Nestled at the junction of three scenic rivers and home to Canada’s federal government, Ottawa is considered to be one of the most beautiful capital cities in the world. Its famous Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, becomes the world’s largest natural skating rink in winter. Situated just across the river from the province of Québec, Ottawa is a dynamic environment with strong French and English roots and a rich cultural and ethnic diversity.
WHAT TO DO

CENTENNIAL FLAME ★
Season: year-round.
Located on Parliament Hill, the Centennial Flame commemorates Canada’s 100th anniversary as a Confederation. The flame burns in the centre of a fountain surrounded by the 12 coats of arms of Canada’s provinces and territories, and is the symbol of Canadian unity. The Centennial Flame offers a superb view of the Parliament Buildings. Time to get out your camera!

CHANGING OF THE GUARD ★★
Season: daily from June 24 to August 19, 2019 at 10 a.m. From late June until the end of August, you can enjoy the music and colourful drills of the changing of the guard (much like the one at Buckingham Palace). It begins on Parliament Hill at 10:00 every morning, but be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of time to get a good spot. Best of all, it’s free of charge!

PEACE TOWER ★
Season: year-round.
Built in 1927 in memory of the Canadians who have died in military service, the Peace Tower is in the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings. The soaring 92.2-metre tall stone tower is one of the most widely recognized symbols of Canada. A Canadian flag flies from the flagpole at the apex of the tower. The tower’s observatory offers a bird’s eye view of the region. visitparl.ca/visit-e.html

BOAT CRUISE ON THE OTTAWA RIVER ★★
Season: daily from mid-May to early October, departing at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. From late June to early September, additional departures at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Take a sightseeing cruise on the famous Ottawa River for superb views of Rideau Falls, Parliament Hill and the sumptuous homes of Sussex Drive, including the Prime Minister’s residence. Paul’s Boat Line: 1 Canal Lane, Ottawa 613-225-6781 www.paulsboatline.com

SPARKS STREET MALL ★★
Season: year-round.
Sparks Street is an attractive and thriving pedestrian mall lined with trees and colourful flowerbeds, shops and cafés, located just south of Parliament Hill. It is also home to a wide variety of events and activities throughout the year. www.sparkslive.com

RIDE ON THE RIDEAU CANAL ★★
Season: daily from mid-May to early October (departing at 10 a.m., noon, 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.). From late June to early September, an additional departure is possible daily at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. The Rideau Canal is the heartbeat of Ottawa and an integral part of the lifestyle of its residents. One of the best ways to explore the Canal and its magnificent views of the city is with a sightseeing cruise on its calm waters. You will learn all about the history of Canada’s Capital and its main attractions from your on-board tour guide. Rideau Canal Cruises: 2 Rue Rideau, Ottawa 613-317-3919 www.croisierescanalrideau.ca

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY ★★★
Season: Open year-round, daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (to 6 p.m. in summer).
This museum complex is dedicated to 1,000 years of Canadian history. Learn about the arrival of the Vikings, the art and traditions of Canada’s First Peoples and the country’s 275 ethnic groups. You will have the chance to admire the world’s largest indoor collection of totem poles in the heart of a reproduction of a West Coast tribal village. The museum houses an impressive collection of 5 million artifacts, with a focus on Canadian cultural traditions. Visit the Canadian Children’s Museum for a trip around the world, where you and your children will discover a host of fascinating people and places. The complex also includes an IMAX theatre. 100 Rue Laurier, Gatineau 819-776-7000 www.historymuseum.ca

BYWARD MARKET ★
Season: year-round.
Established in 1826, the ByWard Market (Marché By in French) is one of Canada’s oldest and largest public markets. This quaint market, covered in winter, is home to farmers with their fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables throughout the warm months, and local artisans and specialty food shops year-round. The area also features many cafés, restaurants, boutiques and tea shops, as well as a dynamic night life! www.byward-market.com

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★ Noteworthy ★★ Worth the detour ★★★ Must see
FESTIVALS

