

GREAT  
TASTE OF

Ontario



# Fruitful journeys

Three road trips that are perfect for picking your own food

**S**ummer is the season to indulge in the diverse, fresh produce grown right here in Ontario. What better way to celebrate surviving another Canadian winter than by picking, tasting and sipping your way through three of the province's most fruitful regions? As you head out on your journey to Simcoe County, the Halton Hills area or Elgin County, be sure to check the hours and picking conditions at each farm before you hit the road – and don't forget your sunscreen!

## SIMCOE COUNTY

### Fernwood Farms and Market

**7865 Hwy. 26, Stayner**  
Start your day with a scenic drive through Caledon Village, Creemore and up towards Collingwood where you'll find Fernwood Farms and Market in Stayner. Its summer "u-pick" offerings include strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, currants, pears and beans. Stop by the market for a cinnamon scone or strawberry cream cheese strudel, both of which make for an indulgent breakfast, not to mention other local delicacies, including honey, sweet corn and delicious farm-fresh eggs.

### Barrie Hill Farms

**2935 Barrie Hill Rd., Springwater**  
Next, head 30 minutes southeast to Barrie Hill Farms. They've been welcoming local-produce lovers to their fields for more than 40 years, offering a variety of pick-your-own and ready-to-buy produce. Fresh veg, including peas, beans, pickling cucumbers and asparagus are all on offer, plus strawberries, blueberries and raspberries.

### McArthur's Berry Farm

**441 Line 5 South, Oro-Medonte**  
Make your way 25 minutes north for your last stop – more berry-picking fun at McArthur's Berry Farm, an Oro-Medonte staple since 1842. In addition to scoring your \$2.50-per-litre strawberries, consider picking up some fresh rhubarb stalks, perfect for pie-making.



## HALTON HILLS AND SURROUNDING AREA

### Hutchinson Farm

**6202 Walkers Line, Burlington**  
Start your morning off at Hutchinson Farm, a Burlington favourite offering everything from herbs to plants, flowers and more. Hutchinson's pick-your-own crops include raspberries (the raspberry patch is only open in the mornings), as well as red and black currants.

### Andrews Scenic Acres

**9365 10th Side Road, Milton**  
Just 20 minutes north of Hutchinson, you'll find Andrews Scenic Acres, a 165-acre local farm full of pick-your-own fruits, along with an on-farm fruit winery, farm experiences and petting zoo. From June to August, visitors can pick rhubarb, blackberries, blueberries, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries and more. Complete your visit with a wagon ride and a stop by the BBQ for lunch or ice cream. We also highly recommend picking up a pie from the farm store for dessert.

### Stonehaven Farms

**7388 Guelph Line, Campbellville**  
At Stonehaven Farms, strawberries are the name of the game this summer. They provide the baskets – all you have to do is show up ready to pick. Be sure to visit the farm's market, too, where you can pick up ready-picked strawberries and other produce, fresh-baked treats, cheese, maple syrup, honey, eggs and gourmet frozen foods and preserves by local artisans.

## ELGIN COUNTY

### Great Lakes Farms

**511 Union Road, Port Stanley**  
Stop by the family-owned Great Lakes Farms in the summer to pick your own strawberries and peaches, and stock up on the latest baked goods, preserves and local products at their store and café. Stay tuned for the announcement of their annual Peach Fest, when you can pick your own peaches, and pick up some peach crisp and pie to take home with you.

### Defauw's Blueberries

**53768 Vienna Line, Port Burwell**  
Open mid-July through August, this family-owned and operated farm is the place to go for fresh, local, mouth-watering blueberries, as well as blackberries, cherries, cranberries, green beans, pears, strawberries and more. Past visitors say they have the best blueberries ever, and a relaxing atmosphere to boot. Pro-tip: check out their Facebook page for the most up-to-date picking hours.

### Bluegroves Farms

**25503 Talbot Line, Eagle**  
Finally, head west to Bluegroves Farms, a 62-acre property founded by the Hatch family in 1983. The Hatch family plan? To grow the best local blueberries; and though the farm has since passed to several other families, including the Pierinellis, the Innes family and now Mike St. Germain and Victoria Spencer, it continues to deliver. Bluegroves is an Eagle go-to for fresh, local, mouth-watering blueberries that visitors call "fantastic."

Above: Berry picking at local farms is an Ontario summer tradition. Below: Even refreshing summer drinks can benefit from an infusion of lavender.



LAVENDER-BLU

## Snap a selfie at an Ontario lavender farm

Smell that? It's officially lavender season, and it doesn't last long. Sightsee your way through Ontario by hitting up one – or all – of these five lavender farms.

### The Lavender Farm

Located in lovely Ayr, just outside Waterloo, this one-time working farm was converted into a lavender farm in 2011 when owners Bob and Barb Gillies planted their first 600 plants. Now, visitors can stroll through abundant lavender fields and pick up a souvenir from the store, which is stocked with the farm's own products, including lavender-scented soap and room spray.

### Stonewell Farm

This Wellington County farm grows several varieties of lavender, including Gros Bleu, Phenomenal, Folgate, Melissa and Royal Velvet – and not just for their good looks. The fragrant blooms are used to make everything from maple syrup to body butter to tea, all of which are for sale on-site. Visitors can also take yoga classes among the plants, and even opt to stay at the property's three-bedroom guest house.

