

Parks, our National Treasure








Canada is known the world over for its wide open spaces, and natural beauty. From Cape Spear, Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia, Canada boasts some of the best and well preserved wilderness on the planet.

What makes these places special is that our parks, both national and provincial are open to everyone. Canada has 39 national parks covering 2.5% of its land... That's almost 1/4 million square kilometers! These national parks combined with provincial parks make a wilderness network that you can spend a life time exploring.

So if you and your family are looking for a great way to spend your summer holidays, why not pack up your tent and sleeping bags and head for adventure at a Canadian park.

Who's making Tracks?

Here are some common animal tracks that you might see on a visit to one of Canada's parks. Can you figure out which track pattern belongs to which animal?

1.  Grey Fox
2.  Otter
3.  Skunk
4.  Wolf
5.  Brush Rabbit
6.  Porcupine
7.  Raccoon

Something old Something New

Founded in 1885 after the discovery of the Cave and Basin Hot Springs, Banff National Park is Canada's oldest and most famous national park. Banff's features include the emerald waters of Lake Louise, the flower-filled heavens of Sunshine Meadows, and towering jagged peaks that line the Ice fields Parkway.

From humble beginnings as a 26 square kilometer hot springs reserve, Banff National Park now consists of 6,641 square kilometers in the Canadian Rockies, and is home to some of North America's wildest creatures, including grizzly bears, caribou and wolves...

One of Canada's newest National Parks is Sirmilik National Park located in Nunavut. This diverse landscape is home to walrus, polar bears, seals, whales, seabirds, caribou, wolves, Arctic foxes, collared lemmings and Arctic hares.

Sirmilik was the site of some important European arctic exploration, including landings by Captains Bylot and Baffin for whom islands there are now named.

Groups of Inuit used this area as hunting, fishing and gathering grounds as early as 4,000 years ago. However, there probably wasn't any permanent inhabitation of the area until about 1,000 years ago, when the Thule culture arrived.

While there are no designated campsites in the park, tenting is encouraged, as long as your camp site isn't too near archaeological evidence, rich growth areas, or sites at risk of floods or landslides. Campers should also take note of the park's "Safety in Polar Bear Country" guidelines before heading off on their own... *Now you know!*

In The Next Issue

In the next issue of the colourcanada *Totem*, we'll celebrate the summer with a tribute to our many festivals. From Ottawa's Tulip Festival to the Calgary Stampede, Canada offers up some great annual attractions for tourists and visitors of all ages.



A Camp Fire, Cook-Out Treat

In earlier times, pioneers and visitors to our parks would have cooked their meals over an open fire. While propane stoves might have made life easier in the woods, its still fun to try cooking over a camp fire. Here's an easy to make treat to try on your next park adventure.

Instead of picking out marshmallows before your trip, buy a roll or two of Pillsbury's Bread Stick dough from the freezer aisle at the grocery store. Once you have your fire going, find a nice straight stick about a metre long like you would use for roasting marshmallows. Make sure the stick is clean by peeling off some of the bark.

Open the roll of dough, and remove one bread stick from the package. Wrap the dough in a spiral around the end of the stick. Make sure that the ends of the dough are tucked in so that the spiral stays on while cooking.

Now that you're ready to go, hold the dough over some hot coals and slowly rotate the stick so that the bread cooks evenly. You'll be able to see the bread puff up as it cooks, and the smell is terrific. Once its golden brown on the outside, your treat is ready to eat. Peel it off of the stick and enjoy! This is always a hit around the fire, so try it out.



Getting There

If your family decides to make a National or Provincial Park part of your summer plans, here are some good sites to help you choose the best places to visit...

- Parks Canada** - <http://www.pc.gc.ca>
- B.C.** - <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca>
- Alberta** - <http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpfw/programs>
- Saskatchewan** - <http://www.sasktourism.com>
- Manitoba** - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks>
- Ontario** - <http://www.ontarioparks.com>
- Quebec** - <http://www.bonjourquebec.com>
- New Brunswick** - <http://www.tourismnewbrunswick.ca>
- Nova Scotia** - <http://parks.gov.ns.ca>
- P.E.I.** - <http://www.gov.pe.ca/visitorsguide>
- Newfoundland** - <http://www.gov.nf.ca/parks&reserves>
- Yukon** - <http://www.touryukon.com>
- Northwest Territories** - <http://www.newparksnorth.org>
- Nunavut** - <http://www.nunavutparks.com>
- Maps** - <http://www.mapquest.com>

Remember, if you go, take lots of pictures and send them in so that everyone can see how beautiful Canada is!



Play it Safe!

The wilderness of Canada's parks is truly awesome. While there's plenty of fun and adventure to be had, we have to remember that the great outdoors can also be an unforgiving and at times dangerous environment. We want you to enjoy your experience, and most of all stay safe. So when you're out exploring keep these tips in mind.

Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac can be most uncomfortable plants to find. Make yourself aware of what these plants look like, and avoid leaving designated trails.

The urushiol oil found on the leaves of these plants is what causes a rash. Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years. 1/4 ounce of urushiol is all that is needed to cause a rash in every person on earth. 500 people could itch from the amount covering the head of a pin. 90% of people are sensitive to urushiol oil... So be careful!



Many parks are located around lakes and rivers. Be sure to always wear a life jacket when you play around the water. Its also a good idea to make sure that a parent or other adult is present when playing in or around the water.

There's plenty of wildlife in Canadian parks, and they're hungry. Leaving food or garbage around your campsite will likely attract animals. While raccoons and squirrels can be annoying, a bear can be dangerous. Make sure all food is stored in your vehicle or are tied up in a tree. Never leave these items in your tent.



Canadian Parks Word Search

- Aulavik
- Banff
- Forillon
- Fundy
- Glacier
- Grasslands
- Gros Morne
- Jasper
- Kejimikujik
- Kluane
- Kootenay
- Mingan
- Nahanni
- Pelee
- Pukaskwa
- Revelstoke
- Sirmilik
- Ukkusiksalik
- Vuntut
- Wapusk
- Yoho

FORILLONKILIMRIS
 GAZJPQRNPUKASKWA
 ARBMLEFABNAGNIMA
 ETABCXJHAAULAVIK
 KRKSOHAANREICALG
 EYEISDSNFI FVNJFA
 JIJVLLTNFWAPUSKS
 IPTYEAAIKOOTENAY
 MELUYLSNBHTGQWUY
 KFVXDGSKDNCURHOA
 UEAANAKTISRATHAB
 JAEMUNPLOS AEONRA
 IGCLFFSDUKUIPUUL
 KZBVEKJAF AEKMSNV
 RKOESPQHSCNUKPAE
 GROSMORNEDPEIUBJ



Who's making Tracks - Answers

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|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| 1. Brush Rabbit | 4. Porcupine | 7. Wolf |
| 2. Raccoon | 5. Otter | |
| 3. Grey Fox | 6. Skunk | |

Parks Canada Charter: On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

