

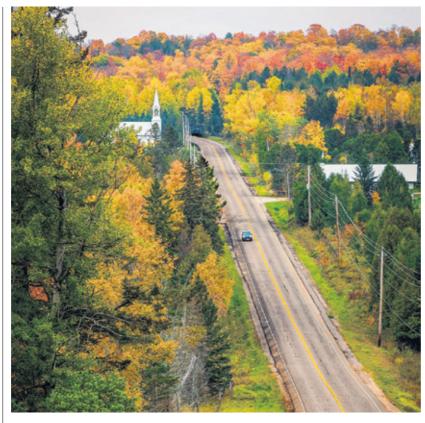
Take a road trip to one (or all) of these three Ontario regions for some fun, fall colours and fantastic food

he days are getting cooler and the lazy days of summer are in the rear-view mirror, but that doesn't mean there's not plenty of fun to be had. These three counties, Chatham-Kent, North Bay and the Ottawa Valley, are all full of wonderful excuses to get away for a weekend. Here's how to spend a delicious and wonderful 48 hours in these welcoming regions.

CHATHAM-KENT

Chatham-Kent is a mostly rural municipality that straddles Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair. To get the most out of your time in the CK, follow the Bakery Trail, a self-guided tour that will lead you right to the best breads and pastries in the region. Some delicious highlights include Maple City Bakery (which has been slinging baked goods since 1960) and Big Ricky's Little Bake Shoppe (which has been dubbed the home of CK's best desserts for two years running). If you're more interested in brews than bread, Chatham-Kent is also home to a number of microbreweries and wineries. Enjoy a cold one by the lake at Bayside Brewing Co. in Erieau or head over to Early Acres Estate Winery for a glass of 100-per-cent Canadian-made wine. If you're hungry for more, head over to Tray Parker's Real Texas BBQ in Charing Cross, which feels like stepping into a small Texan town complete with perfectly smoked ribs and juicy pulled pork. Or, check out Casa Bella in Chatham, which overlooks the Thames River and offers a variety of pasta, veal, seafood and steak entrees - there's something for everyone.

What to do: Because of its location between two lakes, Chatham-Kent is a great place to get in touch with the outdoors. Learn how to kitesurf at Mitchell's Bay on Lake St. Clair or visit the St. Clair National Wildlife Area for prime birdwatching.



Where to stay: Retro Suites in downtown Chatham is right in the middle of the sprawling region and has a stylish vintage vibe. The boutique hotel is also home to the Chilled Cork Restaurant Lounge, for a quick and yummy late-night bite.

NORTH BAY

North Bay is a city in Northeastern Ontario on the shores of Lake Nipissing. Start your day off with a coffee and breakfast at Twiggs Coffee Roasters, which serves up specialty coffees and traditional breakfasts. The North Bay Farmers' Market is a great spot to stock up on snacks for a picnic lunch in one of the area's many hiking spots. For sips, enjoy a beer flight at New Ontario Brewing Co., which also has live music on the weekends. As a bonus, there are often food trucks stopped outside the brewery for a quick bite with your brew. Cap off the day at The Boat, North Bay's landmark restaurant, where you can enjoy a lakeside dinner while enjoying the views off of the sprawling deck. Or, if you're looking for something a bit more low key, head to Greco's Pizza, which has been one of the city's most beloved local spots since 1913, when it started out as a bakery. Its signature pies are baked directly on stone bricks.

What to do: Also called the "gateway to the North," North Bay is close to a number of prime hiking trails and conservation areas where you can lace up your hiking boots and com-

mune with nature, like the nearby Mattawa River Provincial Park and the Eau Claire Gorge Conservation Trails. Downtown North Bay is also home to unique art galleries, museums and cultural centres that highlight the work of artists from Northern Ontario. The North Bay Museum and the WKP Kennedy Gallery are must-visits.

Where to stay: The Days Inn and Suites by Wyndham North Bay is within easy walking distance to many of the city's galleries, museums, restaurants and bars, so you can take North Bay by foot to maximize your sight-seeing.