### Lavender-Blu

This three-acre farm sits on the shores of Lake Scugog near Port Perry and includes an orchard, vegetable garden and lavender fields stocked with upwards of 3,000 plants. Guests can take yoga classes in the field, or just hang out in the artisan studio and garden, where they can also pick their own bundle of lavender for \$12.

### Terra Lavanda

At this Benchlands lavender farm, which bills itself as the first of its kind in the Niagara region, sustainability is the most important value. The lavender here is organically grown, tended using ecological farming practices and hand-harvested for minimal environmental impact.

### NEOB Lavender

Part small business producing essential oils, soaps, lotions and candles, part floral farm, this Niagara-on-the-Lake destination has all your wellness needs covered. Opt to wander through the property's beautiful lavender fields solo, or sign up for a guided tour that includes stops throughout the farm and greenhouse.



# HITTING THE MARKET

Get your fill of seasonal, local and cultural foods at these diverse, bustling markets this summer

Ontario has some of the greatest food markets in the world. From Asian night market-inspired food halls to a century-old daily market, there's a food market ready to be explored for every palate. While some are open year-round, many run for just the summer – or just one special weekend! Here are five exciting food markets to visit this summer.

**Smorgasburg** 7 Queens Quay E., Toronto

This massive outdoor food market has been a staple in cities across the U.S. since 2011, and now it's arriving in Toronto for the summer. Dubbed the "Woodstock of Eating" by The New York Times, Toronto's version of Smorgasburg will run on Saturdays from July 23 to September 8 and will feature more than 50 local vendors like Afrobeat Kitchen, Sunny's Chinese and Spice Girl Eats.

**Superfresh** 384 Bloor Street W, Toronto

Superfresh is a new 4,000-square-foot Asian night market-inspired food hall located in the Annex neighbourhood of Toronto. Styled after the look and feel of an outdoor night market in East Asia, Superfresh serves up food from Asian-led and owned businesses across the city, including noodles from Big Beef Bowl and baked goods from The Good Goods.

**Covent Market** 130 King Street, London

Covent Market in London has been around since 1845. Open seven days a week, this massive market offers up food, services, cultural festivals and events. Plus, every Saturday, there's a farmers market where you can find local produce, meats, cheeses, baked goods and prepared foods from all around southwestern Ontario. It's the perfect place to pick up your park hang must-haves.

**Night it Up!** 179 Enterprise Boulevard, Markham

Night it Up! lights up Markham for just one special weekend in August. The festival is the longest-running night market in the GTA and offers up a mosaic of delicious Asian street foods and performances from local talents. And, after a two-year hiatus, this year's festival is slated to be the biggest yet. Night it Up! is influenced by night markets like the ones in Taiwan, Hong Kong and other parts of Asia. This year's Night it Up! takes place from August 5 to 7.

**Katarokwi Indigenous Art and Food Market**

Springer Market Square, 216 Ontario Street, Kingston  
This market in downtown Kingston will feature Indigenous performers and vendors selling food, as well as art, jewelry, mugs and clothing. There will also be live performances from talented people from across Turtle Island. Check it out on Sundays throughout the summer.

## Bigger fish to fry

The lakeside fish fry is one of Ontario's tastiest summer traditions

Different cultures offer a variety of takes on the signature fried fish dish – from Andalusia's pescado frito to the Jamaican saltfish fritters known as Stamp and Go – and the classic Ontario shore lunch definitely deserves a place among these tasty culinary traditions.

The star ingredient of any shore lunch is the day's catch, fresh off the hook. It has been a popular way for Ontarians and visitors to the province to enjoy the bounty of our lakes and rivers for decades. It's also a culinary tradition that incorporates the do-it-yourself spirit – even if a pro happens to be on hand to fillet and prepare the catch.

Shore lunch novices need not worry; there are plenty of Ontario resorts and lodges that will handle the specifics of the cookout. John Naimian has owned and operated Oak Lake Lodge and Outpost in Thunder Bay since he purchased the property in 1999, and fish fries have always been a part of the guest experience.

"Every day we do a shore lunch," he says. Guests bring their allotted catch to Naimian's staff who fillet and fry it to perfection in a signature house batter that includes crushed cornflakes.

The meal is simple but tasty and usually enjoyed with a cold beer. Naimian's fishing guides do the cooking, separating the fish (typically pickerel) into finger-like shapes and frying it in canola oil after coating each section in batter. "We usually serve it with red beans and a salad. And after that we'll have cookies. A very simple, but very delicious meal."

Naimian estimates that around 85% of the guests at his all-inclusive fly-in lodge are repeat visitors, meaning there must be something to this shore lunch tradition. "I would say it's one of the big attractions for people to come to fish," he says.

Krista Morgan, the owner and operator of Beachwood Resort on Lower Buckhorn Lake north of Peterborough, agrees the meal has its own gravitational pull on her guests. One family of repeat customers has been bringing multiple generations up from their home in the U.S. for the last 45 summers.



Want to get your own fry on? Fishing resorts like Oak Lake, Beachwood, and Auld Reekie are as close as anglers can get to a sure thing in terms of a triumphant fishing expedition, but Ontario also offers a range of other fishing options. While most fishing in the province requires a licence for anyone between the ages of 18 and 64, certain dates such as Family Fishing Week in July (July 2 to 10 this year) allow Canadian residents to fish for free (though catch limits, size limits and other regulations still apply). Single-day fishing licences are also available for under \$25.

