

Day Tripping. Local Travel.  
Call it what you want . . .

More and more people  
are discovering the joys of  
vacationing closer to home.

**Ottawa Road Trips: Your 100-Km Getaway Guide** is a comprehensive guide to day-tripping around Eastern Ontario and the Outaouais. From the Mill of Kintail in Almonte and a great place to kayak in Renfrew to the log-palace splendour of Fairmont Le Château Montebello, the charming boutiques of Merrickville and a quiet picnic spot near Rockland, this book is your go-to resource for travelling around the National Capital Region and beyond.

Starting from the base of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill, the book is organized by distance, making it easy to plan any day trip — from a one-hour cycling excursion to a full-on car trek. Or use it to plan a theme trip — Girls' Day Out; Historic Taverns; Gardens of Eastern Ontario.

Author **Laura Byrne Paquet** has written the popular **Ottawa Road Trips** (<https://ottawaroadtrips.com>) blog since 2014, and these are her favourite local destinations.

Many are accessible to both cyclists and motorists. None are more than 100 kilometres away. All are worth the trip.

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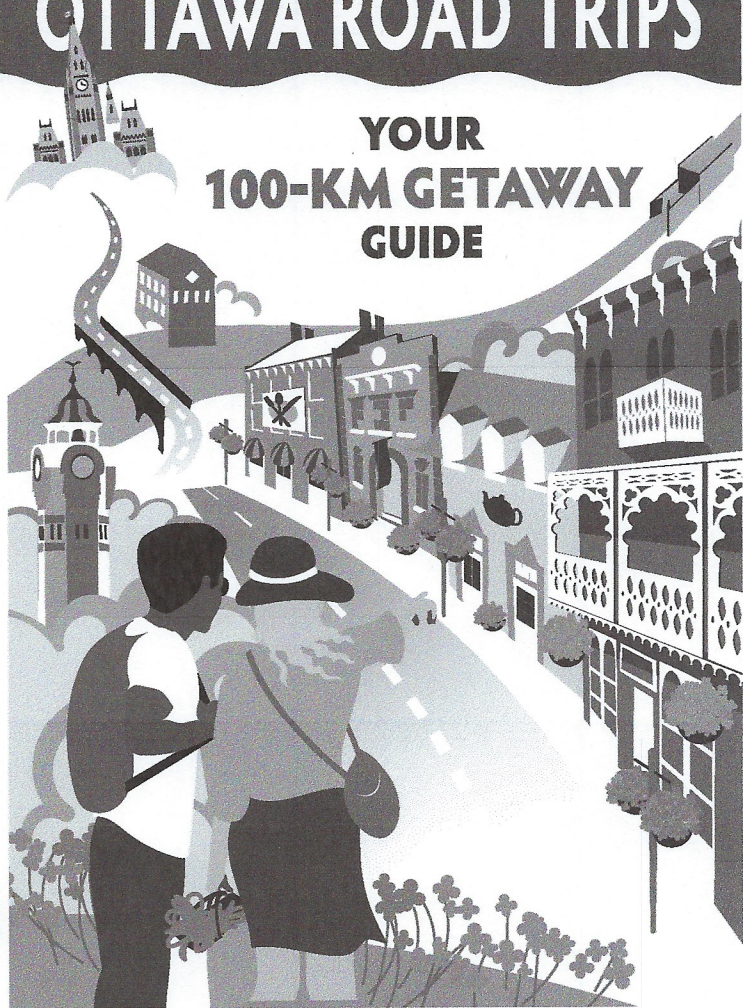
LAURA BYRNE PAQUET