OTTAWA VALLEY

The Ottawa Valley is also known as the Whitewater Capital of Canada and is home to more than 900 lakes, making it a picturesque getaway close to the nation's capital. Grab a morning coffee and some breakfast at Neat Coffee Shop in Burnstown. If you come back to Neat in the evenings, you'll be treated to a delicious cocktail and bites menu that you can enjoy while taking in live music or comedy. The 86 Bistro and Market in Deep River is another must-visit that just opened in late July. On top of its picturesque patio, 86 Bistro also sells fresh burgers, steaks and sausages that you can take home and grill yourself. For a cold bevvy, head to . Whitewater Brewing Co and Lakeside Brew Pub. Open year round, the brewery is right on the Ottawa River, where you can enjoy one of their

brewskis with something off their seasonal menu featuring local ingredients. For dessert, grab a BeaverTail in Killaloe, the birthplace of the iconic Canadian treat. Pair your BeaverTail with a coffee from Fifth Chute Coffee. where you can also pick up a fresh loaf of bread.

What to do: There's a ton to do and see in the Ottawa Valley region. If you're looking for an outdoor adventure, take a guided ATV and off-road motorcycle tour with Tom Irwin Adventure Tours. Or go whitewater rafting with OWL Rafting or Wilderness Tours if you're not afraid to get wet. If it's a rainy day, stay dry by visiting the Canadian Clock Museum, the country's only clock museum where you can learn about timetellers from the early 1800s up to the present day.

Where to stay: The Whitewater Inn located in Beachburg is also home to Jamieson Travel and Valley Cycle Tours, so you can rent e-bikes on the premises for a guided tour around the beautiful property. The inn also hosts farm-to-fork dinner events and there's a brand-new sauna on-site so you can relax after a long day of adventures.



Top: Sweet tooths, take note. Chatham-Kent's Bakery Trail offers visitors a chance to check out more than 20 local bakeries.

Left: Fall is one of the best times to see the Ottawa Valley, especially if you're a fan of leaf-peeping.

Middle right: Enjoy a lakeside dinne at one of North Bay's most iconic restaurants, The Boat.

Bottom right: Learn about modern and historical time pieces at Ottawa Valley's Clock Museum.

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GT2 • SPONSOR CONTENT FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022



Próst!

The secret history of Ontario's Oktoberfests

To understand how Ontarians began celebrating fall with beer, lederhosen and Bavarian cuisine, you have to go back to 1810, when Prince Regent Ludwig of Bavaria (who would eventually become King Ludwig I) and Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen celebrated their marriage with a five-day carnival in Munich. It was such a hit with the city's populace – who doesn't love nearly a week of revelry? – that the next year, they did it again, combining it with the state fair. By 1818, it was an annual event, with booths selling the region's signature beer and sausages. Oktoberfest, Germany's famous two-week celebration of the fall harvest, was born.

Fast-forward to southern Ontario in the late 1960s, when a German club in a city once called Berlin (which was subsequently renamed Kitchener during the First World War during a wave of xenophobia) decided to throw its own Oktoberfest to mark Canada's 100th birthday. That first celebration at the Concordia Club in 1967 drew around 2,500 people, so the next year they invited a few other German clubs in the area to join in, almost doubling the crowd.

By 1969, the area's chamber of commerce spotted a promising tourism opportunity, and the event became known as Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, Ontario's first and longest-running 'volksfest,' the German term for an outdoor event that combines a beer or wine festival with a fun fair. In the first year alone, it attracted 75,000 people, who ate and drank their way through 57,000 gallons of specially-brewed Bavarian beer and 50,000 pounds of sausages. (Not bad for an event that started with a \$200 budget!)

Oktoberfest

19th-century

Bavaria, but

the very first

happened in

the country's

100th birthday

Canadian event

has its roots in

And while the crowds are a bit bigger now – more than 700,000 people attended at the pre-pandemic peak – the festival really isn't so different from the grainy Kodachrome snaps of those early years, where smiling faces cheers the camera, stein of beer in hand, or laughing children twirl each other around

a dance floor, the skirts of their traditional dirndls spinning around them, a polka band playing in the background.

