

# Sleeping beauty

Wake up to what Canada offers beyond the Rocky Mountains, writes Katie McGonagle

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Nothing beats the Rocky Mountains – for their magnificent scenery, diverse wildlife, exciting adventures and all-round, unadulterated beauty, this western Canadian region deserves its spot at the top of most people's must-see lists.

But what if visitors are missing out on other adventures in their rush to the Rockies? Canada is not only enormous, it's packed full of incredible experiences that are just as worthy of exploration. The rugged coastlines of Atlantic Canada, the natural beauty of the national parks and the towering peaks of its mountain ranges are every bit as impressive.

Whether they're repeat visitors in search of something different,

or first-timers who want to avoid the crowds, check out our alternatives to ever-popular Rocky Mountains escapes.

## THE ALTERNATIVE... NATIONAL PARK

While some dream of staring across the iced-over surface of wintry Lake Louise, or seeing the Maligne Mountains towering over the sparkling cerulean waters of the lake below, the Rocky Mountains national parks aren't the only areas with views to knock your socks off.

Tim Groathead, Canada product executive at Premier Holidays, says: "Newfoundland has some beautiful scenery and great experiences. I would highly



Canada is packed full of incredible experiences just as worthy of exploration as the Rockies

recommend Gros Morne National Park as an alternative to the popular parks in the Rockies. The fjords and wildlife here are simply stunning and very similar to those found in the Rockies.

"Clients can hike the park's trails to the summit of Gros Morne Mountain to admire the

sweeping views of the desert-like Tablelands, or enjoy peaceful fishing villages surrounded by towering cliffs and steep fjords."

Like the Rockies, Gros Morne is a Unesco World Heritage Site, with wildlife including Arctic hares, black bears, lynxes and caribous.

**Book it:** Premier Holidays' 19-night Tides and Parks of Atlantic Canada self-drive tour costs from £2,899, including accommodation, flights and car hire. Agents can earn up to £150 on Canada bookings.

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

## THE ALTERNATIVE... RAIL JOURNEY

It's hard to imagine anything coming close to the epic



**TOP TIP**  
Prestige Holidays has a Canada website with destination guides and agent resources.  
[prestige.canada.co.uk](http://prestige.canada.co.uk)



→ beauty of a rail journey through the Rockies, with the likes of Rocky Mountaineer's Journey through the Clouds and First Passage to the West itineraries revealing one jaw-dropping view after another.

Yet there are plenty of other scenic rail journeys criss-crossing this vast country, including Via Rail's The Ocean from Montreal to Halifax, which sees city skyscrapers give way to green farmlands and forests, before hitting the coastal scenery of the Maritimes.

Railbookers managing director Peter Traynor says: "Apart from the attractive, historic cities of Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax, the overnight journey on Via Rail's The Ocean across the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is a real highlight, with views of hills, lakes, forests, farms and more." **Book it:** Railbookers' eight-day Quebec and the Canadian Maritimes Rail Journey starts at £1,549, including flights from London to Montreal, city sightseeing and Via Rail journey onboard The Ocean. **railbookers.co.uk**

#### ▶ THE ALTERNATIVE... SELF-DRIVE

If the thought of the open road appeals – along with the freedom to take things slow or stop off when you please – suggest a fly-drive. Canada's wide, well-signposted roads make driving a doddle, and there are some spectacular routes to explore.

One of those is the Cabot Trail in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, which traces the coastline from sea level up to a 500m-high vantage point. It's included on First Class Holidays' Wildlife of Atlantic Canada self-drive, combining coastal scenery with the chance of seeing whales, moose and bears along the way.

Product manager Brian Hawe says: "There's more to Canada than mountains and lakes, as any visitor to the stunning Atlantic region will see. As well as some of the most amazing seafood

in the world, visitors will find breathtaking coastal scenery offering some of the highest tides and amazing beaches, and varied wildlife on land and at sea – not forgetting the rich heritage and lively music scene."

**Book it:** First Class Holidays' self-drive round-trip from Halifax starts at £1,445 land-only, including 14 nights' accommodation, intermediate car rental with GPS, two whale-watching cruises, moose and bear-spotting tours, and ferries. **fcholidays.com**

#### ▶ THE ALTERNATIVE... HIKING

The Rockies are a haven for hikers and active travellers keen to immerse themselves in nature, but Albertans and British Columbians aren't the only ones who like to give their boots a good outing.

Travel 2 has a canoeing trip to Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario, which will introduce travellers to the real Canada by water – paddling through the park's lakes looking for beavers, great blue herons and moose – and by land, with forest hikes and a trail to Music Lake.

Mark Henderson, senior product and commercial manager for touring, says: "Algonquin is just over three hours from Toronto, but a world away in terms of landscape and the activities on offer. The tour includes two nights' camping followed by two



“Canada's wide roads make driving a doddle, and there are some spectacular routes to explore

nights staying in the Algonquin Log Cabin. Holidaymakers will travel through outstanding maple valleys, along miles of rivers, and across lakes by canoe."

