



STAYING CLOSE TO HOME

STEPHEN SCOURFIELD on the hospitality of the Great White North

When friends turn on you, better friends step in. Given the hostility and acquisitiveness US President Donald Trump has shown towards their country, Canadians are more focused on NOT crossing the border to head south, but travelling in their own country. So we thought we'd both tap into that, and show our support. And we've turned to our Canadian resident writer SUZANNE MORPHET for this **CANADA GUIDE (by locals)**.



Choose your own bucket-list adventure

SUZANNE MORPHET shares highlights to suit every taste

Last year, Canadians made more visits to the US than people from any other country — more than 20 million.

It's safe to say that won't be the case this year with what's being called the Trump Slump.

The dramatic shift in sentiment means Canadians are choosing to vacation at home, and happily so, according to local media.

When a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio show invited listeners to nominate destinations for a Canadian bucket list, it was deluged with more than 2000 entries from across the country.

Filled with natural beauty and home to four national parks and three British Columbia provincial parks, the Canadian Rockies are a perennial favourite. A road trip or train ride from Vancouver to Jasper or Banff gives a grand overview of the region.

If you like an active adventure, CBC Radio listener Rita Komendant suggests paddling the turquoise Bow River. "Showboat in the icy melt as it rushes down from Bow Lake under the gated animal overpasses. Stop way before Banff, take a break, go for lunch," she said.

For a quieter experience in the Rockies, Jane Millen recommends Waterton Lakes National Park on the southern border of Alberta. "It's out of the way enough to keep it less busy than other Canadian Rockies destinations, but not so isolated that you have to carry your supplies on your back," she said.

With British Columbia's long, convoluted coastline, there's a plethora of boat-based fun. Explore the Indigenous-owned islands of Haida Gwaii on the



One of many surfing beaches near Tofino, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Picture: Jeanette Jackson

➤ If there's one place on BC's coast that stands out, for its spectacular beaches, old-growth forests and easy accessibility, it's Tofino on Vancouver Island.

north coast with Outer Shores Expeditions, spot bears and whales in the Great Bear Rainforest on the central coast with Maple Leaf Adventures, or sail the idyllic Gulf Islands on the southern coast with Blue Adventures.

If there's one place on BC's coast that stands out, for its spectacular beaches, old-growth forests and easy accessibility, it's Tofino on Vancouver Island.

Canadian comedian Rick Mercer travelled Canada non-stop for 15 years for his television show Rick Mercer Report and told CBC Radio what it was like to visit Tofino for the first time.

"I woke up at probably five in the morning, left the hotel, walked down on a beach. The sun was coming up. It was a moment I will never forget for the rest of my life. It was the most beautiful thing I think I've ever slapped my eyes on," he said.

Canadian singer-songwriter Sarah McLachlan, who owns a home on Chesterman Beach in Tofino, echoed that first-time awe and wonder when she told Canadian Geographic magazine, "I was like 'Holy crap, this is the most incredible place in the world!'"

Canada's prairie provinces

(Manitoba, Saskatchewan and part of Alberta) offer visitors a very different experience from either the Rockies or the coast.

Long before settlers arrived and introduced a cowboy culture (most famously on display every July at the Calgary Stampede), the Prairies were home to Indigenous people who followed the migratory bison. At Grasslands National Park in southern Saskatchewan you can still savour that earlier time, according to CBC listener Dianne Wilson. "It is remote, stunningly beautiful and serene. . . miles of grasslands. . . huge skies with a multitude of stars, the prairie winds blowing through the grasses, the bison roaming," she said.

If you want to experience a variety of landscapes — mountains, rivers and prairies — as well as both cowboy and Indigenous cultures, head to BC's Cariboo-Chilcotin region. "From crossing the mighty Fraser River, driving through wide-open skies and ranges, by cattle ranches, spotting feral horses in the distance, and seeing the ever-present Coastal mountains on the horizon, this is just the beginning of what this region has to offer," said Emilie English, a

CBC listener in eastern Canada who described the Cariboo-Chilcotin as one of her "soul places".

If you're travelling with children — or even if you're not — Alberta's Badlands offer exciting dinosaur discoveries. The deep gullies and barren land formations along the Red Deer River are rich with fossils, particularly at the UNESCO-designated Dinosaur Provincial Park, where you can take guided tours and see active dig sites. In Drumheller, the Royal Tyrrell Museum houses one of the richest collections of dinosaur specimens in the world.