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# OTTAWA ROAD TRIPS

YOUR  
100-KM GETAWAY  
GUIDE



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# CONTENTS

---

Introduction . . . . . ix	<b>50 KM . . . . . 101</b>
Acknowledgments . . . . . xi	Southern Prescott-Russell . . . 102 (Russell, Embrun, St. Albert, Casselman)
<b>2 KM . . . . . 1</b>	Rockland to Plantagenet . . . 107
ByWard Market . . . . . 2	North Gower to Winchester . 110
Centretown . . . . . 8	<b>60 KM . . . . . 113</b>
Hull . . . . . 12	Mississippi Mills . . . . . 114 (Almonte and Pakenham)
Sandy Hill . . . . . 18	Carleton Place . . . . . 121
<b>5 KM . . . . . 21</b>	<b>70 KM . . . . . 127</b>
Little Italy, Chinatown and Dows Lake . . . . . 22	Arnprior, White Lake and Burnstown . . . . . 128
New Edinburgh–Lindenlea . . 28	Kemptville and North Grenville . . . . . 135
Old Ottawa South . . . . . 34	<b>80 KM . . . . . 141</b>
The Glebe . . . . . 40	Morrisburg . . . . . 142
Vanier . . . . . 46	Smiths Falls . . . . . 145
<b>10 KM . . . . . 51</b>	<b>90 KM . . . . . 151</b>
Wellington West and Hintonburg . . . . . 52	Merrickville . . . . . 152
Westboro . . . . . 57	Montebello . . . . . 157
<b>20 KM . . . . . 63</b>	Perth . . . . . 163
Aylmer . . . . . 64	<b>100 KM . . . . . 169</b>
Britannia . . . . . 67	Prescott . . . . . 170
Chelsea . . . . . 70	Renfrew . . . . . 173
<b>30 KM . . . . . 77</b>	Vankleek Hill . . . . . 177
Cumberland . . . . . 78	Your Tour Guide . . . . . 183
Manotick . . . . . 81	
Navan to Edwards . . . . . 86	
<b>40 KM . . . . . 89</b>	
Carp to Richmond . . . . . 90	
Wakefield . . . . . 95	

## Synopsis

### **Ottawa Road Trips: Your 100-km Getaway Guide**

**By Laura Byrne Paquet**

People often ask me why I started my website, Ottawa Road Trips, in 2014. Always, my answer is the same: I love this region, and I love sharing that enthusiasm with like-minded people.

Ottawa, Eastern Ontario and the Outaouais are fascinating, complex places. This is the land where the Anishinaabe made offerings of tobacco to the roaring Chaudière Falls. Where Samuel de Champlain sought furs and fame. Where lumberman Big Joe Mufferaw (né Joseph Montferrand) became a 19th-century folk hero. Where 1950s Ottawa mayor Charlotte Whitton dared to ream out a Russian ambassador at the height of the Cold War. Where a railway baron tossed \$100 bills out of his office window to random passersby. Where a formerly enslaved U.S. Civil War veteran taught himself to be an architect. Where a group of villagers decided to name their community after a Mexican general.

Explore it today and you'll find Canada's highest bungee jump and one of the country's largest log buildings. You'll discover an aquatic maze you can explore by pedal boat and an urban sugarbush established by Catholic priests. You can scuba dive to a 19th-century shipwreck, sip rare wines with one of the world's top sommeliers, dodge bats in a huge cave system or chase your kids through a corn maze.

And you can do it all within 100 kilometres of Parliament Hill.

Along the way, you can eat and drink like royalty. Lavender honey, apple cider, chocolate croissants, Nigerian-style barbecue, craft beer, a cocktail that comes in its own tiny glass cabinet—you name it, you can have it.

I'm passionate about the idea that we all need to understand our surroundings—the landscapes, the history, the farmers, the ecology, the artists and poets and musicians—to understand our place in that world. With knowledge comes respect. And if you can acquire that knowledge by exploring on foot, or by bike, bus, train or car, I'm delighted to help you do that.

Each chapter of *Ottawa Road Trips: Your 100-km Getaway Guide* focuses on a particular community or neighbourhood, and includes tips on things to see, do and eat. Restaurants, shops, hiking trails, museums, paddling spots, farmers' markets, historic sites and quirky trivia—the book includes all that and more. The chapters are arranged in order of their distance from Parliament Hill. Just pop this book in your glove compartment and hit the road.



**WHEN IT COMES TO** Lanark County towns, Carleton Place is like the shy high school girl who hangs around in the background while her flashier friends get all the attention. Day trippers flock to nearby Perth and Almonte for river views, heritage stone buildings, cute shops and great food, often driving right through Carleton Place along the way. True, CP doesn't have quite as many stone buildings (although it does have a gorgeous town hall). It doesn't have quite as many gift shops. It doesn't attract quite as many Hallmark Christmas movie directors.

What it does do, though, is slowly charm the thoughtful visitor. Just like the stereotypical wallflower, Carleton Place has a lot of heart and a great personality, once you get to know it. And because CP been a little slower than other nearby communities to catch the gentrification wave, it has recently attracted a small wave of entrepreneurs looking for good opportunities.

A group of guys who met while working at Ottawa's Wellington Gastropub took over a one-time car dealership and opened Stalwart Brewing Company in 2015. The next year, chef Ian Carswell launched his destination restaurant, Black Tartan Kitchen, a few blocks away. The year after that, Rohit Gupta opened Braumeister Brewing Company at the opposite end of downtown. And around the same time, a partnership including Ottawa restaurateur Rod Scribner, as well as Almonte wedding venue owners Janice Mathers and Joel Schramek, bought a Victorian building on CP's main drag, poured a whack of money into it and created the opulent Grand Hotel.