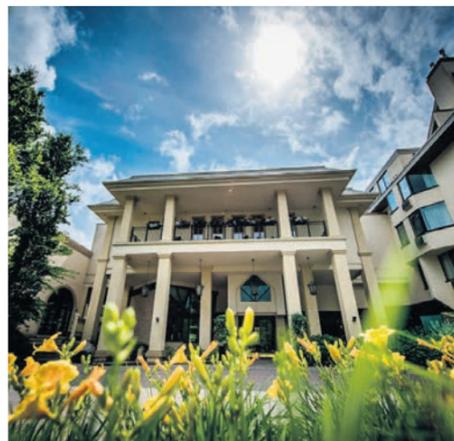
While the remoteness of destinations like Oak Lake Lodge or Auld Reekie Lodge on Gowanda Lake in Northeastern Ontario is part of the appeal for many, there are also plenty of spots on the shores of Ontario lakes and rivers that offer prime fishing opportunities that don't require a boat, from Rice Lake to St. Mary's River Rapids. The community of Temiskaming Shores on Lake Temiskaming is considered one of the province's under-the-radar angling gems with huge caches of pickerel as well as smallmouth bass, pike, perch, and catfish.

When it's time to cook up your catch, all that's required is a grill and a large skillet or roasting pan that can hold plenty of oil. Batter favourites include beer batter, tempura-style coating, breadcrumbs or classic cornmeal. You'll know the fish is ready to be fried when the oil shimmers. Traditional side dishes complete the meal. Think: potato or pasta salads, coleslaw, and maple baked beans.

Wherever you decide to partake in the fish fry tradition, follow local rules about fishing and outdoor grilling. Above all, make sure you have enough fish! After a first taste of the fish fry, not many people say no to a second serving.

For the ultimate in local dining, indulge in a traditional Ontario shore lunch this summer.

## Gourmet resort getaways



Hockley Valley Resort

At these Ontario resorts, your next great meal can be found just steps away from your hotel room.

**Deerhurst Resort Muskoka**

Set on a 760-acre property overlooking Peninsula Lake in Huntsville, Deerhurst delivers meals that are just as inspiring as its top-notch waterfront views. Menus at the resort's four Feast On Certified restaurants combine local ingredients with culinary influence from the diverse cultural backgrounds of its kitchen team, says executive chef Gus Gulmar. Be sure to try at least one dish that incorporates the resort's own honey or maple syrup, which are gathered on-site. Summers at Deerhurst bring additional culinary options, including beachside eats provided by locally owned food trucks.

**Hockley Valley Resort**

Located in the Town of Mono, Hockley Valley's flair for gastronomy can be traced back to its founders, according to general manager Ken Murray. "The original owners – the Adamos – came from Italy and food and wine and hospitality have always been a huge part of their culture," he explains. Hockley Valley blends these European-influenced cooking techniques with a farm-to-table approach: Much of the produce served at the resort's main restaurant comes from a garden on the property. The culinary team also makes many artisan products from scratch, including prosciutto, which is aged in-house. If all that wasn't enough to lure staycationers in search of excellent food and drink, visitors also have the opportunity to sip small-batch wines at Hockley

Valley's sister property Adamo Estate Winery.

**Elmhirst's Resort**

At Elmhirst's Resort in the Kawarthas, trails curve through 400 acres of farmland adjacent to the property, allowing visitors to see where their food is grown. Now in its fourth generation of family ownership, Elmhirst's raises its own Black Angus cattle, turkeys and Pekin ducks, in addition to growing a wide range of produce and herbs. "How I like to describe the food experience here is, unique farm-to-table dining in a lakeside setting," says general manager Greg Elmhirst. A VQA wine cellar with between 60 to 70 labels and local microbrewed beer on tap complement dishes featuring "Elmhirst's Own" ingredients that have been farmed or raised on the property.

**Langdon Hall**

Chef Jason Bangarter says walking around Langdon Hall's garden, where he and his team often bring produce straight from the soil to the kitchen, is essential for visitors who want to understand the resort's farm-to-table ethos. "Anything you have in the dining room that is a vegetable – 90 percent of it comes from the property," says Bangarter. From ripe coriander seeds to trout lily picked before flowering, Bangarter takes advantage of the opportunity to work with produce that's only available for a few weeks. He also forages for ingredients, including morels and wild leeks, on the Cambridge resort's 75-acre property. These unusual ingredients, combined with Bangarter's exceptional execution and talent for beautiful plating, make for a dining experience that's regularly touted as one of Canada's best.

**Heather Lodge**

The menu at Heather Lodge in the Haliburton Highlands changes daily, with executive chef James Jennings given free rein to get creative with the freshest ingredients available. The lodge works with nearby suppliers like Abbey Gardens, Wintergreen Maple Products and Kawartha Dairy to develop delicious dishes that showcase the best of the area's homegrown bounty, while craft beers and Niagara region wines round out the restaurant's locally-driven Feast On Certified dining program.

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Indigenous TOURISM ONTARIO

# Three food-loving regions serving up summer adventure

Hastings County, Niagara Benchlands and Perth have more to offer than just good looks – take in art, culture and delicious food in these scenic Ontario destinations

Warm breezes, long evenings and sunny days are a harbinger of a summer well spent. To take summer up on its promise of adventure, look no further than Ontario's sprawling backyard: Hastings County, Niagara Benchlands and the Town of Perth all offer great excuses to get away for a weekend. Here are our suggestions for how to spend a delightful – and delicious – 48 hours in each.

