

Canada's Top Ten New Attractions for Summer 2006

WHERE Canada editors select Canada's Top Ten Exciting New Draws for the Summer Travel Season

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Stand atop a glass-floored platform that soars 190 metres above Calgary. Experience British Columbia in a new interactive way. Canoe the Bow River through the heart of Banff. View an incredible collection of ceramics in Toronto. Watch the historic changing of the guard in Halifax. These are just some of the hot new experiences awaiting travellers across Canada this summer.

To help families who are getting ready for summer holidays, the regional editors of *WHERE* magazine today announced their annual picks of the Top Ten New Attractions for summer travel in 2006. Many of these attractions are brand new, while others are completely renovated or celebrating significant milestones. They are as diverse as Canada itself, ranging from historic re-enactments in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Halifax, to natural and marine beauty in Muskoka, Banff and Vancouver. Together, they are the must-see events, exhibits, facilities and sites for anyone considering travel within Canada this season.

Published across the country for more than 20 years, *WHERE* is Canada's most reliable source of timely information for travellers, reaching more than nine million readers annually. Each year, its coast-to-coast team of editors tours hundreds of attractions, considering numerous options of interest to travellers before selecting the most compelling 10 that represent each local region. Several of these exciting attractions have just opened this month, offering the latest in Canadian cultural and educational experiences.

The Top Ten New Attractions for Summer 2006

B.C. Experience – Victoria

Interactive B.C. exhibit space developed in the historic Crystal Garden building.

Blue Canoe – Banff

The only river-based rental concession in Canada's Rocky Mountain Parks.

Calgary Tower Observation Platform – Calgary

A glass-floored platform set 190 metres above Calgary.

Changing of the Guard – Halifax

The centenary of the last British military garrison leaving Halifax re-enacted.

Fort Edmonton Park 1920s Midway – Edmonton

A period-perfect midway that includes an assortment of rides from yesteryear, such as an old-fashioned Ferris wheel.

Fort Gibraltar – Winnipeg

A voyageur-era living history site on the banks of the Red River.

Gardiner Museum – Toronto

Canada's only museum devoted entirely to ceramics re-opens after a \$20 million renovation and expansion.

Library of Parliament – Ottawa

The completion of a 10-year restoration of one of Ottawa's historic gems.

Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre – Gravenhurst

Vintage wooden boats and restoration efforts on display in this new centre celebrating life on the water.

Vancouver Aquarium – Vancouver

The 50th anniversary of one of Canada's most celebrated attractions.

B.C Experience – Victoria

The wait is over as Victorians welcome the June 26 grand opening of their newest attraction, **B.C. Experience**. Housed in the historic Crystal Garden building in the heart of downtown near the Fairmont Empress Hotel, the B.C. Legislature and the Royal B.C. Museum, B.C. Experience boasts an array of interactive exhibits showcasing the province's rich geography, history and culture. Among the highlights will be the massive, wonderfully detailed three-dimensional map of B.C. that allows visitors to see the province as it would appear from space, along with a series of Electronic Geostations to explore the map's many features. Relax in one of several theatres showing films that explore the region's natural and human history as well as its magnificent scenery. Then, pilot your own trip through B.C.'s diverse landscapes at one of six Exploration Stations, take in the province's natural amenities in a Parks Canada display or relax and enjoy a snack in the Crystal Tea Garden—it's all part of the B.C. Experience. 713 Douglas St., 1-888-360-2055, www.bcexperience.info

Blue Canoe – Banff/Canadian Rockies

Blue Canoe now presides over the venerable Bow River docks three blocks from Banff's main street. And the place looks great. A rental fleet of brand new, all blue Clipper canoes gives credence to the company moniker, while new umbrella picnic tables (and an ice cream vendor) impart a festive atmosphere. Old life-jackets have been replaced, comfy seats are offered to "third-person" paddlers and passengers, and a new map notes points of interest along Bow River, 40 Mile Creek and Vermilion Lakes routes. Blue Canoe is the only river-based rental concession in Canada's Mountain Parks. Paddlers access prime animal habitat impressively ringed by Cascade, Sulphur, Norquay and Stoney Squaw mountains. Sightings of elk, deer, bald eagles, osprey and muskrats are common. Rent a canoe on your own (\$25/hour; \$40 for two hours; \$50/day) or drop by for a hosted trip with an interpretive guide (11 a.m. or 1 p.m.; free with two-hour rental). West end of Wolf St., 403-760-5465, www.banfftours.com

