exhibitors from Europe, Africa, South America, Indonesia, and Australia.

www.sprucemeadows.com/christmas_market.htm

Vancouver

No fewer than 60,000 people will attend the spectacular annual display of a million and one lights, sparkling along with the music at the Festival of Lights in the VanDusen Botanical Garden, from December 7 to January 1.

www.vandusengarden.org

Bright Nights in Stanley Park will also enchant people of all ages. Countless twinkling lights illuminate the forest, where you can go for a magical train ride. Santa Claus, choirs, and other attractions complete the tradition. November 30 to January 3.

www.vancouver.ca/parks/events/brightnights

WINTER CARNIVALS

There are many carnivals, but there's only one Carnaval. The 54th Quebec City Winter Carnival (February 1 to 17) will

mark the city's 400th anniversary in its own inimitable way. Highlights of this edition include a pair of special night parades featuring big-name artists, multimedia effects, and active participation by the public. www.carnaval.qc.ca The 30th annual Winterlude takes the chill off Ottawa and Gatineau from February 1 to 17. The event's favourites will be back, including skating on the Rideau Canal—now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

www.canadascapital.gc.ca/winterlude

The Fête des neiges de Montréal invites families to come outside and play from January 26 to February 10 during the city's biggest winter festival. "Boule de Neige" and sixty-plus colourful characters will all be there.

www.fetedesneiges.com

Billed as the world's biggest kitchen party, Saint-Boniface, Manitoba's Festival du Voyageur runs from February 15 to 24; this winter, the event spills over into Winnipeg proper. There will be a host of activities and shows in addition to the classic International Snow Sculpting Symposium.

www.festivalvoyageur.mb.ca

Top chefs from Toronto, including Susur Lee, will be the star guests for the culinary portion of Montreal HighLights, February 21 to March 2. The wines of Chile will also be featured, while Quebec City is to receive a special tribute. Performing arts, the festival of lights, the Montreal All-Nighter, and a mini-marathon in the Underground City are also on the calendar. www.montrealenlumiere.com Toronto's WinterCity Festival is back for a fifth year, January 25 to February 7. This edition again features the WOW (Wild On Winter) series of outdoor shows, the Warm-Up series of culinary performances and demonstrations, and Winterlicious (special prix fixe menus offered by fine restaurants).

www.toronto.ca/special_events/wintercity

Edmonton's Ice on Whyte features ice sculptures and winter sports for the whole family. January 18 to 28, McIntyre Park.

www.iceonwhyte.ca

Photo: Tourisme Montréal / Stéphan Poulin

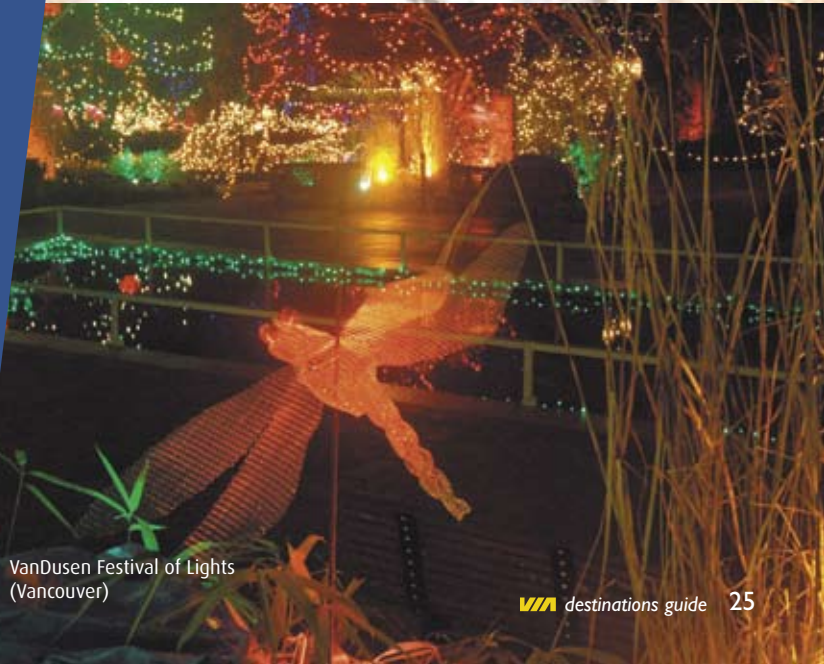


Fête des Neiges (Montreal)



Festival du voyageur (Saint-Boniface)

Photo: Jim Jorgenson



VanDusen Festival of Lights
(Vancouver)



Photo: RMS Titanic Inc.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Essential exhibitions, concerts, and events.