No bucket list for Canada's west would be complete without the Okanagan Valley, one of the nation's top-producing wine regions and where western Canadians commonly retire to, or enjoy second homes overlooking the valley's many lakes.

Summers are hot and from late July through September, fruit ripens in the countless orchards. One of the simple joys is stopping at unpretentious highway stands and markets to find the juiciest peach or plum.

The old Kettle Valley railway runs through this region and there's no better way to explore the dramatic canyons and historical railway trestles than by cycling the converted tracks. Great Canadian Trails offers self-guided, multi-day tours where you stay in local bed and breakfasts and enjoy the bounty of chef-inspired cuisine along the way.



Maple Leaf Adventures operates expedition-style cruises by small ship on the BC coast, including in the Great Bear Rainforest. Picture: Simon Ager

A dog team races across a frozen lake near Yellowknife.



Northern lights beckon in land of extremes

SUZANNE MORPHET finds inspiration and ideas for those visiting her country's far north

It would be hard to overstate the size or grandeur of Canada's north. The three northern territories combined — Yukon, Northwest Territories, and

Nunavut — make up almost half the country's land mass.

Yet when Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, asked listeners to suggest places in the country that should be on a Canadian bucket list, few mentioned the north — not because it isn't worthy, but because it's a long way from where most of us live, and few roads and planes go there.

That didn't stop Yvonne Kyle from visiting Canada's northernmost national park — Quttinirpaaq — even though it took a full day to fly part way there from Ottawa, followed by a chartered Twin Otter for the last four-hour stretch. Far north of the Arctic Circle, Quttinirpaaq is a land of melting glaciers and infinite horizons. Ms Kyle went on a hiking tour in July, when it was 24-hour daylight and the tundra was in full bloom.

"So there's brilliant bright reds and yellows and purples all over the place," she told CBC.

"You have to watch where you step because all the ground is very soft and there's mosses and lichens and everything... It's just, it's to die for."



Left, camping under the northern lights at Aurora Village in Yellowknife. Below, a red fox at Hudson Bay.



Hudson Bay near Churchill is the polar bear capital of Canada. Pictures: Suzanne Morphet

Perhaps an easier way to see high Arctic landscapes, as well as Inuit communities, is by ship. With global warming shrinking Arctic sea ice, a cruise ship allows you to go ashore in multiple locations, subject to wildly unpredictable Arctic weather, of course.

Adventure Canada has pioneered cruises in the Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, and is known for its Canadian crews, including Inuit cultural educators.

Much further south than



CONTINUED PAGE 14

From Quebec to a water wonderland

SUZANNE MORPHET with ideas for visiting the country's east

As Canadians spurn travelling to the US — we all know why — they're exchanging ideas on their favourite destinations within their country. The country's public broadcaster CBC is even asking listeners to

create and vote on a Canadian bucket list.

Eastern Canada is where the French and British first settled, and where 70 per cent of Canadians now live, many in our two largest cities — Toronto and Montreal.

The east is also where many of us holiday, from Sleeping Giant National Park on the northern shore of Lake Superior to the bountiful beaches and parks of the Atlantic provinces.

Naturally, many of the more than 2000 suggestions CBC Radio received from listeners included much-loved places in this eastern third of the country.

Kristine Day, for instance, who hails from Newfoundland, suggested the small town of Bonavista, in her own province. "It's on the end of a peninsula, jutting right down into the ocean. At the end, there's a gorgeous lighthouse . . . You're literally



surrounded by earth, water, wind and sky," she said.

Ms Day noted Bonavista overlooks "Iceberg Alley", where icebergs arrive most summers from Greenland or the Canadian Arctic. "So you can go and spot really majestic blue and white icebergs. You might even catch one rolling over and crashing into the sea, which is pretty spectacular," she said.

Newfoundland is the province where you'll find Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its rare landscape that includes exposed rocks from the Earth's mantle. CBC listener Lisa Proulx of Nova Scotia recommended it after visiting Newfoundland twice with her mother.

She can't wait to go back, saying "one of the best things about



Kelly's Beach boardwalk. Picture: Parks Canada

cruiseabout.

