



Parks Canada-Dale Wilson

the Great OUTDOORS

Canada is blessed with an abundance of nature. Camping is an affordable way to experience it, while promoting family bonding at the same time. Consider our coast-to-coast sampling of great parks, then disconnect to reconnect.

BY ANNE BOKMA

Every summer for 17 years, Temmi Ungerman Sears and her husband, David, planned an annual two-week camping trip with their kids, Jeremy, Dylan and Ilana. They'd pack up their seven-person tent to drive hundreds, sometimes thousands, of kilometres to parks across the country. They kayaked in northern Ontario's Lake Superior Park, hiked the Rockies in Alberta's Banff National Park, watched humpback whales leap in the air near Quebec's Jacques-Cartier National Park and dined on freshly steamed lobster at their campsite in Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

Temmi looks back on these camping adventures with nostalgia and joy. She recalls the daily ritual that began with reading around the fire in the morning, followed by hearty breakfasts of pancakes and scrambled eggs before

heading out to hike, swim, kayak or chill at the beach. Late in the afternoons they'd all head back to the site to prepare dinner and play poker – using M&Ms as poker chips – or charades around the evening campfire. Each day ended the same way – cocooned in their sleeping bags nestled next to one another, as one by one they dimmed their flashlights and drifted off to sleep in the dark night.

Camping, she says, is what made her family become “unified, close-knit and loving. All of us were always growing and changing, but camping was the one constant,” she says. “We were together in nature, unplugged, and we would appreciate the natural world – and each other. It was an annual ritual that reaped such incredible benefits.”

While camping enriched their lives beyond measure, it also happened to

be affordable. Temmi says their annual two-week treks rarely cost more than \$500 for site fees, food and activities such as kayak rentals (but she notes site costs have increased). “These were such valuable and meaningful trips and they cost so little.” Today, her kids still talk about their favourite camping experiences and enjoy looking through the photo albums. “There are so many memories. Camping really helped create our family history.”

Anne Bokma is an award winning writer in Hamilton, Ont. and the mother of two teenage daughters. For the past decade they've spent two weeks camping in their trailer every summer.



If you're looking to bond as a family over s'mores and sunsets this summer, we've got some great suggestions for places to visit, thanks to Guy Thériault, senior marketing specialist at Parks Canada. Here are his top park picks for an ideal family getaway in each of Canada's provinces and territories:





Newfoundland **Gros Morne National Park**

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is bordered by quaint seaside towns and includes five campgrounds. Diverse terrain is made up of forests, bogs, Arctic tundra and a rugged volcanic coastline. Sea kayak on Bonne Bay and go for a boat cruise to view the waterfalls and wildlife on the landlocked fjord of Western Brook Pond. parkscanada.gc.ca/grosmorne



Nova Scotia

Kejimkujik National Park

Gaze at the stars through a telescope in the park's Dark Sky Preserve, an area kept free of artificial light in order to promote astronomy. Explore traditional Mi'kmaw canoe routes, portages, and fishing grounds and check out North America's largest collection of aboriginal rock art. In the Seaside section, seals frolic on offshore islands. The park includes an oTENTik Village, providing campers with a structure that's a blend between a tent and a rustic cabin with beds and furniture on a raised floor. parkscanada.gc.ca/kejimkujik

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New Brunswick **Fundy National Park**

Perks at this park include a golf course, a heated saltwater swimming pool and a 100-kilometre network of hiking and biking trails. It's located on the Bay of Fundy, which has the highest tides in the world. The park is also home to 25 waterfalls and a Dark Sky Preserve that offers spectacular stargazing. For a unique accommodation experience, try a yurt, a cozy circular structure with walls and a roof. parkscanada.gc.ca/fundy

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Parks Canada Robert Baronet



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Prince Edward Island **Prince Edward Island National Park**

The 200-site Cavendish Campground has a supervised white sand beach and the eight-kilometre Homestead Trail, perfect for hiking and cycling. The park is also home to Green Gables, the childhood inspiration for the Anne of Green Gables novels. Its Covehead Lighthouse is one of the most photographed lighthouses on P.E.I. parkscanada.gc.ca/pei



Quebec

Forillon National Park

Located on the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, much of this park is pure mountain wilderness. Soak up the sun on pebble beaches in quiet coves or hike the trails along seaside cliff edges. Go snorkelling to discover colourful underwater life. Seven species of whales swim the waters along Forillon Park, in addition to dolphins and seals. Camp accommodations range from oTENTik tent cabins to lean-to shelters and backcountry campsites. parkscanada.gc.ca/forillon



Landlocked Liechtenstein and Uzbekistan are both surrounded by other landlocked countries.