**Book it:** Travel 2's seven-day Canoe and Log Cabin Tour,

including flights, camping and cabin accommodation plus two hotel nights in Toronto, several meals, and guided canoe and hiking excursions, starts at £1,239. **travel2.com**

#### ▶ THE ALTERNATIVE... WILDLIFE

Desperate to see hulking bears standing in a fast-flowing river, trying to catch salmon midstream? The Rockies are home to outstanding wildlife experiences, some of which you won't find anywhere else, but there are plenty of species to discover elsewhere.

Denise Hunn, Canada manager for Prestige Holidays, says the

wildlife is just as exciting in the Maritimes, where whale and bear-spotting go hand in hand with seeing seals, puffins and other sealife.

She says: "Although the scenery is very different from the Rockies, the spectacular rugged coastline, sandy beaches, small fishing villages, mixed forests and freshwater lakes of Canada's Atlantic region are equally spectacular. The area is also full of history – from Viking settlements to maritime heritage. And then there's the local cuisine, with scallops and lobster to die for!"

Highlights include the seal colony of Kejimikujik Seaside Adjunct, whale-watching trips to Grand Manan, guided moose-spotting from Ludlow, and black-bear-viewing in Kouchibouguac National Park.

**Book it:** Prestige Holidays' 14-night Wildlife of the Maritimes tour starts at £2,998, including Air Canada flights, accommodation and car hire, departing June 16. **prestigecanada.co.uk**

▶ THE ALTERNATIVE... SKI From Sunshine Village to Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, the Rockies abound with places to strap on skis and take to the slopes, but there are other



winter-sports resorts worth knowing about.

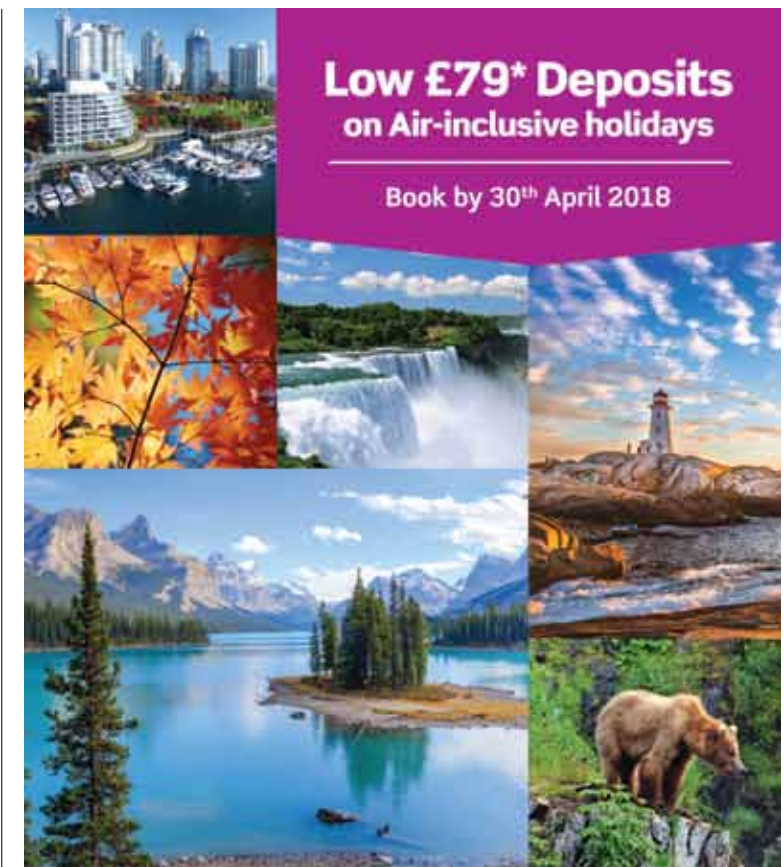
Inghams' Canada product, Zuber Sameja says: "Mont Tremblant has consistently been voted the number-one ski resort in eastern North America by readers of *Ski Magazine*, and it's easy to see why. This picturesque, pedestrianised village has undeniable charm, apparent throughout its attractive hotels and French-influenced eateries and bars.

"Its location in eastern Canada is also a bonus for Brits, as direct flights depart daily from Heathrow to Montreal, taking only six hours. Then it's just a 90-minute transfer to resort. Mont Tremblant is one of the highest peaks in Laurentians National Park and temperatures can reach well below freezing, which ensures excellent snow conditions."

It's suited to intermediate skiers, with a variety of pistes across four mountain faces, and is easily paired with a Montreal city break.

**Book it:** Inghams offers 10 nights' B&B at Homewood Suites by Hilton, from £879 in January 2019, including flights to Montreal and transfers. Lift passes and equipment can be pre-booked through Inghams.

**agents.ingham.co.uk** **TV**



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\*Low deposit of £79pp applies to new bookings made between 30th March and 30th April 2018 (inclusive) only. Exclusions apply, please see our website for details. This offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time.



ABOVE  
LEFT: Mont Tremblant

ABOVE  
RIGHT: The Ocean train

LEFT:  
Algonquin Provincial Park