The spirit of the festival is certainly unchanged, says Allan Cayenne, the festival's president. "We call it 'Gemütlichkeit,' which is a welcoming atmosphere," he says, referring to a word that doesn't quite translate into English, but implies a cross between warmth and good cheer and means something akin to coziness.

How that plays out across the festival, however, is very much a choose-yourown Bavarian adventure. "Everyone has their own thing about the festival that makes it special for them," says Cayenne, who is not German himself but grew

up in the Kitchener area and fell in love with the festival's open-hearted, open-armed joy - not to mention its impact on the community through charitable giving. "Some people book a table for dinner and then they'll move into grabbing some drinks and playing some games," he says. "Other people go straight to the bar and enjoy a beer, while other people will head straight to the dance floor. The annual Thanksgiving Day Parade, which draws thousands, is also a festival highlight. "Everyone can come and be German for the day," says Cayenne of the festival that's running in Kitchener-Waterloo this year from Sept. 23 to Oct. 15.



About 8,000

Toronto's

Oktoberfest every year, where they

annual

25,000

pints of beer and 10,000

schnitzels and sausages.

Key to many Oktoberfest are its "festhallen," which literally translates to "festival halls," but can really be anywhere the tradition is celebrated. At the Kitchener-Waterloo event, along with a centralized "Willkommen Platz" – a literal "welcoming place" in the city center with performers, food vendors, and two beer tents – they have a variety of festhallen across the region, including those hosted by the area's different German clubs, each with its own flavour, literally.

"Each of the German clubs were founded by people who trace their roots to different parts of Bavaria or German-speaking Europe," explains Cayenne. "They each have their own atmosphere and unique food offerings." The Alpine Club, for example, is the place to go for home-made strudel (get there early, because it tends to sell out!), while the Transylvania Club is known for the traditional delicacy pig tails, the Schwaben Club is the cabbage roll destination, and Hubertus Haus offers rollbraten, a pork roast you might not find anywhere else. "Concordia Club makes a mean schnitzel," adds Cayenne, who's been in the kitchens with many of the clubs as they've made their specialties.

"You get a different experience depending on where you go," he says. "That's awesome, because sometimes people are looking for that big tent set up, similar to what you'd see in Munich, where you've got two or three thousand people to celebrate with. Sometimes you just want that cozy atmosphere with 200 people where it's a little more intimate."

ONTARIO'S OCTOBERFESTS, GT6





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aquaterrakingston.com



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chezpiggy.ca



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dianneskingston.com



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harpersburgerbar.com



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ottercreekfarms.ca



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atomica.ca



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GT4 • SPONSOR CONTENT FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Six unique fall stays for foodies

From a farmhouse on a working vineyard to a vacation home run by a local celebrity chef, these food-focused accommodations are must-visits

With harvest season in full swing, fewer crowds, and menus brimming with autumn flavours, fall is a superb time of year to take your taste buds on a road trip. Foodies travel far and wide in search of unique culinary experiences, from vacation homes set on vineyards to chef-run B&Bs, and these off-the-beaten path accommodations bring some of the region's best flavours right to your room. Forget thread counts; breakfast, lunch, and dinner are the highlights at these diner-approved stays.

Long Point Eco-Adventures, St. Williams

Foodies looking to reconnect with nature will find the best of both at Long Point Eco-Adventures, which offers zip-lining, axe-throwing, cycling, kayaking, canoeing and glamping accommodations close to some of Norfolk County's best wineries. Located on a 37-acre former tobacco farm, the resort spans scenic marshlands and Carolinian forest.

Although guests are surrounded by distinctive flora and fauna, the accommodations are anything but roughing it with tented suites and cabin-style pods featuring comfy beds, electricity, and running water. Long Point has its own restaurant and brewery; or it's a hop, skip, and a jump across the street to Burning Kiln Winery, which is known for its appassimento-style wines.

lpfun.ca

Cressy House, Prince Edward County

Who better to host travellers on a memorable foodie getaway than a famed local chef? Located in Prince Edward County, Cressy House is owned and operated by Grant van Gameren, the chef behind well-loved Toronto restaurants like Bar Raval and Bar Isabel. Set on 500 feet of pretty waterfront, van Gameren's rustic-chic vacation home promises a serene escape from the city fit for foodies.