## Hastings County

Halfway between Ottawa and Toronto, this sprawling region is made up of welcoming towns, farmlands and villages encompassing 14 municipalities. It reaches from the Bay of Quinte to Algonquin Park and is ripe with boreal forest, refreshing lakes, small-town charm, trails, sights – and many culinary treats. Take the region from the top with Bancroft as your first stop. Bancroft Brew Pub is located on the main artery, and the patioed restaurant is a great pick for lunch. If dishes up everything from apps to pasta to lager-battered fish and chips, while the beer menu focuses on brewed-in-house crafts from the Canadian Shield's own Bancroft Brewing Co. After your meal, you really must trek five minutes south to Kawartha Dairy, a cottage country staple. Scooping for more than 80 years and with 50-plus flavours of ice cream, the iconic, family-owned company doesn't skimp on serving size. Small cones feel sky-high, which is not a problem since signature

flavours like Moose Tracks and Wolf Paws are so delicious. Next stop: Marmora, which has a weekly 18-vendor farmers' market with everything from handmade soaps, stained glass, date squares, local preserves, fresh-baked breads and a smoker food truck. While en route, keep your eyes peeled for roadside farm stands and local honey, which are always worth the stop. Finish the trip in the city of Belleville, where you can cap the day off with a seat on the waterfront patio at the Boathouse Seafood Restaurant. Go for buttery lobster, snow crab legs or classic surf and turf.

## What to do

Dubbed the Mineral Capital of Canada, you can literally find a hidden gem in Bancroft's CN Rockpile. Sift through pebbles, rocks and stones to find some pretty, all-natural souvenirs at this former quarry. When you're done, pop into the Bancroft Mineral Museum to learn more about the region's mining history. If you're looking for adventure, the all-season Hastings Heritage Trail is a striking way to take in the area by bike. While you're in Belleville, peruse the quaint downtown core's bustling shops, making sure to pop into Funk & Gruven A-Z for a hit of antique nostalgia.

## Where to stay

Marmora is small, cute and part way between Bancroft and Belleville. Limestone Bed & Breakfast is an 1860s home-away-from-home steeped in history and surrounded by beautiful gardens. The rooms are named after semi-precious stones, which is quite fitting, since it's close to the abandoned pit at Marmora Mine.

## Niagara Benchlands

Never heard of the Niagara Benchlands? That's because it's a new initiative spearheaded by the southern Ontario town of Lincoln that encompasses the Niagara-adjacent



180 Estate Winery is just one of many wineries to enjoy in Niagara Benchlands.

towns of Beamsville, Campden, Vineland, Jordan, Rockway, Tintern and, of course, Lincoln. Celebrating the tastemakers, trails and parks that trace the Niagara Escarpment, there's much to see and do. Prime location for vineyards, there's absolutely no shortage of wineries: 180 Estate Winery, Stoney Ridge Estate Winery, Honsberger Estate Winery, Angels Gate Winery and plenty more. If it's a multi-course dinner that you seek (and, honestly, it should be) The Restaurant at Redstone Winery in Beamsville is a good one to check out. The contemporary dining room offers views to the vineyard, and the menu is stacked with local ingredients. Don't miss the Upper Canada ricotta tortellini or the grilled Cornish hen. In nearby Jordan Station, Blossom Bakery is the spot to source an assortment of goodies. Inclusive of the vegan and gluten-free crowd, the kitschy homestyle joint has flatbread pizzas, like-grandma-used-to-make squares, flaky-sweet butter tarts, pies, granola and even hot sauce.

## What to do

Wine tastings are obviously on the list, but as well as grapes, Niagara Benchlands is bursting with fresh produce, farmers markets and cute stores. In Vineland you can visit The Watering Can Flower Market. Inspired by European shops, the family-run company is a beacon for the plant obsessed with a side of coffee and treats. Also in Vineland is Peach Country Farm, which, as the name suggests, is a peach-lovers' oasis. If you can imagine it, they've got it, including peach muffins, tarts, ice

cream, cookies and jams. If a picnic is on your to-do list, you can also pre-order cherries, plums, apples and nectarines to go with your baked sweets for curbside pickup. Support local artists with a trip to Northern Expressions Inuit Art Gallery where you can shop prints, drawings, soapstone carvings and more.

## Where to stay

The Bed and Breakfast at Vieni Estates in Beamsville is a serene place to rest after a day of wine tasting and escarpment exploration. Your stay includes a gourmet breakfast made from local ingredients. The expansive saltwater pool is a prime spot to enjoy the region's beauty and blazing sunsets.

## Town of Perth

Originally set up after the War of 1812, this charming town maintains its character-rich heritage, enticing tourists to come "check out their backyard." The town's population may be small – just under 6,000 people – but it's big on attractions, activities, food and fun. To get here, travel 83 kilometres southwest of Ottawa towards Lanark County. Plan a stop at Blackfly Grub Hub for artisanal doughnuts and gourmet hot dogs. If you're serious about fried dough, you can pre-order faves like over-the-top birthday cake and tender, fruit-studded apple fritter. For something a bit more substantial, try Picnic Cafe and Catering where you'll want to sink your teeth into the Montreal-smoked meat or the tangy-delicious Kimchi Reuben. To match the town's European aesthetic,

go for dinner at one of the oldest food spots, Maximilian Restaurant. Wienerschnitzel is made fresh daily and served with buttery mashed potatoes and a lemon wedge – it's the locals' go-to. On a warm day, take a jaunt down the street to the ice cream window at Peter's Family Fare Restaurant, which is also where you should definitely have breakfast in the morning.