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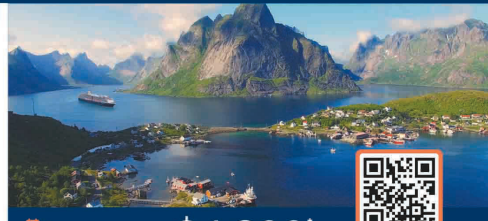
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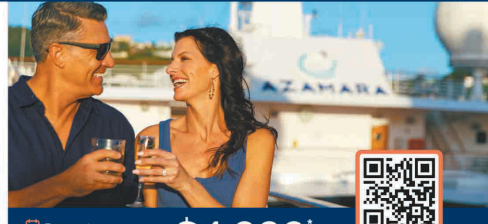
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Paddling in the Avon River in Stratford, Ontario. The small city is best known for its live theatre and music productions. Picture: Destination Stratford

visiting here means enjoying fresh seafood, including lobster, and homegrown farm products.

Another CBC listener recommended Kouchibouguac National Park in New Brunswick. "Standing on the lighthouse looking over the Gulf (of St Lawrence), I truly imagined what it must have been like for Champlain as he sailed by," said Annette Barclay, a French-language teacher who travelled there all the way from Victoria, on Canada's west coast. She wanted to better understand New Brunswick's Acadian history, originating with French settlers in the 1600s. Chief among them was Samuel de Champlain.

For French history and culture, Quebec City may well earn a spot on the bucket list as it boasts the most intact fortified old town north of Mexico, with 400-year-old colonial buildings and cobbled streets.

"It is wonderful seeing a different culture and hearing French being spoken so easily and fluently," wrote Alexandra Esposito, who honeymooned in Quebec City and visits as often as she can.

While there, check out (or into) the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, a turreted hotel built in the style of a Loire Valley chateau.

Another cultural hotspot nominated for the Canadian bucket list is Stratford, Ontario, where live theatre and music are performed from April-October.

"I came here 61 years ago from Vancouver to see the Stratford Shakespearean Festival," said Sharon McKenzie. "And I am still here, with all of our grown-up family living in towns and cities nearby."

And for a place where there's little to do but relax, consider Manitoulin Island, the largest freshwater island in the world. It's so big, there are islands on lakes on the island in Lake Huron. Visitors often rent a cabin on a lake for a week or longer every summer.

CBC Listener Ellie Poirier recommended hiking the Cup and Saucer Trail.

"It looks over the different inland lakes. It looks over the big water that the island is on. It is so gorgeous," she said.

CBC Radio will announce its Canadian bucket list after voting closes on April 30. To find out which 10 destinations made the list, go to cbc.ca/newsinteractives/features/canada-travel-destinations-bucket-list.

Newfoundland and Labrador (is) the people . . . very friendly, welcoming, and always helpful!"

There is also sea kayaking round Norris Point on Bonne Bay in Newfoundland.

Sandra Trask, also of Nova Scotia, nominated Cape Breton Island in her province for the bucket list. "In every area of the island there is something unique and special, with diverse cultural experiences throughout," she said.

The island is perhaps best known for the Cabot Trail, a highway that follows the curved coastline and offers mountain and water views. For Canadian comedian Rick Mercer, who travelled Canada non-stop for 15 years for his television show Rick Mercer Report, "the drive around Cape Breton is mind-blowing. And if you're lucky enough to do it when the leaves are changing, it is truly spectacular".

If you go in October, which is prime leaf-peeping season, time your visit to take in the Celtic Colours International Festival, a lively nine-day celebration of Celtic culture with dozens of concerts and events.

For Amber Jenkins, St Andrews, a small town on the Bay of Fundy in the province of New Brunswick, was an easy pick. The tides in the bay are the largest in the world, with up to 16m difference from low to high tide.

"It was breathtaking," she said, to watch them rise and fall twice each day.

She also recommended driving into the bay — at low tide, of course! — to see the mansion on Ministers Island, which once belonged to the president of Canadian Pacific Railroads and is now a national historic site.


"When you get on the island, it feels so magical . . . everything's just the way it was left," Ms Jenkins said.

Then there's the Kellys Beach boardwalk to stroll in Kouchibouguac National Park in New Brunswick.

Also magical, in my experience, are the Magdalen Islands, better known as Iles de la Madeleine, in the Gulf of St Lawrence. With their red sandstone cliffs and rolling green hills, the landscape captivates at every turn. Islanders live off the land and sea, so




Manitoulin Island cottage. Picture: Suzanne Morphet



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