

CHILL



THRILL



CANADA

Chill @ Thrill

Laura French lines up adrenaline-packed adventures with slower-paced alternatives for clients wanting to explore every side of Canada [→](#)

Canada is the stuff of dreams for thrill-seekers the world over, but it's not only adrenaline junkies who'll find something to please here. From watching the aurora borealis colour the sky green to culinary tours, cowboy cookouts and cultural experiences, there's plenty in the way of relaxing activities, too.

We've put these two sides head to head in key destinations across the country to give you a hook to sell its glorious landscapes and cities.

► QUEBEC CITY

Thrill: Quebec City is something of a haven for thrill-seekers, with a string of adventurous activities on hand come summer or winter.

For those heading here in the colder months, suggest Au 1884, a traditional toboggan slide where visitors haul a wooden sled up the ramp before tumbling down an icy track at up to 40mph, views over the snow-covered streets below unfolding as they descend (£1.70 per slide).

Clients coming in February will find plenty more where that came from as the annual Winter Carnival comes to town, bringing ice canoeing, night parades, snow sculptures and more to these historic streets.

But for the ultimate adventure, head 15 minutes out of the city to Montmorency Falls National Park. Hiking, cycling and rock climbing are key draws, but the centrepiece is the 83m frozen-over waterfall, which invites intrepid ice climbers from far and wide to scale its craggy, slippery cliff-face.

Chill: It's not all about the adrenaline here, though. Quebec City's historic quarter makes the perfect backdrop for chilled-out ambles among its stone-built, 17th-century fortifications. Highlights include the Citadelle, a 19th-century fortress, and Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, the city's most iconic hotel, defined by castle-like turrets and tall, pointy spires.

Beyond that there's the Morrin Centre, a former prison now focused on the history of English speakers in Quebec; guests on Luxury Gold's Indulgence in Eastern Canada trip get early-morning access to the cultural centre before it opens to the public.

► THE ROCKIES

Thrill: It's western Canada that's best known for thrills, though. Hiking among the aqua-blue lakes and jagged, snow-dusted peaks near Banff is a no-brainer, but to see these landscapes in a different light, suggest Rat Nest's Cave, just outside the town. Premier Holidays offers a hiking and caving excursion that involves clients abseiling, climbing and crawling through passages deep underground (from £119, departing from Canmore).

Above ground, there are plenty more adventures at the Athabasca Glacier in Jasper National Park, part of the Columbia Icefield. Ice Explorer vehicles take intrepid types out to bump their way along this humungous block of ice, which APT combines with a visit to the Skywalk - a glass-floored, cliff-edge lookout platform - on its 16-day Rockies Odyssey itinerary.



If all this doesn't satisfy, there's only one thing for it - a Harley-Davidson motorcycle tour. APT offers one as an add-on to the above trip, as does Newmarket Holidays on its Rocky Mountaineer tour (from £119 per person), taking daredevils hurtling past bottle-green pine trees and shimmering lakes.

Chill: Banff has plenty to offer on the chill front too - not least horse-riding trails and regular cowboy cookouts. Canadian Affair offers both on its 13-night Western Delights Holiday, taking guests plodding peacefully along the Bow River before they tuck into an authentic Rockies barbecue.

Back in Jasper, you'll find a host of other relaxing activities, including cruises on Maligne Lake and wildlife-spotting opportunities aplenty; Gold Medal offers a three-hour Wildlife Discovery Tour with bears, elk, deer and big-horned sheep on the agenda (prices from £50).

But it's not only about Jasper and Banff. The scenic Thompson Okanagan is the Rockies' premier wine-producing region. Emerald valleys, glacier-fed lakes and rushing waterfalls make up the scenery, making it ideal for laid-back strolls in silent surrounds and tipples fresh from the vineyards. Premier Holidays offers a three-night self-drive in the region from £369, including vineyard visits and wine tasting.

LEFT: Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, Quebec City

ABOVE: Ice climbing, Montmorency Falls National Park

► TORONTO

Thrill: Back east, Toronto beckons. First and foremost, there's the CN Tower, whose futuristic elevators





LEFT:
Harley-Davidson
motorcycle
tour, Jasper



RIGHT:
Sugar
Beach,
Toronto

→ shoot you up to a glass-floored lookout 342m above the ground.