An onsite market allows guests to pick up vegetables grown on the property, such as beets and tomatoes, to cook up meals in the accommodation's beautiful kitchen. For a fee, van Gameren can be hired to personally prepare a family-style meal for guests. From Fifth Town Artisan Cheese to County Cider Co., a wealth of dining and drinking spots can also be found nearby.

cressyhouse.ca

The Grove Hotel, Kingsville

The Grove Hotel's 'A Room with a Brew' brings the brewery vibes to your home-away-from-home. Although the Grove Brew House, which the hotel once overlooked, has relocated a short walk away, the room still evokes your favourite neighbourhood taproom with its wood and leather accents, decorative shelf of growlers, and beer-themed artwork.

This room is one of 18 themed rooms at the Grove, a boutique hotel housed in a handsome 19th-century building. After checking in to 'A Room with a Brew' and getting into the sudsy spirit, you can visit some of the top-notch breweries found steps outside the hotel, including Kingsville Brewing Co. and Banded Goose Brewery.

mygrovehotel.com

The Vineyard Estate House at Cave Spring, Beamsville

Immerse yourself in the romance of wine country at the Vineyard Estate House at Cave Spring. This Victorian-style red brick farmhouse, which sleeps up to 10 people, offers gorgeous views of Cave Spring's vineyards and beyond to Lake Ontario and the Toronto skyline. A picturesque 10-minute stroll through the vineyards brings you to the tasting room, where you can sample flights of Cave Spring's sustainably-certified wines.

Pick up some fresh produce at the nearby roadside stands to make meals in the Estate House's spacious kitchen. Alternatively, it's a quick drive down the road to dozens of other excellent wineries, many of which have noteworthy restaurants, such as the acclaimed Restaurant at Pearl Morissette or its sister cafe, RPM Bakehouse.

cavespring.ca

The Waring House, Prince Edward County

If you enjoy preparing great meals as much as eating them, head to the Waring House to combine your staycation with an opportunity to learn new culinary skills. The inn's popular cooking classes, which have been running for over two decades, focus on a different subject each week, ranging from regional cuisines to featured ingredients. Participants often have the chance to cook with herbs and veggies sourced from the Waring House's own garden.

Of course, you can also leave the cooking to the experts. The menus at Waring House's restaurant, Amelia's Garden, showcase the best of Prince Edward County's local, seasonal bounty. Set in a charming 19th-century building, the inn's rich heritage makes it an especially fitting backdrop for the restaurant's traditional cream tea complete with homemade scones. waringhouse.com

The Farmhouse at 13th Street Winery, St. Catharines

You'd be hard-pressed to imagine a better base for wine tastings than one set directly on a working vineyard. At 13th Street Winery's Farmhouse accommodation, guests can sip exceptional wines while admiring vine views from a private outdoor patio.

With space for up to eight guests, the spiffy Farmhouse includes four bedrooms, three-and-half bathrooms, and a full kitchen. It's a short walk to the winery restaurant, Farmhouse Bistro, to nosh on locally-driven fare or to the Farmhouse Bakery to pick up housemade butter tarts and seasonal preserves. While there's plenty for food lovers to appreciate right onsite, the Farmhouse also gives guests easy access to the Niagara region's many other wonderful wineries.

13thstreetwinery.com







From top: At Long Point Eco-Adventures, tents come equipped with electricity and running water. For beer lovers, there's no better accommodation than the "Room With a Brew" at The Grove, a Kingsville boutique hotel. Extend your stay in wine country by booking a night at Cave Spring's Vineyard Estate House, a red-brick farmhouse that can sleep up to 10. The restaurant at 13th Street Winery offers local, seasonal fare.



