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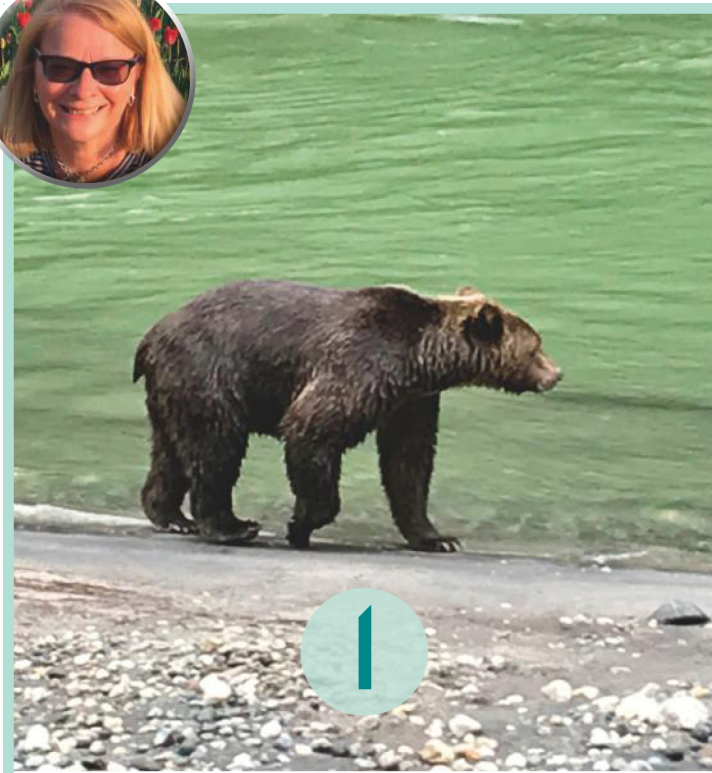
REASONS TO LOVE CANADA

Inspired by Canada Day, **Laura French** asks the trade what makes this country so special

July 1 marks Canada Day, a chance to shine a light on mounties, maple syrup and everything in between with festivities, barbecues and firework displays – or so it would be in a normal year.

This time things are a little different, of course, but there's no less reason to celebrate the diversity, beauty and history of this sprawling country, where soaring peaks and aqua-blue glaciers meet cosmopolitan cities and vibrant Indigenous cultures – and to inspire clients to consider a break here once borders reopen and global travel resumes.

But what is it about the country that really draws people? We asked industry experts to reveal their favourite things about Canada.



1

WILDLIFE

Denise Hunn, director for Canada tour operations, Prestige Holidays: "Growing up in Norfolk, I was used to regularly seeing foxes, deer and pheasants, but my eyes were opened to incredible wildlife when I moved to Alberta. I've seen black bears along Bow Valley Parkway, mountain sheep at Lake Minnewanka, moose at Jasper, mountain goats along the Icefields Parkway and a grizzly bear at Lake Louise. Working in the industry has allowed me many wonderful experiences, including polar bear viewing in Churchill, grizzly bear spotting at Knight Inlet Lodge and whale watching in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec. Along with wildlife, the diverse scenery, cosmopolitan cities, Indigenous culture, eclectic cuisine and exceptional activities all make Canada an incredible place to visit."



2

3 INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Adam Hanmer, trade manager, Destination Canada: "One of the things I love most about the country is the generosity of its people, and since joining Destination Canada, I have really come to appreciate the spirit of the Indigenous people. I've been lucky enough to have spent time with Mike Willie, the owner of Sea Wolf Adventures (seawolfadventures.ca), who is a member of the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis peoples, who have called the west coast of Canada home for millennia. I was given a great welcome to the region and my interest in Indigenous culture was really piqued. One day I hope to get up north to the Aurora Village in the Northwest Territories (auroravillage.com). Sleeping in a tepee, seeing the northern lights and hearing more about Indigenous culture and history would be an honour."



