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# EXPLORE CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS

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## Gros Morne National Park

Best time to travel: Year-round.

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Atlantic Canada's second largest National Park is a starkly beautiful expanse of craggy, mist-shrouded mountains, wind-swept highlands and landlocked fjords on the eastern coast of Newfoundland. From its rocky beaches and lush coastal forests to its barren lands, this geologically fascinating and breathtakingly scenic park

is punctuated by the panoramic peak of Gros Morne Mountain and the ancient glacial and geological formations called the Tablelands. Here, you can ascend from flower-filled lowlands high into the alpine tundra in search of caribou, ptarmigan (also known as a snow quail) and snowshoe hare. Paddle past the sheer cliff sides of Western Brook Pond, a waterfall-fed freshwater fjord, and explore coastal pathways and trails leading to beaches hidden among sea stacks – all the while soaking up the colorful traditions of the charming seaside communities that make Newfoundland so unique.



## Jasper National Park

Best time to travel: Year-round.

The largest of Canada's seven Rocky Mountain National Parks, which together comprise a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Jasper is an alpine wilderness teeming with wildlife, including bighorn sheep, moose, eagles, elk, wolves, lynx, cougars, and grizzly bears.

Here, nature is writ large – from massive glaciers and snow-capped peaks to towering waterfalls, deep canyons and pine-scented valleys. In summer, you can stroll through meadows carpeted with brilliant swathes of delicate wildflowers, soak in the restorative waters of natural hot springs and paddle across pristine emerald lakes, or camp, hike, bike and even backcountry horseback ride over rugged mountain trails. In winter, there are opportunities for canyon ice walks, cross-country and downhill skiing, pond skating, snowshoeing and wildlife watching.



## Quttinirpaaq National Park

Best time to travel: Summer

You can't venture much farther north on land than Quttinirpaaq – an Inuktitut word for “Land at the Top of the World.” Located on Ellesmere Island on the Arctic Archipelago just 800 kilometers from the North Pole, Quttinirpaaq is only accessible by aircraft.

The most remote of Canada's National Parks, it is an almost alien world dominated by ice – a mesmerizing polar desert where ice caps swallow mountains, kilometers-thick glaciers flow into frozen seas and hardy wildlife like muskoxen, polar bears, Arctic hare and wolves freely roam. Quttinirpaaq is also an ancient Inuit homeland where hunters have long driven their dogsleds beneath the shadow of Barbeau Peak mountain. Visiting Nunavut's largest National Park doesn't come cheap, with tours starting at around \$8,000. But considering Quttinirpaaq's extreme remoteness and unrivaled Arctic beauty, a journey here is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. Observe Arctic wildlife beneath a summer midnight sun. Trek across one of the planet's most extreme and undisturbed environments while searching for traces of indigenous ancestors and early explorers. Or simply marvel at Mother Nature's raw, savage beauty in this barren yet utterly beautiful polar ecosystem on an epic journey to Canada's magnificent far north.

## Ivvavik National Park

Best time to travel: Summer

Meaning ‘a place for giving birth’ in the language of the Inuvialuit, Ivvavik has protected the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd since it was created in 1984. The only one of Canada's National Parks created as a result of an aboriginal land claim agreement, it comprises 10,000 square kilometers of pristine northern wilderness –



from the steep cliffs of its Arctic coastline and deltas that provide breeding sites for millions of birds, to ranges of mountains divided by steep gorges that remained unglaciated during the last ice age. And yet this northern tip of Yukon, which Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people have called home for centuries, sees barely 100 tourists per year. Many of them come to raft the mighty Firth River that winds through the English Mountains en route to the MacKenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea. Arriving on a Parks Canada chartered Twin Otter at Sheep Creek Station, encounter a tableau of natural beauty. Trained aboriginal staff lead you on rigorous hikes through spectacular tundra and boreal forests, and along brilliantly colored canyons to places with names like Inspiration Point, Halfway to Heaven and Wolf Tors. You may even spot grizzly bears, Dall sheep, Arctic foxes or wolves while golden eagles and raptors circle high overhead.

## Pacific Rim National Park

Best time to travel: Year-round.

Saturated in millennia-old indigenous Nuu-chah-nulth culture and famed for its rugged coastline dotted with enormous beaches and old growth rainforest, Pacific Rim National Park is one of Canada's most popular National Parks. Stretching south from the whale-watching center of Tofino,

the park spans part of Vancouver Island's wild west coast – famous for its spectacular Pacific storms that draw awed visitors from around the world every fall and winter. Take an easy interpretive stroll along the picturesque Wild Pacific Trail near Ucluelet or a challenging multi-day trek along the legendary West Coast Trail. Learn to cold water surf like the pros. Paddle among the Broken Islands, one of the world's premier sea kayaking destinations. Whale-watch from shore or on a boat, keeping an eye out for some of the estimated 20,000 grey and Orca whales that transit past here each year. Explore one of the world's oldest temperate rainforests at Clayoquot Sound. Or kick back and relax while watching a ferocious winter squall pummel the shoreline while you dine in style on classic west coast cuisine.