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 SPONSOR CONTENT • GT5

How Toronto became a great place to find authentic Caribbean food

From roti shops to jerk stops to high-end culinary destinations, Caribbean immigrants have been bringing the flavour of their homelands to the GTA for decades

It's Friday night and patrons are nestled at Mona's Roti in Scarborough, waiting to get their orders in, the line extending past the doorway. The sounds of soca and chutney music occupy the air, seemingly dancing with the rich smells of curry and paratha that are being made lovingly in the kitchen. Some patrons sway their hips to the rhythm while waiting to hear their order number, while others find a seat, anxiously waiting to take their first bite of the familiar foods they've been enjoying since their youth.

Like Mona's, a plethora of Caribbean restaurants in the Greater Toronto Area – including Rap's on Eglinton West, Rhum Corner on Dundas Street West and Ali's West Indian Roti Shop on Queen Street West - are cultural staples for Caribbean people who live in and around the city, as well as those who are visiting. These eateries aren't just a place to find the flavours that are widely known and loved in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, Haiti, Barbados and other islands; they also offer an authenticity that has remained intact since the migration of Caribbean

people to Toronto.

Reminiscing on fond memories of learning how to jerk chicken with his late father and watching him build a smoking pit and a grill with a repurposed oil drum as a child, Jamaican-Canadian journalist Vaughn Stafford Gray says Caribbean food has always been a way to connect



Caribbean food hasn't always gotten its due in Toronto but chefs like Kareema Beckles (left), Simone Lawrence (top right) and sisters Donna Charles, Renee Charles and Nicky Charles-Page (bottom right) are changing that.

throughout the diaspora and has

to the World Bank, the Caribbean

globally. Immigration has allowed

the Caribbean diaspora to become

one of the largest in the world.

But immigration isn't without its

difficulties. Someone has to stay

connected to home - it's a dish.'

behind to keep us connected. Yet, for

many, it isn't a person keeping them

That's certainly something Simone

Lawrence tries to keep in mind. Born

in Kingston, Jamaica, Lawrence is the

proud owner of Simone's Caribbean

Restaurant, a Danforth restaurant that

been a means of survival. "According

has the 'most highly skilled' diaspora





is approaching its 10th anniversary. She's very committed to making her patrons feel like they're back home. "You can eat from somebody's

kitchen and... they bring you as close to home as possible and that's what we try to create here as well," she says, before revealing the lengths she goes through to acquire ingredients Jamaicans are known for. "Our food is [as] authentic as the ingredients allow. Sometimes it's hard to get things like callaloo, or ackee straight from the tree. We sometimes have it sent and we have to freeze it. But it's just not the same. A little bit gets lost in translation, but we get it

as close to home as possible." That's not to say that Caribbe-

That's not to say that Caribbe an food has always been taken seriously.

"Caribbean immigrants in cities like Toronto open restaurants and bakeries as paths to entrepreneurship, financial independence, and, in some cases, citizenship. Toronto is blessed with multiculturalism and people with adventurous appetites. Caribbean food now ranks among the top cuisines in the city, but it wasn't always that way," Stafford Gray says, pointing to the Toronto Patty Wars, a 1985 clash between Jamaican food vendors and the Cana-

dian government, which demanded they rename their beef patties since Canada's Meat Inspection Act at the time classified hamburgers as the only real beef patties. (The two sides reached a compromise at a February 1985 'patty summit' where the vendors agreed to call their pastries Jamaican patties.) "Caribbean people have long had to fight to take up space in predominantly white spaces that have benefitted from their cultural contributions."

Still, in recent years, restaurants offering cuisine that thoughtfully maps out the beauty of Caribbean food with a twist have emerged in the city. Take SugarKane, which is owned by sisters Donna Charles, Renee Charles and Nicky Charles-Page.

Born to Grenadian and Trinidadian parents, the sisters operated a catering business for six years before opening SugarKane in June 2019. The menu boasts sweet and spicy flavours from the Caribbean with a bold Cajun kick; fusion dishes like jerk chicken fettuccine, fish cakes and creole jambalaya quickly became their signature offerings. Charles-Page says SugarKane tries to emphasize the importance of community. More importantly, the sisters want to see the diversity of Caribbean food showcased on a wider scale. "I think that's coming, I really do think that's coming. And that's exactly what we're trying to implement as well," she says. "There is so much variety within the different Caribbean islands and it deserves to be seen.