Today, Carleton Place is a wonderful mix of trendy new places and old favourites. It feels like a *real* community, not a town designed for tourists.



Mississippi River, Carleton Place

Visiting with kids? A great place to let them blow off steam is **Riverside Park** (175 John Street), where you'll find a beach on the Mississippi River, boat launches, play structures, picnic tables and a splash pad. Put a canoe or kayak in the water here and you'll be following in the wake of a long line of paddlers; the nearby **Carleton Place Canoe Club** (179 John Street) dates back to 1893 and is the oldest continuously operating such club in Canada.

If you'd rather hike beside the river than paddle it, pick up the **Rotary Centennial Trail** near the McNeely Avenue Bridge for a gentle seven-kilometre ramble along trails and country roads to the village of Appleton.

One of CP's biggest annual events is the **Lambs Down Park Festival** (June). It celebrates Carleton Place's status as the biggest lamb's wool distribution hub in Canada (who knew?) with sheep-shearing demonstrations, a pancake breakfast, a beer tent, live music and more. Other popular events include the **Bridge Street Summer Fest** (August) and **Pumpkinfest** (October).

Have I sold you? If so, hop in the car for a short drive from Ottawa and check out what CP has to offer.

## SHOPPING

Creative types will likely head straight to the **Real Wool Shop** (142 Franktown Road) where, naturally enough, you can buy many, many brands of yarn, including Opal, West Yorkshire Spinners, and Briggs & Little. The store sells much more than wool, though, including moccasins, medical sheepskin products, bedding, baby toys, skin creams and casual clothes.

Another draw for crafters is **The PickleDish Quilt Shop and Studio** (24 Lake Avenue West), housed in a grand old mansion and brimming with quilting fabrics and equipment.

The **Queens Crafters and Antiques Market** (142 Bridge Street) is pretty much impossible to classify. Sisters Donna Carpenter and Dianna Brydges-Lachapelle run it as a shared space for a wide range of local makers and vendors, so you never know what you might find: vintage vinyl, CBD-infused body lotion, crocheted slippers, antique boxing gloves, folk art, fabric-covered journals, greeting cards, retro Corningware....really, just drop by and see what's new on the ever-changing shelves.

Similarly hard to pin down with a single label is **Wisteria of Carleton Place** (62 Bridge Street), which sells new housewares—including bedding, ceramics and throw cushions—as well as jewellery, accessories (check out the funky umbrellas) and consignment clothing.



**Black Tartan Kitchen,  
Ian Carswell**

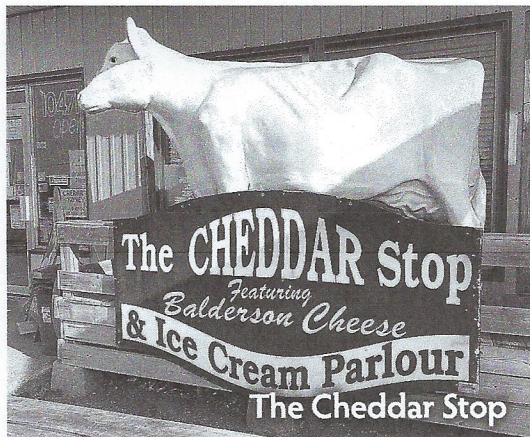
## FOOD AND DRINK

**Black Tartan Kitchen** (132 Bridge Street) is one of my favourite restos in Eastern Ontario. Chef Ian Carswell—whose work has taken him to places as diverse as a Michelin-starred restaurant in Helsinki, Ottawa's Absinthe Cafe and the National Gallery of Canada—creates inventive

bistro specialties with fresh local ingredients. His venison carpaccio, accented with toasted buckwheat and Mighty Micro sprouts, even made a believer out of this game meat hater.

A Carleton Place icon since 1997, the homey **Good Food Company** (31 Bridge Street) specializes in internationally inspired light fare (frittatas, crepes, soups) and house-made desserts. Like many CP restaurateurs, owner Petra Graber serves up lots of local products, such as java from Fluid Solar Coffee Roasters in Clayton, cage-free eggs from Bekings Poultry Farm in Oxford Station and vodka from Almonte's Dairy Distillery. Make sure to come early in the day, as it's open for breakfast, brunch and lunch, but not dinner.