Canadian tulip festival
**Dates:** May 10 to 20, 2019
What began with a gift from the Netherlands as a symbol of international friendship quickly blossomed into one of the most celebrated festivals in Canada and the largest tulip festival in the world. Ottawa, with its official flower, the tulip, has become the tulip capital of North America. The highest concentration of tulips can be viewed in Commissioners Park, where some 300,000 flowers bloom. A shuttle service follows the Tulip Route, allowing visitors to admire the colourful tulip beds and spectacular gardens along the canal. www.tulipfestival.ca

Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival
**Dates:** June 20 to 23, 2019
Ottawa’s Dragon Boat Festival is the largest of its kind in North America. The festival takes place at Mooney’s Bay Park. About 200 teams made up of some 5,000 paddlers compete in different race categories. More than 70,000 spectators enjoy a wide range of on-site cultural presentations, concerts and family activities. www.dragonboat.net

Ottawa Bluesfest
**Dates:** July 4 to 14, 2019
RBC Ottawa Bluesfest is one of the top ten music festivals in the world, according to Billboard Magazine. It is a multi-staged, two-week music showcase featuring some of the best talent available on the planet. Blues, R&B, rock, pop and much more. www.ottawabluesfest.ca

Casino du Lac-Leamy Sound of Light
**Dates:** August 10 to 24, 2019 (Saturdays and Wednesdays)
The Casino du Lac-Leamy Sound of Light is one of the largest fireworks competitions in Canada. Watch the sky over the lovely shores of Leamy Lake light up in a dazzling pyromusical display. Magical moments, colourful lights, music and entertainment combine to create a fun atmosphere that will appeal to the whole family. www.feux.qc.ca
WHERE TO EAT

1. **PLAY FOOD & WINE ($$$)**
A modern, small-plates restaurant that serves full appetizer-sized portions of market-driven cuisine at reasonable prices. A large selection of sweet and savory dishes, charcuterie and cheeses, with the perfect wine-by-the glass to accompany them. The chefs use local, sustainable and seasonal products where possible, and believe in supporting area farmers as much as they can.
Open for lunch Monday-Friday from noon to 2 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 3:30 p.m.
Open for dinner Monday from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday-Saturday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Also open Sundays from noon to 9:30 p.m.
1 YORK STREET, OTTAWA
613-667-9207 / PLAYFOOD.CA

2. **FISH MARKET ($-$-$$)**
One of Ottawa’s first and most popular fresh fish & seafood restaurant, serving locals and tourists since 1979. The menu includes Nova Scotia lobster, Alaska crab and Prince Edward Island mussels.
Open daily for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and evenings Sunday-Thursday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday-Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
54 YORK STREET, OTTAWA
613-241-3474 / FISHMARKET.CA

3. **BECKTA DINING & WINE ($$$)**
Renowned Ottawa chef Stephen Beckta has three restaurants, including the Beckta Dining & Wine Bar. You will fall in love with the modern, seasonal cuisine, always prepared from local and organic products. Attentive and refined service and a lovely ambiance.
Open Monday-Saturday from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
150 ELGIN STREET, OTTAWA
613-238-7063 / BECKTA.COM

4. **TOWN ($-$-$$$)**
Their slogan, “Town loves you and wants you to be happy”, says it all! Creative cuisine made with fresh locally-sourced ingredients, accompanied by good music, a warm atmosphere and excellent service, at a reasonable price.
Open daily from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. They also offer a late-night menu, available between 11 p.m. and closing time!
10 YORK STREET, OTTAWA
613-234-0907 / OZKAFE.COM

5. **OZ KAFE ($-$-$$$)**
Vibrant, fresh, unpretentious and simply delicious. The ambiance is warm and the food is never disappointing. The menu with its five or six meal choices is eclectic and features a variety of local products.
Open daily from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. They also offer a late-night menu, available between 11 p.m. and closing time!
10 YORK STREET, OTTAWA
613-234-0907 / OZKAFE.COM

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★ Noteworthy  ★★ Worth the detour  ★★★ Must see