## What to do

The town's proximity to the Tay River makes it an optimal place to hike and take in some pine-scented air. The Tay River Trail is a choose-your-own adventure: Either hike it through downtown or make your way upstream towards Bobs Lake or downstream where the river meets Lower Rideau Lake. Or, pick a whole other beaten trail using the Perth and Area Hiking Guide. For a different type of walk, revisit the past at the Perth Museum. The stone house was built in 1840 and shares the preserved lifestyle of longtime Perth residents, the Matheson family. Downtown has all the shops you need, from quaint bookstores to flowers to gifts to clothes, all housed within architecturally pleasing structures.

## Where to stay

Nevis Estate is a stone house built in 1842 that has a handful of luxurious rooms and common areas that preserve the era's charm with moulding and ceiling medallions while seamlessly incorporating comfort with a modern feel. If you're sweaty after a hike, you'll especially enjoy the outdoor pool.

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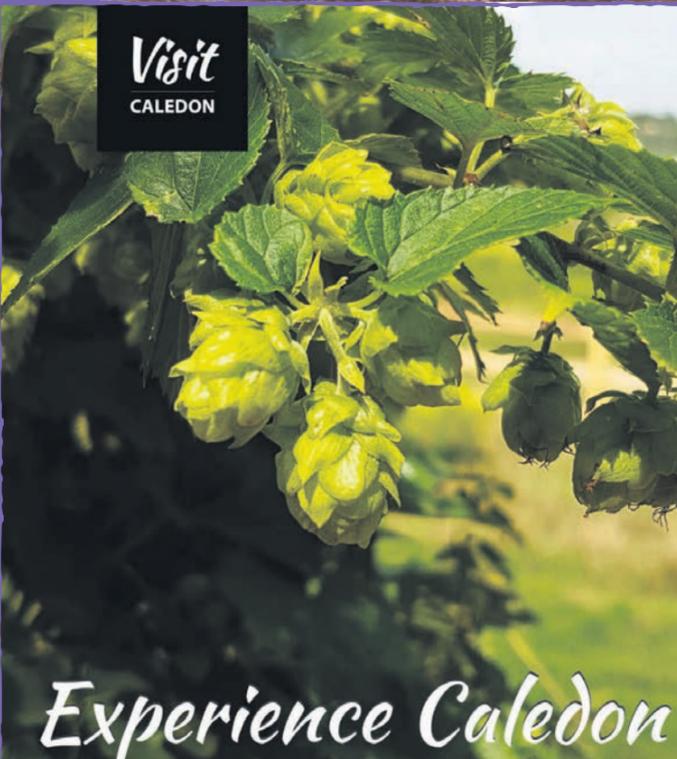
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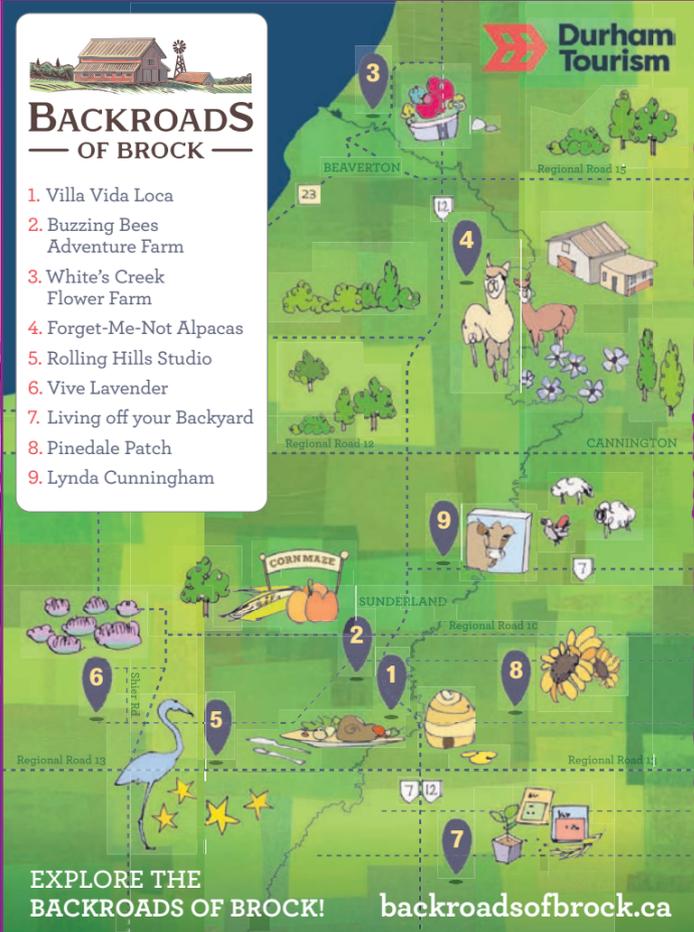
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# A foraged feast

With his nine-course tasting menu at Naagan, Owen Sound-based chef **Zach Keeshig** is creating a one-of-a-kind Indigenous culinary experience



Keeshig's creativity shines through in dishes like his "foraging for mushrooms" dessert, below.

There is a sacred cultural rebirth afoot in Owen Sound. That's where chef Zach Keeshig has been running Naagan, a Feast On Certified weekly pop-up dinner series nestled in the heart of the city's historical farmers market, for the past eight years.

