

# of the BEST

## CANADA ROAD TRIPS

The open road beckons for clients wanting to explore Canada at their own pace, writes **Isobel Turner**

**A**cross Canada's 10 provinces and three territories, one thing is guaranteed: awe-inspiring landscapes you'd expect to find on the front of a postcard.

Whether it's rugged, snow-capped peaks in the west, cascading waterfalls in the east or glistening alpine lakes further south, one of the best ways to explore Canada's most breathtaking scenery is to take to the open road. And with an array of new Canada-bound flight routes from the UK, there's never been a better time for your clients to strap in for an adventure behind the wheel.



### 1 EXPLORE NATURE IN NEWFOUNDLAND

From May 1, WestJet will be flying from Gatwick to St John's three times a week, bringing the charm of Newfoundland and Labrador within easy reach. After touching down in North America's oldest city, sample the unique pancake-doughnut crossover *toutons* and visit the quaint fishing village Quidi Vidi, before setting off to drive the 194-mile Irish Loop. Along the way, nature lovers should keep an eye out for caribou (reindeer) in the iceberg-studded Avalon Peninsula, North America's largest puffin colony in Bay Bulls and Witless Bay, and humpback whales breaching the Atlantic waves.

**Book it:** Frontier Canada's 14-night Lodges and Escapes of Newfoundland self-drive tour starts from £3,350 per person, based on two adults sharing, including accommodation, car hire, some activities and flights departing in May. [frontier-canada.co.uk](http://frontier-canada.co.uk)



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### ENJOY WINE AND WELLNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Start off in Vancouver, then journey through the best of British Columbia's small towns and rugged mountains on a self-drive through the Rockies. Osoyoos, nestled among the Okanagan Valley's sprawling vineyards, is the perfect spot to sample some of Canada's best wines. Next, soak up the scenery in Nelson, a small town flanked by towering peaks and crowned by the Kootenay Lake. After passing through Golden, which is surrounded by six magnificent national parks, recommend your clients indulge in a spa treatment in the idyllic town of Radium Hot Springs, before ending with a stop in Banff.

**Book it:** Premier Holidays' 12-night Rainforest to Rockies self-drive tour starts from £1,999 per person including accommodation, car hire and flights departing October 1.

[premierholidays.co.uk](http://premierholidays.co.uk)



### TOUR THE WONDERS OF THE WEST

To traverse some of western Canada's most impressive landscapes, there's no better starting point than Banff. The country's oldest national park and neighbouring Jasper offer undeniable natural wonders, with mountains, canyons and alpine lakes perfect for hiking and skiing. Continue west and briefly swap the road for the sea to hop on a ferry across to Vancouver Island, where first stop Parksville is synonymous with beach town charm. On the island's west coast, Tofino is a must-visit for clients keen to glimpse bears in their natural habitat, while whales can be spotted with a boat trip from the capital, Victoria.

**Book it:** Prestige Travel's 15-day National Parks and Pacific Coast self-drive tour starts from £9,778 for two adults, including room-only accommodation, car rental, some activities and flights departing June 4.

[prestigetrip.co.uk](http://prestigetrip.co.uk)

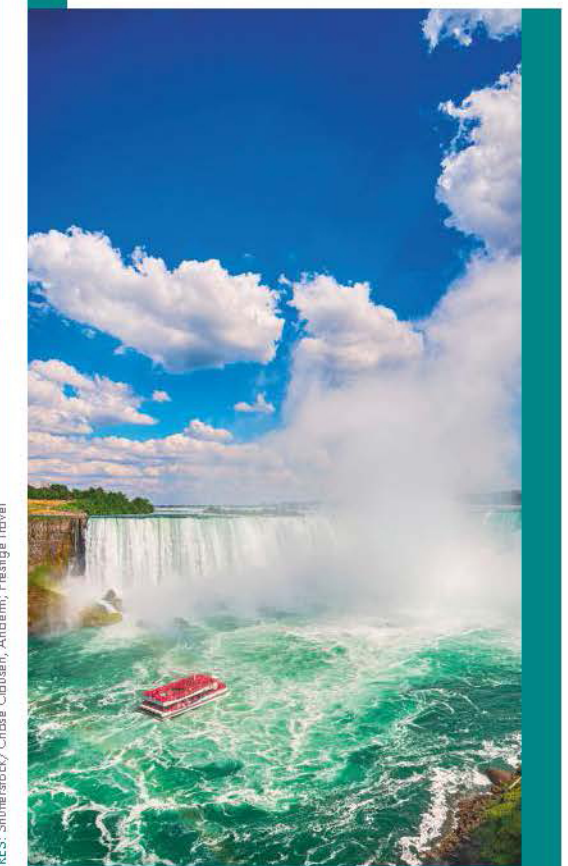
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### SOAK UP THE CITIES OF THE EAST

Cosmopolitan Toronto has many culture-rich neighbourhoods to explore, before hitting the open road and heading for a staple of any eastern Canada itinerary: Niagara Falls. Helicopter and boat tours showcase these majestic falls in all their glory. The journey continues through tree-lined towns before arriving in Ottawa, Canada's capital. In this walkable city, visitors can meander along the Rideau River before heading up Parliament Hill for some unbeatable views. The remainder of the itinerary is big on urban appeal, too, with stops in Montreal and Quebec City.