Calgary Tower Observation Platform – Calgary

Imagine walking out into thin air, suspended a dizzying 190 metres above the ground. That's the experience that the **Calgary Tower** offers with its glass floor experience. The Tower has been a popular attraction and Cowtown's most recognizable landmark since it opened in 1968. It offers visitors panoramic views of the city and nearby foothills and mountains from both its observation deck and revolving fine-dining restaurant. Last year, a new feature was added: a glass observation platform cut into the side of the main deck so that the floor and three sides of your view are completely open. Not for the faint of heart, the experience is like stepping out into open space. It's perfectly safe—the glass is 2 1/4 inches thick and built to withstand 4,000 pounds. This new experience, along with a brand new tourism information centre at the base and the Tower's always incomparable views make it a must-visit for this summer's vacation season. 101 – 9 Ave. SW, 403-266-7171, www.calgarytower.com

Changing of the Guard: July 18-23 – Halifax

Visit Halifax this summer for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of military pomp: the **Changing of the Guard**. Running from July 18 to 23, the event marks the centenary of the last British military garrison leaving Halifax, turning the city's defences over to Canadian control—an important step in Canada's evolution from a British colony to an independent nation. The highlight of the week is the *Grand Encampment* at the Citadel, where 1,000 military re-enactors will set up a "living history" tent city, re-creating the daily activities of the original garrison and staging mock battles. Not to be missed are the *Sunset Ceremonies* at the Citadel (showcasing three centuries of military traditions in Halifax) and *History in the Streets* (daily patrols through the downtown by the 78th Highlanders). The grand finale is July 23, with the *Changing of the Guard* ceremony at the Citadel, followed by the *Grand Departure Parade*, with troops marching from the fortifications, down Sackville Street to Sackville Landing. www.changingoftheguard.ca

Fort Edmonton Park 1920s Midway & Exhibition – Edmonton

Offering a step back in time by chronicling the early days of Edmonton, **Fort Edmonton Park** unveils its newest addition—a recreated **1920s Midway & Exhibition**. Appropriately located on 1920 Street within the Park's expansive living museum site, this period-perfect midway includes an assortment of rides from yesteryear such as an old-fashioned Ferris wheel, a Vaudeville tent, sideshows, historic games of skill and concession stands. For many, the icing on the cake at the carnival is the exquisite musical carousel that boasts an impressive collection of gorgeous, locally hand-carved horses. Adding to the antique flavour of the fair and further enhancing the visitor's immersion into this exciting and magical aspect of Edmonton's past are the colourful and amusing replicated

banners and historically accurate entrance and exit gates. Also find a carousel carving workshop area designed for the creation and repair of the horses and a gift shop. Fox and Whitemud drives, 403-496-8787, www.edmonton.ca

Fort Gibraltar – Winnipeg

The site of the popular winter event Festival du Voyageur is now celebrating the life of a fur trader with its new summer interpretive program. The site—a replica of the fort built by the North West Company (NWC) in 1809, **Fort Gibraltar**—is steeped in history. This fort was the cause of great friction between the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company, two rival fur-trading companies. When the fort was built in the heart of the HBC's continental headquarters, it sparked years of conflict before HBC captured and destroyed it in 1816. Today, Fort Gibraltar seeks to recapture the height of the fur trade with a depiction of life at the fort in 1814. Visitors can wander the grounds and watch costumed interpreters go about their daily lives and chat with the carpenter as he makes chairs, tables and other furniture for the inhabitants of the fort. The hearty voyageurs frequently stop by for trade and merriment. Pemmican, a First Nations staple food made of dried bison meat, blueberries and suet, is made onsite for these voyageurs to take on their lengthy travels. Visitors can also taste other traditional foods of the First Nations people, as well as French-Canadian fare such as stew and bannock. Voyageur games are also in the mix, with observers getting a chance to get in on the action of leg wrestling and hatchet throwing contests. Whittier Park, Hébert and St. Joseph streets, 204-237-7692

