

Oh Canada

PROUD CANADIAN MOMENTS | THE JOYS OF FLY-FISHING | BUTTER TART WAR



Our Home & Native Land

It's sort of odd that a nation so closely associated with snow and ice celebrates its birthday in July. But we're so glad it does! The warmer temperatures allow us to experience everything our country has to offer—whether we're camping close to home or trekking coast to coast. Read on for your guide to making the most of the great Canadian summer.



For The Love Of Camping

YOU AWAKEN IN YOUR TENT JUST AS THE SUN BEGINS TO RISE. YOU STRETCH, INHALE AND LISTEN. NO TRAFFIC, NO MUSIC BLARING. JUST BIRDSONG, AND WOODPECKERS TAPPING AWAY. SUDDENLY, YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO THINK, TO REFLECT, TO IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GREAT CANADIAN OUTDOORS. THIS IS WHY CAMPING STILL MATTERS. **BY COLLEEN FRIESEN**

Go Online: From cookout cuisine to campground must-haves, we share everything you need to know about camping at canadianliving.com/canadiancamping.

It begins with the perfection of morning—that glimmering moment when dawn ascends the tent wall and warms your face. And it ends with a velvet darkness so deep that no city street could achieve it. In between are lungfuls of pine-laced oxygen, blood-pumping jumps into glacial lakes and picnics on mossy rocks.

This is camping.

As Canadians, we are defined by our vast northern lands. We see ourselves as plaid-wearing outdoorsy types, even though we are one of the most urbanized countries in the world and 90 percent of us live no more than 160 kilometres from the U.S. border. Setting out into the Canadian wild, even if only to do car-camping, gives us a chance to reconnect with that cherished Canadian identity. With 44 national parks in the Parks Canada system, and innumerable provincial and municipal parks, we are never far from the perfect antidote to urban stress.

There is a heady sense of accomplishment that comes of erecting your own shelter, having device-free conversations and connecting with friends and family around a crackling fire.

Vancouver resident Hamid Marvasti understands this. Looking for a better future for his sons, Marvasti moved to Canada from Iran in 2006. He'd grown up camping and having forest picnics, and he wanted that same rich outdoor heritage for his children. "It is part of our culture—going to the forest, the river, making a fire," he says.

Marvasti was pleased to find that Parks Canada offered programs he could enrol his sons in, programs that would teach the Canadian approach to camping and give them an understanding of their place in nature. "Not only to be familiar with wildlife, but to be a part of it," he says.

There are loads of scientific studies that prove that immersion in nature is good for you. If the confirmed health benefits of boosted immunity, lowered blood pressure, increased energy, sounder sleep and improved focus were sold in pill form, bottles of those pills would be flying off the shelves.

But don't go camping because it's good for you. Go camping because of how good it makes you feel.

Camping is learning how to hang out—a chance to get dirty and to rediscover the simple art of playing. It's also an opportunity to remember your place in the natural world. You have no idea what a

continuous assault on your senses city life is until you enter the deep silence of a dense wood.

The rushing rhythm of a river has a way of washing away worry and stress. Watching your kids float sticks on a sparkling stream will expand your heart in ways no gym workout can match. And standing atop a mountain after a heart-thumping hike brings a feeling of accomplishment far greater than even your best day at work.

Light has a different quality in the natural world. Candles, a campfire, the moon, the sun—this is honey light, a soft gleam that warms and makes the tension roll from your shoulders.

Waking to birdsong, campfire smoke, the heady aroma of coffee and the crisp, chill air feels primal. Even the comforting patter of rain on the tent roof is a reminder of your connection to the earth.

Food just seems to taste better in the clean outdoor air. Hotdogs and hamburgers are great, but you're only limited by your imagination. You can make pot stickers, pasta, or perhaps Marvasti's go-to Persian favourite, the kebab, which he likes to prepare for his boys at his favourite campsite at Alouette Lake in BC's Golden Ears Provincial Park.

The "true north strong and free" is not just a line in our anthem, nor is it an abstract notion. As Canadians, we are both privileged with and responsible for a great treasure. Immersing yourself in nature gives you just a tiny glimpse of our vast tracts of wilderness. More importantly, it opens your heart and makes you understand that our country *is* our land. Camping gives you a chance to claim your true Canadian heritage. ●

Get outdoors and explore!

Celebrate Canada Day with Parks

Canada (July 1) Enjoy free admission to all Parks Canada sites, including national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.

Participate in the Great Island Sand Castle Competition

(July 19) Grab a bucket and shovel and get ready to build your castle in the sand at Prince Edward Island National Park. Brackley Beach, PEI.

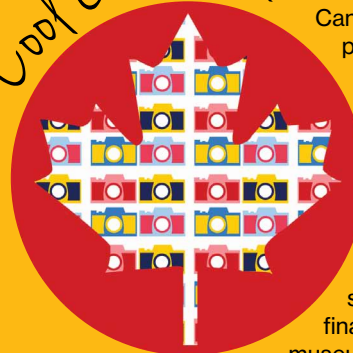
Camp overnight at Fort Langley

National Historic Site Families can bunk down for the night in an oTENTik (part tent, part cabin) in the former Hudson's Bay trading post. Fort Langley, BC.

Visit parksCanada.gc.ca for more information about *Learn to Camp* and other special events.



Cool Canadian



Tim Van Horn is on a journey to unite Canada. Since 2008, the Red Deer, AB, photojournalist has been travelling across Canada in his modified passenger van photographing people in order to make a massive mosaic of our flag for the nation's 150th birthday in 2017. The final image will feature 54,000 Canadians (he's taken 34,500 portraits so far). Having grown up a military kid, Van Horn says he feels a sense of duty to do something meaningful for his country. The final product will be unveiled at a national museum that has yet to be determined. "I'm

hoping to stand the Canadian public in front of this beautiful piece of work and teach them what life looks like here. Hopefully they will see themselves in it." To learn more about the project, visit canadianmosaic.ca.