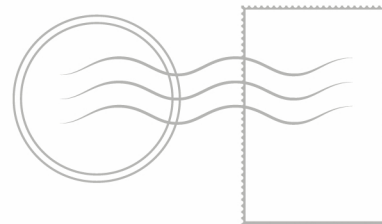


POSTCARD

Ottawa



Indigenous stories are often overlooked when it comes to Canada's history, but a walking tour of the capital is changing all that, finds **Meera Dattani**

"We're standing on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory," says Jaime Morse, our Indigenous Walks tour guide. We're in the heart of the nation's capital where, as is the case in much of Canada, the land that belonged to indigenous people (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) was colonised.

A small plaque marks that fact, a stark contrast to the flamboyant 'Ottawa 2017' sculpture beside it, celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary of confederation. Throughout the walk, Jaime pauses at spots we might otherwise have missed, such as the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument, which honours the 7,000 indigenous Canadians who served the country in war and peacekeeping missions.

This walking tour through Ottawa is one of many experiences addressing how the nation's history is told, both to visitors and its own citizens. Today, indigenous voices, stories and companies are a growing force in Canada's travel industry – there's a long way to go, but it's happening.

Inside the Canadian Museum of History – across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Québec – is the Grand Hall, designed by indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal. It has the world's largest indoor collection of totem poles, it's home to Morning Star by celebrated indigenous artist Alex Janvier, and First Nations stories are woven into its retelling of 15,000 years of history.

Then there's the Canadian War Museum, which covers conflicts involving the First Peoples, and homes in on key figures such as Louis Riel, founder of Manitoba and the Métis spiritual leader. There's a huge collection of indigenous and Inuit art in the spectacular National Gallery of Canada, while the Canadian Museum of Nature shows Inuit and indigenous experiences in everyday life and has the world's largest exhibit about Canada's Arctic people. All these experiences help unpack the complexities of Canada's history. Our tour ends by sailing across the Ottawa River in a traditional dug-out canoe, just as the First Nations people did. **TW**



BOOK IT

Indigenous Walks offers 90-minute tours for a minimum of five people (£12 per person) or group tours for 10 or more (£9 per person), with five routes to choose from. Indigenous Experiences also offers animated living history displays, interactive Pow Wow dance performances, and singing and storytelling by the Ottawa River. indigenewalks.com



FROM TOP: Pow-wow at the Canadian Museum of History, which has the world's largest collection of totem poles

PICTURES: Brendan Burden/Ottawa Tourism; Marie-Louise Deruaz