The real attraction for thrill-seekers though is the EdgeWalk, which has you circumventing the outer ring of this needle-like structure, 356 metres in the sky, with nothing but a harness to support you (from £112).

Outside the city, Niagara Falls makes for something of an adventure playground with ziplines, helicopter rides and Hornblower cruises under the crashing plume.

And elsewhere there's Canada's Wonderland, a huge theme park where you'll find rollercoasters, water slides and a soon-to-launch ride that claims to be the tallest, fastest and longest dive rollercoaster in the world. Canadian Affair offers tickets from £29.

Chill: Back in the city, Toronto's plazas, museums and markets make for ideal chill-out territory. Must-sees include the historic Distillery District, where one-off boutiques and indie coffee shops line cobbled streets, and Kensington Market, a bohemian district filled with colourful houses-turned-vintage shops.

Just as worthy a wander is St Lawrence Market, where fresh produce and street-food outlets spill over the aisles. Culinary Adventures offers food tours here as well as in lesser-known districts such as Leslieville, Chinatown and Little India



You circumvent the outer ring of the CN Tower, 356m in the sky, with only a harness for support

for those wanting to immerse themselves.

But the highlight is the waterfront and the 15 Toronto Islands, scattered across Lake Ontario. "These are the main reason I love Toronto," says Malcolm Davies, product destination manager for Funway Holidays. "They're peaceful and car free, with sandy blue-flag beaches, and it's just 15 minutes by ferry from the bustle of downtown."

▶ THE YUKON

Thrill: No list would be complete without mentioning the Yukon – the wild, sparse northern territory that sits within the Arctic Circle.

Dog sledding, ice fishing, snowmobiling, snow-shoeing, tobogganing and more are available from capital Whitehorse – suggest Prestige Holidays' three-night Northern Lights of the Yukon package for those seeking Arctic activities – while kayaking and canoeing on the Yukon River add appeal for those wanting to see its extraordinary

landscapes from the water. Grand American Adventures has an eight-day camping Yukon Canoe Adventure for those serious about their paddling.

But for an even more unforgettable perspective, suggest a glacier flight. Kluane Glacier Air Tours offers plane rides over the Saint Elias Mountains, soaring more than 3,000m high above icy, mountain-clad landscapes that make up the world's largest non-polar icefields (from £155 per person).

Chill: You'd be hard pressed not to disconnect in this vast wilderness, but for added R&R, look to Takhini Hot Pools, a cluster of mineral-rich, outdoor hot springs easily accessible from Whitehorse.

But the most dazzling draw has to be the northern lights. Tours by the likes of Transun, Hayes & Jarvis and Prestige Holidays guide guests in search of this illustrious spectacle. For a truly relaxed way to witness them, suggest the Northern Lights Resort & Spa, available through The Aurora Zone.

Sandwiched between pine forests and mountains, it offers a viewing deck and heated tepee, plus new glass-fronted chalets that offer panoramic views over this impressive display – think swathes of lime-green, white and purple dancing like spirits overhead, right from the comfort of your own bed. No need for Netflix when you've got that to chill with. **TV**

Best of the rest

Vancouver

Ziplining over Grouse Mountain, Zodiac cruises and Capilano Suspension Bridge Park – a series of hanging bridges built into the trees – make Vancouver a hotspot for thrill-seekers. Whale-watching trips, Vancouver Island and strolls in Stanley Park add more relaxed appeal.

Manitoba

Polar-bear safaris and kayaking trips with beluga whales bring adventurers to Churchill, while Winnipeg boasts Thermēa by Nordik Spa-Nature – a collection of outdoor, Scandi-inspired baths set among scenic woodland.

Ottawa

White-water rafting, flights in a Second World War biplane and the Great Canadian Bungee make Ottawa a magnet for adrenaline-seekers. Slower-paced activities include craft brewery tours (there are more than 40 in the city) and cycling food tours with local operator Bike & Bites.



PICTURES: GREAT CANADIAN BUNGEE; LODOE LAURA PHOTOGRAPHY/TOURISM TORONTO; QUEBEC ORIGINAL; SHUTTERS TOCK