Ontario Thousand Islands National Park

This park consists of more than 20 islands with scenic lookouts, rugged rock faces, and majestic pines along the banks of the St. Lawrence. The visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing has picnic shelters and barbecues, interactive indoor and outdoor exhibits, nature programs and a playground. Paddle the St. Lawrence River and take in the view of the area's historic estates. Waterfront oTENTik accommodations available. parkscanada.gc.ca/thousandislands

Parks Canada-Tim Forbes



Manitoba Riding Mountain National Park

The prairie parkland of Wasagaming Campground is just minutes from the main beach area and pier, restaurants, playground area, tennis courts, lawn bowling, visitor centre, walking and biking trails as well as canoe, kayak and bike rentals. The park offers a full range of accommodation options from oTENTik tent cabins to yurts (round, canvas huts) and fully equipped campsites complete with tents and dining shelters as well as sleeping pads and a propane stove.

parkscanada.gc.ca/riding

Parks Canada-L. Neufeld



Alberta Jasper National Park

The largest of Canada's Rocky Mountain Parks and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, this park spans 11,000 kilometres. It offers a Dark Sky Preserve, ice fields parkway, amazing mountain drives, 1,200 km of hiking trails and thousands of campsites, including oTENTik options. Roadside wildlife such as elks, bears and coyotes is a common sight. The new Hidden Cove Family Canoe Camp has just been created with beginner canoeists and kayakers in mind. parkscanada.gc.ca/jasper



Saskatchewan Prince Albert National Park

This park offers a mix of wilderness and accessibility. The bustling lakeside town of Waskesiu, with its six sandy beaches, serves as the park's hub and offers plenty of dining and lodging options. Or travel deep into the wilderness on an overnight canoe trip and portage between lakes. Hike or paddle the route to the historic cabin of Grey Owl, the famous turn-of-the-century trapper turned conservationist. parkscanada.gc.ca/princealbert

Parks Canada-Kevin Hogarth





British Columbia Kootenay National Park

Home to bighorn sheep, mountain goats, deer, moose and black and grizzly bears. The park's three campgrounds are all within walking distance of trails and natural attractions such as the warm mineral waters of the Radium Hot Springs. McLeod Meadows, set in the centre of the park, is the perfect secluded sanctuary for families looking to unplug. Redstreak Campground offers oTENTik tent cabins.

parkscanada.gc.ca/kootenay



Parks Canada Amy Krause



Northwest Territories Tuktut Nogait National Park

This remote park with rolling tundra, noisy rivers, tumbling waterfalls and large canyons is located 170 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle and offers an expansive open landscape ideal for hiking. From early June until late July, the sun does not set this far north – so outdoor activity can take place any time of the day or night. This is true wilderness country and visitors are expected to be completely self sufficient – there are no established hiking trails or designated campsites but camping is allowed on any durable surface.

parkscanada.gc.ca/tuktutnogait

Parks Canada

→ A giraffe's horns are called ossicones.

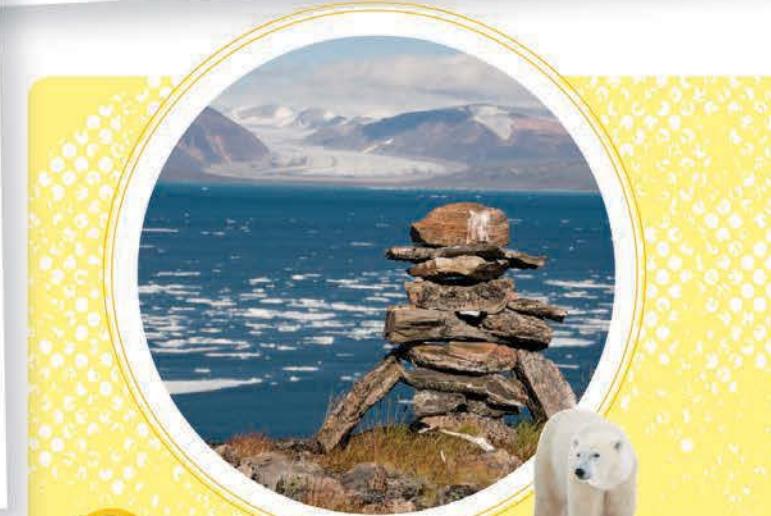


Yukon

Kluane National Park

This 22,000 square kilometre park is home to 17 of Canada's 20 highest peaks, its largest ice field and North America's most diverse grizzly bear population. It attracts wilderness seekers who trek its mountain passes and raft alongside its stunning glaciers. The 39-site Kathleen Lake campground offers "bear-proof" storage lockers and outhouses. The visitor centre houses world-class exhibits on Kluane's dynamic landscapes, abundant wildlife and rich cultural history. parkscanada.gc.ca/kluane

Parks Canada Fritz Mueller



Nunavut

Quttinirpaaq National Park

It's a brave family that ventures to Quttinirpaaq, Inuktitut for "land at the top of the world," in the extreme high Arctic. This massive park, almost 40,000 square kilometres, features wilderness and isolation at its most extreme and wildlife such as the Arctic hare, Peary caribou, narwhals, polar bears and muskoxen. Here daring explorers will see the midnight sun, imposing mountains, ice caps and glaciers. parkscanada.gc.ca/quttinirpaaq

Shutterstock/City Escapes Nature Photo



For video tips on packing for a camping trip, go to
ParentsCanada.com/campingtrips