On the surface, Naagan, which is named after the Ojibwe word for dish, is an inventive and adventurous nine-course meal featuring dishes like a wild rice cracker topped with smoked duck, wild elderberry powder and fried wild rice; pork loin rolled in dehydrated and powder oyster mushrooms; or, for dessert, a mini ice cream bar filled with duck egg custard.

But its purpose goes deeper. Keeshig launched the pop-up both as a way to share his Ojibwe culture with curious diners, and as an ongoing culinary experiment education for himself and his team.

"We want to be at the forefront, showing people how to use things that are coming off the land. We are big advocates of Aboriginal cuisine, because there isn't much out there," Keeshig says. "When we bring dishes out to our customers, we're telling them what's in our cuisine, and an educational story about what herbs are in there. [For example], with our sweetgrass ice cream, we tell them it's one of our medicinal herbs. We source that locally as well."

Keeshig began his culinary education at Georgian College, then went on to apprentice with executive chef Tim Johnston of Sweetwater Restaurant and Bar at Cobble Beach

Golf Resort near Owen Sound. From there, he worked at Michael Stadlander's legendary Eigensinn Farm and Langdon Hall in Cambridge, Ont. Knowing he wanted to combine his culinary skills with his cultural heritage, he then began building Naagan.

"We're learning the techniques that I've learned in a professional kitchen atmosphere, and we're getting back to the land – we're foraging, we're sourcing our ingredients straight from the ground, from local purveyors around here. And whatever we can't source or forage, we grow ourselves," he says.

The menu changes seasonally in tune with Mother Earth's offerings and revolves around the belief that Ojibwe people have a sacred relationship with Mother Earth that permeates through to modern day. This relationship is honoured through Keeshig's delectable offerings, which are 90-per-cent sourced locally, if not actually foraged.

"Our signature dish on the menu that's always evolving is the wood-fired bannock, house-smoked lake fish and quark made from Saugeen yogurt with pureed stinging nettle. We are always trying to be innovative with the products that we forage or source; to be as local as possible," Keeshig says.

But it's not just about the meals he serves during the weekly pop-up dinner. Community engagement and education are also important to Keeshig; so, he seeks to go beyond the restaurant by hosting foraging

walks, where he instructs attendees in the fine art of searching for delicious wild-grown ingredients, from blueberries to mint. In the future, he wants to go even further, building Indigenous culinary internships with the help of trusted suppliers and offering other educational programming around food, flavours and the medicinal benefits of different ingredients.

"It's not just a dining experience," he says. "I've always been a big believer in giving back my knowledge, so now we're able to reach out to schools and educate youth and give them an idea of what progressive Aboriginal cuisine looks like."



## Five more Indigenous food and tourism businesses to explore

### THRIVE TOURS (Sault Ste. Marie)

This tour company offers eco cultural tours where guests can hear stories and teachings, and learn about Indigenous food gathering and preparation techniques. This summer, opt for tours focused on bushcraft, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, camping and, new for 2022, learning how to powwow.

### MĀDAHÒKI FARM (Ottawa)

Ottawa's Mādahòki Farm engages all ages and all communities through a food-based Indigenous agricultural program. Its signature event is the Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival, known nationally for its vibrant culture and artisan showcase.

### ANISHINAABE WILD RICE EXPERIENCE (Thunder Bay)

This Indigenous rice farm seeks to intimately connect visitors with the experience of growing wild rice, or manomin. During the two-day experience, learn how to harvest the rice from a canoe, then take part in the drying, cleaning, thrashing and roasting process.

### MANITOULIN BREWING COMPANY (Little Current)

This popular Indigenous-owned brewery isn't just the place to go for its award-winning brews, including popular Swing Bridge and Bridal Veil pale ales. It's also helping visitors get the whole Manitoulin Island experience with a new app that points them toward the most delicious things to do and see in the area.

### RESTAURANT AT KAY-NAH-CHI-WAH-NUNG HISTORIC CENTRE (Stratton)

Come to "the Place of the Long Rapids" and experience a truly Anishinaabe menu that features wild rice, bannock, walleye and other delicacies celebrated across Northern Ontario.

# Meet Ontario's most underrated craft beverage destination

Sarnia, Lambton and Middlesex Counties are home to some of the most exciting new cideries, wineries and breweries in the province

When you think "hot Ontario food and drink destination," your first thought might not be Sarnia, Lambton and Middlesex – at least not yet. But the region, which is set on the sandy shores of Lake Huron, is an up-and-coming foodie hotspot with a growing slate of must-visit breweries, cideries and wineries. (It actually sits at the same latitudinal plain as Northern California!) Want to check it out while it's still something of a hidden gem? Here's where to start.

### Rusty Wrench Brewing Co. 9 Front St. W., Strathroy

This Strathroy microbrewery opened in 2018, with Chris Traczuk as owner, brewer and supervisor of a family-friendly pub where regular Thursday 'hoppy' hours, dart nights and the Rusty Wrench signature Big Hef'n Hammer hefeweizen, or German-style wheat beer, have become local favourites. Want to take in the sights first? Reserve a seat on the sidewalk patio, work up a thirst at the nearby conservation area, then head back to Rusty Wrench, where you can kick back with a citrusy pint of the Apprentice SHIPA Staff Helped India Pale Ale.