Gardiner Museum – Toronto

The only Canadian museum devoted entirely to ceramics, the **Gardiner Museum** has reopened after a \$20-million renovation and expansion. To commemorate the renovated museum's debut, the Gardiner has commissioned *Clay, Sculpture and Drawings*, an exhibit by Jean-Pierre Larocque—one of Canada's leading ceramic sculptors. The show christens the new Special Exhibition Gallery. Another new space, the modern and contemporary ceramics gallery, showcases the works of such artists as Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall. The museum's permanent collection, which ranges from English Delftware to Chinese and Japanese porcelain, has also been expanded, as has the Gardiner Shop, featuring one-of-a-kind contemporary ceramics and other handmade collectibles. Acclaimed chef Jamie Kennedy unveils a new restaurant here, appropriately named Jamie Kennedy at the Gardiner, which is open for lunch daily and dinner on Fridays. 111 Queen's Park, Toronto, 416-586-8080, www.gardinermuseum.com

Library of Parliament – Ottawa

It's been more than 10 years in the making, but visitors to the newly refurbished **Library of Parliament** in Ottawa will tell you it was worth the wait. Originally constructed between 1859 and 1876, the library is a stoic lass indeed: in a fire that destroyed much of Parliament Hill in 1916, the library was the only building to survive. In 1995, plans were launched to restore its Victorian Gothic grandeur. More than a decade later, the crew has packed up its tools, the scaffolding has come down, and the building is once again open to visitors. Reconstruction involved removing 4,815 cubic metres of bedrock to accommodate a new basement, applying 213 metric tonnes of grout to stabilize the stone and installing 2,075 square metres of copper roofing. This elegant gem is destined to become one of Ottawa's most-visited sites. 613-992-4793, www.parliamenthill.gc.ca

Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre – Gravenhurst

With more than 1,500 lakes, it's no wonder that life in Muskoka is all about boats. The **Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre** celebrates the region's enduring ties to boating as both a recreational pastime and a sign of cultural and economic development. Located in the 89-acre Muskoka Wharf, the new centre showcases life aboard a section of a "living" steamship, complete with interactive exhibits, working engine and steam whistles. The Boat and Heritage Centre is also a testament to Muskoka's reputation as Canada's wooden boat-building capital. Visitors can walk through a boat-builder's workshop to watch boat restoration and see an in-water exhibit of up to 20 classic Muskoka wooden boats in the Boathouse, one of the most prestigious displays of vintage watercraft in North America. 275 Steamboat Bay Rd., Gravenhurst, 705-687-2115, www.mbhc.ca

Vancouver Aquarium Marine 50th Anniversary – Vancouver

Turning 50 isn't always cause for celebration. But when the birthday is for Canada's largest aquarium, reaching that milestone is momentous. The **Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre** opened its doors on June 15, 1956. Former Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau fed the aquarium's first killer whale in 1971 and opened the Killer Whale Pool. In 1983, Queen Elizabeth popped in for tea with sloths and anacondas to open the Graham Amazon Gallery. Each year, one million visitors explore the site. This summer, even the residents are getting caught up in the

birthday festivities. All month, thousands of blue morpho, monarch, owl, zebra and postman butterflies are emerging from cocoons and filling the air. Also making an energetic appearance are three new Pacific white-sided dolphins. Other recent arrivals include pygmy marmosets, weedy scorpion fish and garden eels. A scarlet ibis chick, baby tentacled snakes and marbled whiptail catfish—all born on-site—are joining the program, too. As far as birthdays go, it's quite a show. 845 Avison Way in Stanley Park, 604-659-3474, www.vanaqua.org

Information on the Top Ten New Summer Attractions for 2006 can be found in the summer issues of *WHERE Canada* magazine, published in 11 major travel destinations coast to coast across Canada. Canada's best attractions are also listed online at www.where.ca, along with detailed accommodations, dining, shopping and sightseeing information for the regions in which they are located.

About *WHERE Canada*:

WHERE is the world's largest publisher of visitor magazines and can be found in 3,500 hotels globally. Since 1936, *WHERE* has provided travellers with timely, local information on current shopping trends, new stores, restaurants, cultural attractions and entertainment. *WHERE Canada* magazines are available in hotels, travel information centres, stores and attractions in the following locations: Calgary, Canadian Rockies, Edmonton, Halifax, Mississauga, Muskoka, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and Winnipeg. *WHERE Canada* is a subsidiary of St. Joseph Media, whose stable of magazines includes *Toronto Life*, *FASHION Magazine* and *Wish*.

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