ICEFIELDS PARKWAY

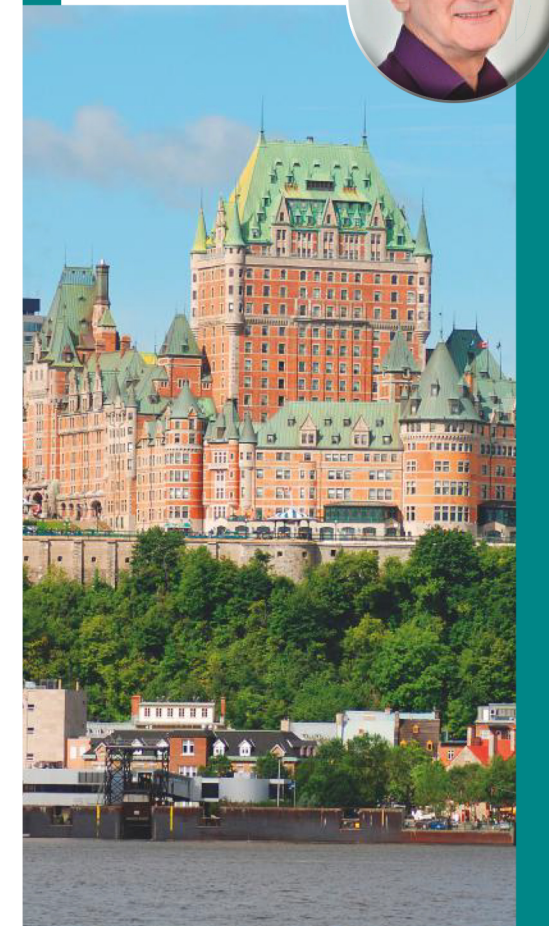
Lee Rogers, product and commercial director, Canadian Affair: "No matter where you go in Canada, you are met with stunning natural scenery, fantastic city life, vibrant cultures and wonderful people. But my favourite region has to be the Rocky Mountains. At Canadian Affair we like to use the Icefields Parkway – the 144-mile highway that meanders through the Rockies – as a mini holiday within a holiday. The roads can be used as transport between Jasper and Lake Louise, and an opportunity to soak up the stunning scenery of mountains, lakes, waterfalls and glaciers. For clients, I'd recommend a stay at the Glacier View Lodge (*pictured*), which is surrounded by bewilderingly beautiful scenery and offers morning and evening tours of the Athabasca Glacier, plus breakfast and dinner, creating an unmissable experience."



4

QUEBEC

Brian Hawe, product manager, First Class Holidays: "They say first impressions count, and for me, the first place I visited and which made a lasting impression was Quebec City (*pictured*). As a Francophile, the resemblance to some cities in France was just remarkable. It's a place like no other in North America, with its history, traditions and some amazing cuisine, and I include in that poutine – that essentially Quebecois snack of French fries topped with gravy and cheese curds that started life in the mid-1950s. Outside the city, there's a wealth of sightseeing and open spaces waiting to be explored, both along the shores of the St Lawrence River and further into the national parks. And my second favourite place, Montreal, is pretty close too."



DESTINATIONS

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ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Andrew Sullivan, destination manager for the Americas, Gold Medal: "One of my favourite experiences is travelling by train through the Rockies and British Columbia – it's a great way to see the region's magnificent landscapes. No high-speed trains here, just an enjoyably slow trundle giving ample time for you to soak up the scenery, spot wildlife and enjoy the service on board. One of my favourite quirky stories, told by one of the Rocky Mountaineer hosts, was about a lady called Doris who waves at the train, double-handed and very enthusiastically, from her house that backs on to the tracks every single day without fail. That's commitment!"

BOOK IT

Gold Medal offers a week in British Columbia from £2,589, including a two-day trip on Rocky Mountaineer, three nights at Banff Caribou Lodge & Spa and three nights at the five-star Sutton Palace Hotel in Vancouver, plus a full-day Explore Banff tour, transfers and flights, departing May 1, 2022. goldmedal.co.uk

First Class Holidays offers a 12-day Splendours of Quebec self-drive taking in Montreal, Quebec City, La Malbaie and Saguenay from £2,279, including whale watching in Tadoussac, eight days' car hire and flights from Gatwick, for travel in 2022. fcholidays.com

top tip

Canadian Affair is hosting a prize giveaway on July 1 to celebrate Canada Day, with goodies and a fam trip spot up for grabs. Find out more at facebook.com/CAFagentsadmin



ONTARIO

Tim Greathead, product manager, Premier Holidays: "My favourite province has to be Ontario – it has it all really. I love the fact you can be 450m up the CN Tower, gazing out at the busy city, Lake Ontario and the islands, and then within two hours be soaked by the almighty spray of Niagara Falls (pictured). Another similar drive will take you to the wilderness of Algonquin Provincial Park, which is especially beautiful when the fall colours are at their best. But as well as being full of amazing experiences, Canada has some of the world's greatest comfort food. Alongside poutine, BeaverTails pastries and, of course, maple syrup – put on pretty much anything – are some of my top recommendations."

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Murat Can Kirmizigul; Glacier View Lodge; Digital-Photo.co.uk; Rocky Mountaineer; Jason van Bruggen