### Brewster's Mill Brewing 36 Ontario St. N., Grand Bend

Six friends launched this tap room/store in summer 2021, naming their new business after Grand Bend's former moniker. Drop by for a pint with a side of live music on weekends, or pick up fins or a growler of 1832 Irish Stout, River Pigs IPA and Crooked Waters cream ale, all of which are tributes to the area's history.

### The Tin Fiddler Brewpub 146 Christina St. N., Sarnia

Everything on the menu at this welcoming pub is made from scratch – including the beer. The Tin Fiddler is the exclusive home of River Run Brew Co.'s handcrafted ales, porter and stout, including the Nut Buster, a peanut butter porter and River Run,



a pale ale. Guests can enjoy their selections straight-up, or in a delicious beer cocktail, including the Day Drunk, which combines River Run with coconut rum, orange liqueur and pineapple juice for a drink that feels like a summer vacation.

### Two Water Brewing 446 Lyndoch St., Corunna

Myka Barnes first started making beer in her basement, but when her operation kept growing, she and two

partners took the leap and launched the first brewery in the town of Corunna. Two Water's offerings include ales, lager and stout – all in well-designed, vintage-look cans, might we add.

### Black Gold Brewery 395 Fletcher St., Petrolia

Founded just 18 months ago by four Petrolia couples, this Lambton County brewery is new on the scene, but already making waves. On-tap options include Derrick IPA, Oiler's Daughter American Amber Wheat, Pantless in Petrolia IPA and What the Frack brown ale, which nabbed a gold at the Ontario Brewing Awards in December 2021.

### Stonepicker Brewing Company 7143 Forest Rd., Plympton-Wyoming

When farmers Joe and Mary Donker retired from their full-time swine operation, there was just one thing to do: plant barley, then use it to make beer. Sold by the pint, can, bottle, growler or keg, Stonepicker makes an ale, lager, pilsner and/or stout for every occasion. The outfit also hosts fun events, including concerts, trivia nights and even yoga and beer classes.



### Alton Farms Estate Winery 5547 Aberarder Line, Plympton-Wyoming

When Marc and Anne Alton established a seven-acre vineyard on the south shores of Lake Huron in 2005, they took the first step in creating what has become the Huron Shores appellation. Almost 20 years later, the Altons offer multiple vintages, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc.

### Shale Ridge Estate Winery & Cider 9090 Widder Rd., Thedford

Established in 2019 by owners Alicia and Garren Hardman, Shale Ridge uses its 13 acres for growing grapes to make its Gamay Noir, Riesling and the Farmerette Rose. Ciders, including the very popular Blueberry Hops Hard Cider, are also on offer, made from apples grown at nearby Juicy Fruit Farms (which is run by Alicia's parents).

### Twin Pines Orchard & Cider House 8169 Kennedy Line, Thedford

Owned and operated since 1968 by the Vansteenkiste family, Twin Pines Orchard produces over a million pounds of 25 commercial apple varieties and 15 heritage varieties, which they use to make their award-winning Hammer Bent series of ciders. Visit the farm on weekends to wander the walking trails and taste apple wine, a flight of ciders or a cider mimosa.

All of these stops can be found on the Great Taste of Ontario! Download a Middlesex, Sarnia, Lambton passport and plan a day – or a weekend – to check out the region's tasty libations.

## Three more off-the-beaten-path craft beverage destinations

### For gin lovers... Wellington, Waterloo and Perth Counties

From Guelph's Spring Mill Distillery to Elora Distilling Co., there's a brand-new boozy trail launching that's sure to delight gin lovers. The Craft Gin Trail, which officially debuts on June 11 (World Gin Day!), is the perfect way to check out some of the province's best distilleries.

### For brew enthusiasts... Brantford

This Southern Ontario city is home to irresistible and unique craft breweries, including Bell City Brewing, Steel Wheel Brewery and Mash Paddle Brewing Co. There's also plenty more experiences in neighbouring Brant County.

### For oenophiles... Norfolk County

Must-visit stops in this off-the-beaten-path wine region include Burning Kiln Winery, Bonnieheath Estate Lavender and Winery, and Hounds of Erie Winery.



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# A sweet history of Ontario mead

Mead, a honey wine with a centuries-long history, has only been commercially produced in Ontario for a few decades – and it's finally getting its due

It's early on a Friday morning, and Sarah Allinson-Chorabik has a busy day ahead of her.

"We bottled about 60 cases of our dry mead yesterday," says the co-founder of Ontario Honey Creations, whose husband Peter has been out tending some of their 600 hives since 4:30 a.m. "Today, I'm labeling those bottles. It's really an ongoing effort," she says of the work that goes into making their artisanal mead, a honey wine with ancient roots that's generating brand new buzz lately.

Still, life at the meadery should be quieter than the day before, when the noise of mead being pumped from a thousand-litre tank into individual bottles filled the air of their otherwise tranquil property in Mulmur, located halfway between Orangeville and Collingwood.

"It's chaotic," says Allinson-Chorabik, who left the corporate world behind for full-time beekeeping and honey-producing in 2015, then branched out into mead making not long after. "But the smell of the mead is heavenly."

And it is: think the tangy undertone of fermentation, kissed with the sweetness of honey and a lingering top note of brightness – in this case, cranberry and rhubarb, which hints at the fruit that's been infused into this particular batch, based on a recipe brought from Poland by Peter Chorabik's beekeeping ancestors.