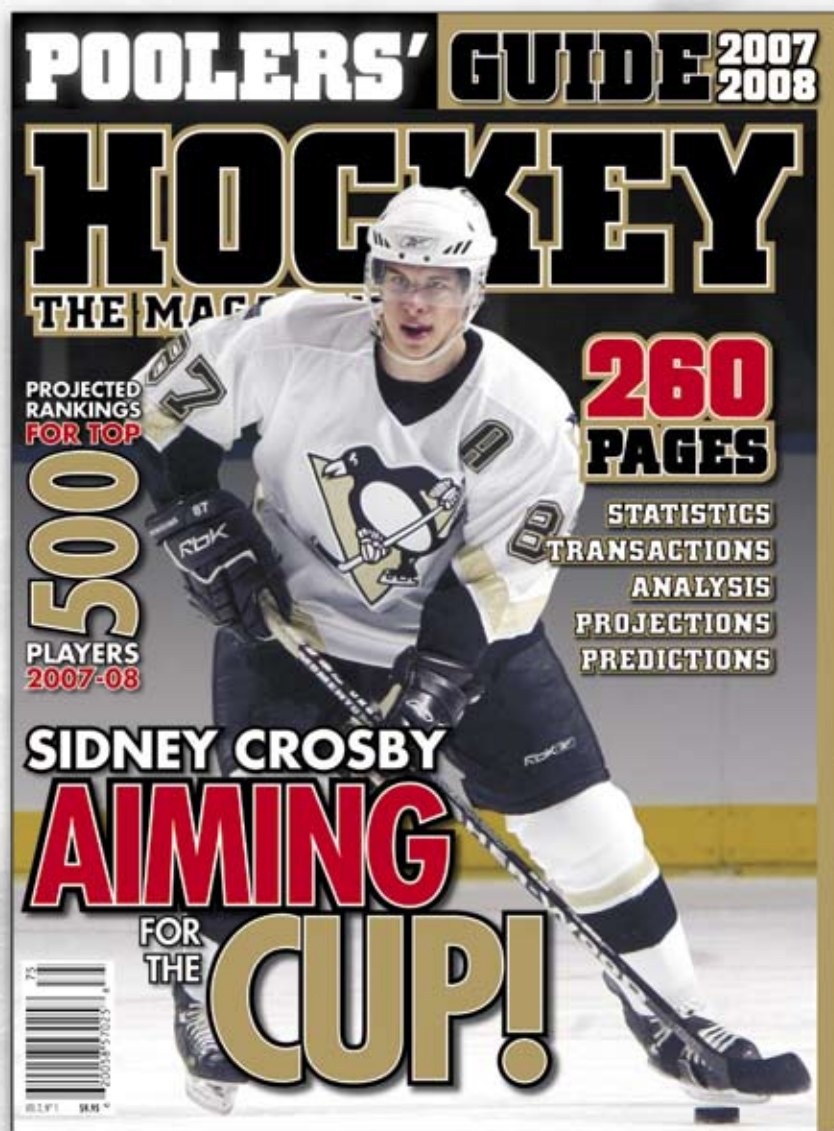
- ▶ **Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition** An intimate look at the terrible shipwreck. Until January 6, Ontario Science Centre, Toronto. www.ontariosciencecentre.ca
- **Georgia O'Keeffe: Nature and Abstraction** An exploration of the career of the great American painter known for her stylized flowers. Vancouver Art Gallery, October 6 to January 13. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca
- **The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair** is the world's largest equestrian, agricultural, horticultural, and canine event of its kind. November 2 to 11, Direct Energy Centre, Toronto. www.royalfair.org
- The **Canadian Aboriginal Festival** features food, culture, and music. Rogers Centre, Toronto, November 30 to December 2. www.CanAb.com
- **Life As Legend: Marilyn Monroe** includes 186 objects and works by 65 artists that shed light on one of the biggest stars of all time. December 15 to February 17, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. www.agns.gov.ns.ca
- **¡Cuba! Art and History from 1868 to Today** reveals the history of emerging Cuban identity as seen through the visual arts, from the second War of Independence to the present day. January 31 to June 8, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. www.mmfa.qc.ca
- **Quebec, A City and its Artists**, February 7 to April 27 is part of the festivities surrounding the city's quadricentennial. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. www.mnba.qc.ca
- **Les Jeux nationaux d'hiver Québec 2008** (Quebec winter games) and **Canadian Special Olympics**, February 26 to March 1, Quebec City. www.monquebec2008.com



viarail.ca
* Amtrak connections available to the United States.
 ™ Trademark owned by VIA Rail Canada Inc.
 ® Registered trademark owned by VIA Rail Canada Inc.

BE QUICK ON YOUR SKATES!

Get the highest selling and most complete POOLERS' GUIDE in Canada!



EXPERTS Analysis

Statistics and
Projections of the
TOP 500 PLAYERS

Who's **HOT?**
Who's **NOT?**
Who'll **FINISH ON TOP?**

Spectacular
PICTURES
and **CHARTS!**

SUBSCRIPTION **1 866 841-5088** editionsgesca.ca

HOCKEYLEMAGAZINE.COM OR CYBERPRESSE.CA/POOL

Experience the West or the East like never before.



Whether you crave the splendour of the Rockies or the warmth of the Maritimes, you can start planning your journey by taking advantage of an incredible offer at viarail.ca/eastwest



Get a chance to win a **\$1,000 travel credit** by taking part in a short online survey.

Visit viarail.ca/eastwest

™ Trademark owned by VIA Rail Canada Inc.

A MORE
HUMAN WAY
TO TRAVEL


VIA Rail Canada