The **Smith & Barrel Pub** at the Grand Hotel (7 Bridge Street) feels like an historic English pub as redecorated by an urbane Martha Stewart—think patterned wallpaper, dark wood and multiple chandeliers, along with chairs upholstered in brocade and leather. Despite the traditional feel, the menu leans toward modern “gastropub” dishes, such as poke, charcuterie and Korean shrimp—along with pastas, burgers and steak frites.



Other Carleton Place restaurants to consider include **The Boulton House** (35 Mill Street), housed in an 1820s mill; **Sagar Indian Cuisine** (156 Bridge Street), where the service is kind and the butter chicken is delish; and the **Waterfront Gastropub** (12 Bell Street), which offers a big patio overlooking the Mississippi River.

Carleton Place can also slake your thirst. If, like me, you like your beers on the slightly sweet side, I can highly recommend Big Papa at the **Stalwart Brewing Company** (10 High Street). “The Big Papa pale ale has some peach and apricot in it, but it’s not your typical fruit beer—it’s definitely a pale ale first,” Adam Newlands, one of Stalwart’s co-owners, says. Not a fan of sweet? No worries; the brewery makes a wide range of other beers, from a light blonde to a chocolate porter and a double IPA.

The concept for **Braumeister Brewing Company** (19 Moore Street) was born when founder Rohit Gupta moved from Ottawa to Austria to teach high school. Captivated by the warm camaraderie at Austrian beer gardens and eager to replicate the experience back home, he decided Carleton Place was a great place to try the concept.

Pop into the **Cheddar Stop** (10471 Highway 7) for cheese of all sorts, as well as local pies, honey, maple syrup and more.

And finally, if you’d like to sample lots of different places in a single day, Cathy Reside offers excellent tours of both Carleton Place and Almonte through her walking tour firm, **The Good Food Tour** (no relation to the Good Food Company).





## LOCAL ATTRACTION

Charles Schultz and *Peanuts* aside, it wasn't Snoopy who shot down Manfred von Richthofen, the First World War German fighter pilot better known as the Red Baron. According to the Royal Air Force (RAF), it was actually Canadian **Captain Arthur Roy Brown**, who was born and raised in Carleton Place. While the source of the bullet that ultimately killed the Red Baron in April 1918 is disputed by historians, it's indisputable that Brown was among the



last Allied airmen to fight him in his final battle—and that the RAF gave Brown official credit for the deed.

His hometown certainly has not forgotten him. The Carleton Place-based Roy Brown Society has a website with details galore about Brown. You can see permanent exhibits about his life at the **Carleton Place Visitor Information Centre** (170 Bridge Street) and at

the **Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum** (267 Edmund Street). A huge mural by Ottawa artist Shaun McInnis, portraying the famous aeronautical dogfight, covers much of one exterior wall at 220 Bridge Street. And a statue of the flying ace was unveiled in **Lolly's Park**, on the north side of Central Bridge, in late 2020.

## TRAVEL TIPS

Carleton Place is 53 kilometres from Parliament Hill. To drive there, take exit 145 from Highway 417 onto Highway 7 west.

Are cycling or hiking more your speed? Then pick up the Ottawa Carleton Trailway in Stittsville and follow it 23 kilometres to Carleton Place.

The Downtown Carleton Place BIA ([downtowncarletonplace.com](http://downtowncarletonplace.com)) organizes events throughout the year and is a good source of information on local shops and restaurants.



Visitor Information Centre

For more details on visiting Carleton Place, check out **the town's website** ([carletonplace.ca](http://carletonplace.ca)) or drop by the aforementioned **Visitor Information Centre** at 170 Bridge Street. You can't miss it, as it's located inside

a 19th-century log building that was once a general store, was moved to this site in 2007 and is reputedly haunted by a mild-mannered ghost named Ida.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Carleton Place is home to one of the only public meditative labyrinths that I know of in Eastern Ontario—well, anywhere, really.

A labyrinth is a continuous path with no sight-hindering barriers, designed to inspire contemplation. And the

**Carleton Place Community Labyrinth**, on a plot of land behind the Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum, does exactly that.

My last visit was on a quiet summer morning around 7am, just as the sun was peeking over nearby trees and flooding the peaceful space with light. I didn't know what to expect, but I slowly walked along the path, enjoying the fresh morning air and the deep quiet of the surrounding neighbourhood. Then I sat on a stone bench and listened to a meditation recording on my phone, before walking the path again. I can't explain it, but it really did perk up my day.

A keen community group built the labyrinth and opened it to the public in 2011. It's open 24 hours a day, free of charge, and occasionally hosts public events.



Carleton Place Community Labyrinth