"They'd do it the good old way," laughs Allinson-Chorabik. "I joke they'd put some honey and water in a bucket, and mix it with a hockey stick." Ontario Honey Creation's own process, assisted by an employee with deep knowledge of the wine

industry, is a touch more sophisticated these days, although the central principle remains: Use honey as the fermenting sugar, like you'd use grapes for wine or malted barley for beer, to create an alcoholic beverage.

From there, however, the creative potential is exponential, says Ryan Corrigan, winemaker at Rosewood Estates Winery and Meadery in Beamsville, right in the heart of the Niagara Benchlands fruit belt. "Within mead, there are a lot of different categories," he notes, reeling off the options: pyment, which is honey co-fermented with grapes; metheglin, infused with spices, named after the Welsh words for "healing liquor"; and cyser, fermented with apple juice. "It's a unique playing ground where you can experiment, where you're either trying to showcase the honey or use it as a sugar to create a different product entirely."

Rosewood Estates' flagship Mead Royale, aged in barrels for six months, is one of the few meads to be found at the LCBO, and is designed to show off the honey it's made from.

"There's a terroir aspect to honey," says Corrigan, referencing an idea borrowed from winemaking, where the specific landscape and soil where grapes grow is integral to a wine's character. "Honey has a vintage variation effect, just like grape wine does. How the honey tastes depends on what the bees are out pollinating," he explains. "If you put hives in an area where there are a lot of blueberries, or lavender, like on our farm, or in an apple or peach orchard, the characteristics come through in the resulting honey." And, in turn, that affects the mead it makes, especially since environmental factors – like last year's dry summer – play a major part in where bees go to find that all-important nectar.

"When we're given the honey, we taste it and decide what kind of beverage we make," says Corrigan,



Clockwise from top: At Rosewood Estates Winery and Meadery, mead is barrel-aged for six months. ROB ANZIT PHOTOGRAPHY; Ontario Honey Creations makes its mead from old family recipes; though it's made using honey, mead isn't always sweet itself!



an, who leaves the beekeeping to others, including Rosewood's owner Eugene Roman, who learned the skill from his father, who kept bees in his native Ukraine. This could result in anything from Rosewood's Mead Blanc, a lighter, citrus-driven product made using its Riesling and Gewürztraminer juice, or darker, smokier drinks made using barrels that formerly held spirits like cognac or sherry.

"You can make anything that inspires you, and it's a really fun mead-ium, pardon the pun, to work with," says Corrigan. The owners of Ontario Honey Creations echo this sentiment; they've made everything from a buckwheat honey-based mead that was almost as dark and rich as Guinness, to their new fruit-flavoured seltzer-esque "session" meads in a can, to an upcoming mead infused in red wine barrels that's going to be a

rosé-like pink.

"When it comes to mead, the common misconception we're fighting is that it's a dessert wine," he adds, noting the various preparations can create such different products that they've been able to create entire dinners where each course is paired with a different mead. "You think when you're making wine with honey that it's going to be sweet," concurs Allinson-Chorabik. "And for some people that can be off-putting."

That's why her "entry-level" mead pick is always a dry one, which she says is "shockingly good," because your taste buds are surprised by a crispness, followed by a hint of the honey. "It pairs nicely with any kind of food," she adds.

Mead itself is an ancient drink – archaeologists in northern China have found traces of fermented honey on pieces of pottery dating to 7000 BCE, and we derive the word "honeymoon" from the jar of honey wine Scandinavian couples got after their wedding. Its commercial history in this province is quite a bit shorter.

"When I started making mead, there was nothing in Ontario," recalls John Bryans of Munro Honey and

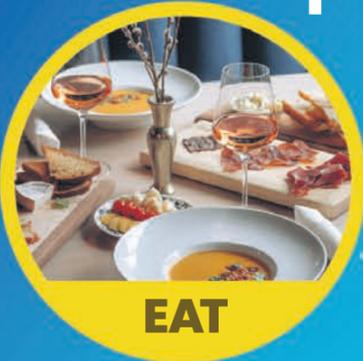
Meadery in Lambton County, whose family has been farming honey since 1914, and who began making mead in the early 1990s. "I read that I could make alcohol out of honey, and I looked at my warehouse and thought, 'I've got lots of honey. I should try that.'"

His early efforts were experimental and tailored to his own taste for a dry wine. While Munro's primary product remains honey, mead now accounts for 20 per cent of its business, and Bryans only expects that to grow. "When we started selling mead in 2000, we were the first commercial meadery in the province. When I'd go and do wine shows, people would look at me like I was off my rocker," he recalls, noting the scene in the U.S. was much more developed, even then. "It only took 20 years of selling it, but I'm starting to see people realize what mead is."

And begin to appreciate it, as Allinson-Chorabik is discovering as well. "The best part of this is talking to people at farmers markets, and seeing them get excited about it," she says. "We talked about doing this ten years ago, and now our hard work is paying off, and we're seeing our dreams come true."

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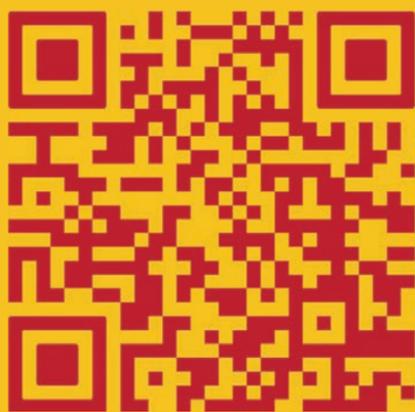
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