

# Orlando®

The City's Magazine

## Canadian Getaway: Westward WOW!

*Celebrate Canada's 150th birthday with these signature experiences in the western provinces.*

BY MEGAN PADILLA



The Glacier Skywalk in Jasper National Park includes a glass-bottom ledge over a 900-foot drop

SCOTT ROWED

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II said it best when congratulating Canada for its 150th anniversary year of confederation: Canada has “earned a reputation as a welcoming, respectful and compassionate country.” It also possesses vast beauty across a wide-ranging landscape and first-rate hospitality. Plus, it’s considered safe, its currency value offers U.S. visitors a 30 percent discount, and direct flights are available from Orlando to most major Canadian cities.

Western Canada, in particular, offers big, bold and beautiful adventures. Here we offer a trifecta of experiences in that region that will each deliver the trip of a lifetime.



The Banff Gondola in Banff National Park swoops travelers to a visitor center where you can dine and enjoy panoramic views (CHRIS AMAT).

### **Storm watch on the West Coast**

You really can't get closer to a raging ocean storm than from the Wickaninnish Inn without being on a boat. Located in the town of Tofino, British Columbia, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Wick is balanced on the edge of the world, surrounded by old-growth rainforest and waves that wash in from Japan.

Charles McDiarmid grew up in Tofino, watching the winter storms approach over the Pacific Ocean from his family's cabin and dreamt of sharing this experience with others. The McDiarmids designed the Wick to give each guest at the inn a front-row seat to Mother Nature's dramatic show.

Each of the 75 deluxe rooms and suites has an ocean view, gas fireplace, soaker tub and private balcony. For those willing to leave their cozy nest, there's a supply of rain slickers, pants and wellies (boots), so you can venture out into the sideways rain for an invigorating "west coast facial." That's the local term for leaning into the wind and rain as you walk to the beach.

The juxtaposition of a fully immersive wild-weather experience is balanced out with creature comforts at the inn. They include the Ancient Cedars Spa and the Pointe Restaurant with its 240-degree panoramic view, an outstanding wine list (a new wine cellar will be complete in 2018) and a creative menu that puts fresh and local front and center.

### **Get Your Rocky Mountain High**

If you've never been to the mountains, the Canadian Rockies are as spectacular a sight as you'll ever see. The glaciers that smoothed out the edges of the American Rockies millions of years ago slipped past the northern range, leaving them jagged, exposed and exceptionally awesome. Even better, you don't have to be a skier or mountaineer to enjoy the panoramic views or see the wildlife.

Brewster Travel has been helping folks experience the Canadian Rockies since 1892—yes, 125 years ago. Hand them the reins and simply show up in Calgary. They'll do the rest, providing transportation (so you can gawk at the bighorn sheep and elk along the way) and accommodation and helping you plan an itinerary that includes the best of Alberta's Banff and Jasper national parks.

Highlights include a ride to the upper terminal of the Banff Gondola for 360-degree views, fine dining, and interactive visitor experiences. The Glacier Skywalk in Jasper National Park is a thrilling cliff-edge walkway past waterfalls, fossils and more that leads to a glass-bottom platform with a 900-foot drop below. That outing is combined with a trek to the Athabasca Glacier aboard a patented Ice Explorer vehicle. Round out your visit with a cruise on a beautiful glacier-fed lake.



Explore family owned wineries such as Covert Farms in the South Okanagan Valley (©2013 HERO IMAGES INC)

### **The Wine Road Less Traveled**

Deep in British Columbia's interior is the hot, dry Okanagan Valley, known to a wider audience for its wine. Those looking for the small family wineries that give tours of the vineyards and sell wine that can't be bought elsewhere turn their attention to the Oliver Osoyoos Winery Association, a group of 39 member wineries bookended by the communities of Oliver and Osoyoos in the South Okanagan.

The climate is ripe for active exploration, too. Heatstroke Cycle gives you a little extra pedal power by guiding guests on electric bicycles through the picturesque landscapes and winery stations of the South Okanagan Valley. Another option is horseback riding through the Sonoran Desert—the only one in Canada—to Montakarn Winery. And at Covert Farms Family Estate Winery, you can tour the vineyards, billed as “a culinary journey through Canada’s desert,” from the back of a 1952 Mercury truck.

Moon Curser Vineyards, Gold Hill Winery and Castoro de Oro spur nostalgia for the region’s Gold Rush days, while Nk’Mip Cellars continues its legacy as the first Aboriginal-owned winery in North America.

The region’s creative food scene extends beyond the plate. Terrafina at Hester Creek by RauDZ offers small-group cooking classes, and Covert Farms hosts farm-field dinners. Chefs lean on the valley’s farms and foragers for an unforgettable taste of the Okanagan.

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## Plan Your Trip

For more trip-planning sources and information about visiting Canada, go to [caen-keepexploring.canada.travel](http://caen-keepexploring.canada.travel)

### Storm-watching

*Go: November-February*

Fly to Vancouver, rent a car, ferry to Nanaimo and drive to Tofino, a 5-6 hour journey through an ancient rainforest. Or, fly Orca Air from Vancouver to Tofino on an 8-passenger plane, but you’ll miss the scenery, and maybe some orcas. [wickinn.com](http://wickinn.com)

### Park-hopping

*Go: April-November*

Fly to Calgary and use Brewster Travel for coach transportation to the mountains. Or, call an Explore Rockies Agent, 888-269-0524, for complete trip planning. Brewster Travel attractions are wheelchair accessible, though not officially ADA compliant. [brewster.ca](http://brewster.ca)

### Wine-tasting

*Go: April-December*

Fly to Vancouver and connect to Penticton. Many wineries have accommodations. The Watermark Beach Resort Hotel in Osoyoos is known for its wellness program, spa and stargazing. See winery websites for events, tours and tastings. [oliverosoyoos.com](http://oliverosoyoos.com)

### Oh Canada!

You must have a current passport to enter Canada. U.S. citizens do not need a visa. The currency value right now makes Canada a bargain for Americans. For every \$100 Canadian, you’ll spend about \$70-\$75 U.S. dollars.