**Book it:** North America Travel Service has a 14-night Eastern Explorer self-drive starting from £2,865 per person, based on two adults sharing, including accommodation, car hire and flights departing in March.

[northamericatravelservice.co.uk](http://northamericatravelservice.co.uk)



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Chase Clouan, Andam; Prestige Travel





### JOURNEY BACK IN TIME IN ATLANTIC CANADA

A southeast road trip promises a journey through the country's impressive maritime history. Halifax, Nova Scotia's coastal capital, serves as the starting point for this epic journey, and also as the arrival point for another new WestJet service from Edinburgh, which starts on June 20. After uncovering the region's nautical history – including its Titanic links – in Halifax's Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, skirt along the Atlantic coast on the Lighthouse Route. Stop at Peggy's Cove, a picture-perfect fishing village crowned by its much-photographed lighthouse. Then, in Kejimikujik National Park, centuries-old canoe routes formed by the Indigenous Mi'kmaq people provide the perfect channel for exploring. One of the highlights of the trip is the scenic Cabot Trail, boasting more than 180 miles of coastline and forest through the Cape Breton Highlands.

**Book it:** First Class Holidays' 14-day A Taste of the Maritimes self-drive tour starts from £2,579 per person including room-only accommodation, car rental and flights departing May 15. [fcholidays.com](http://fcholidays.com)

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### GET CLOSE TO NATURE IN THE ROCKIES

Sun Peaks is a true winter wonderland in the heart of the Rockies but, once the snow has melted, summertime visitors can explore its rolling hills and wind through the towering pines on foot or on two wheels. Continue southeast to the alpine playground of Whistler, where everything from hiking to gondola rides await. Relaxation is promised year-round, thanks to fresh mountain air and an abundance of wellness facilities. In Vancouver, recommend your clients visit one of many trendy waterfront bars or cycle the 17-mile Seawall to celebrate the end of an epic journey. **Book it:** Kuoni's 11-night Luxury Rockies self-drive tour starts from £3,281 per person including accommodation, car hire and flights departing May 11. [kuoni.co.uk](http://kuoni.co.uk)



PICTURE: Shutterstock/Galina Andrushko



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**EXPLORE THE SHORE IN QUEBEC**

Mont-Tremblant National Park, this itinerary's first stop, has six rivers and more than 400 lakes and streams, so it would be rude not to enjoy the breathtaking landscapes from a canoe. Continue the route to marvel at Lac Saint-Jean, a lake so big it could be an inland sea. It's fed by the spectacular Saguenay Fjord, which is best admired from the charming village of Sainte-Rose-du-Nord. End the journey with a stop at provincial capital Quebec City, where cobbled lanes are flanked by cosy restaurants and quirky boutiques.

**Book it:** Travelpack's 11-night Rolling Homes, Endless Horizons motorhome self-drive tour starts from £919 per person, based on two adults and two under-11s sharing, including one night's B&B accommodation, 10 nights' motorhome hire and flights departing October 1. [travelpack.com](http://travelpack.com)

PICTURE: Shutterstock/Vladim77



"On a self-drive holiday to Canada, clients can set their own pace with wide open, well-signposted roads, safe in the knowledge that a comfortable hotel stay awaits them once they reach their destination. Regardless of which area clients are exploring, self-driving lets them stop for photos or refreshments at their convenience. Long driving distances are more manageable than in the UK and, as most vehicles have satnav, it's easy to navigate the journey. Upon arrival, we recommend spending a few days in the city to acclimatise to the time difference before hitting the open road."

**Denise Hunn, Canada programme manager, Prestige Travel**



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**TAKE A PEEK INTO ALBERTA'S PAST**

Home to three Unesco World Heritage Sites and cultural treasures in abundance, southern Alberta promises to be beautiful and enlightening in equal measure. After passing through wide-open prairies, Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park and Dinosaur Provincial Park offer unique insights into the Indigenous traditions of the Siksika Nation and locally unearthed dinosaur species. Further on, rock art created by First Nations people can be seen at Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park, while a canoe ride across the calm waters of Cameron Lake is the perfect way to explore Waterton Lakes National Park.

**Book it:** Gold Medal's 12-night Discover Southern Alberta motorhome self-drive tour starts from £959 per person, based on three adults sharing, including two nights' B&B accommodation, 10 nights' motorhome hire and flights departing April 29. [goldmedal.co.uk](http://goldmedal.co.uk)