Gourmet personal chef Kareema Beckles agrees. A lifelong food-lover - she jokes her mom has had her cooking since the 80s – Beckles has found success as a caterer and media personality by cooking both gourmet versions of the dishes she's loved since childhood and new takes on these beloved flavours. That's why, even though her own restaurant closed its doors during the pandemic, she's optimistic about the future of Caribbean cuisine in Toronto and is pushing for chefs to offer a wider range of dishes and delicacies from throughout the Caribbean.

"I just want us, especially our generation or even younger, to be like, 'Let's push and let's get it out there. Let's do it a little bit better than the last generation. Let's get up. Let's really try to get our food into the hearts, mind and bellies of the rest of the world."



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GT6 • SPONSOR CONTENT FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Four fantastic fall food experiences

There's no better way to experience a new place than through its food, and that's especially true in the fall, when many regions are celebrating abundant harvests









RARE ESCAPE

Looking for a delicious meal with a side of adventure? Head out on a road trip to the Kawarthas, where you'll meet the nature-loving duo behind Rare Escape. Chef Tyler Scott has more than 17 years of experience in the culinary industry, while his wife Kassy loves storytelling and has a knack for all things outdoors. Pick from an array of experiences that they have to offer, all of which start at a surprise GPS location and combine an outdoor activity (or many) with a delicious meal made from locally-sourced foods. The most popular experience yet this year has been the Canoe Portage Lunch, which sees guests enjoy a day's worth of guided activities out by the lake in the Kawarthas and ends with a gourmet meal cooked at a pop-up camp. During each experience, you'll have the opportunity to learn more about local food systems and get to know Tyler and Kassy through stories about how cooking in the great outdoors has helped them to cultivate a deeper

connection to the earth. **DOWN HOME**

The duo behind Sumac + Salt, who brought pop-up multi-course, tasting-style menu experiences to the Bruce, Grey and Simcoe region, have recently opened a year-round, 16-seater farmhouse restaurant called Down Home. Join Chef Joel Gray and wine connoisseur Hannah Harradine for an adventurous meal inspired by their own personal garden, local producers and freshly foraged goods.

Expect to dine in the great outdoors at the farmhouse and enjoy an ever-changing nine-course tasting menu, accompanied with a rotating Ontario Wine Program. Throughout your meal, Gray and Harradine stay close by to explain the inspiration behind each dish and how they source local, from the ingredients (hello fresh pasta and local proteins!) to the cutlery and glassware, which are made by a local woodworker and glass-blowing artist. At the end of the night, take home a little piece of Down Home by shopping their collection of pre-made fresh goods and produce, glassware and art, all

crafted by artisans in the area. Or, consider extending your stay. Down Home has partnered with various stays in the area, which offer shuttles to and from the farmhouse restaurant for an easy evening out.

HARVEST BRUNCH

In this authentic farm experience, you'll harvest your own fruits and vegetables, visit the chickens and gather eggs, and explore the farm at Thames River Melons. At the Harvest Brunch experience, Alex Chesney, registered dietitian and farmer, invites quests to slow down and enjoy the beauty of Ontario's agricultural areas – and to learn more about where your food really comes from, how it's grown and the benefits of supporting local farmers.

Once you've gathered your ingredients, you'll head back to the brand-new Farm Kitchen where you'll spend one-on-one time with Alex, learning kitchen tips and tricks while you cook a selection of brunch foods based on the freshest finds from the farm, like a simple frittata and

roasted potatoes. The cherry on top is finally getting to enjoy the fruits of your labour paired with a variety of other local goods. And if brunch isn't enough, not to worry! You can check out Thames River Melons' daily farmer's market for a selection of take-home-ready baked goods and ready-to-eat items featuring the farm's produce.

Clockwise from

top left: Rare

Escape offers Ontarians

combine gourmet food

with outdoorsy

Harvest Brunch experience, visitors get to

adventures. With the

experience

authentic

farm life

PHOTOGRAPHY). Eat your

Kingston, Ont., and learn

about the city's

history with Kingston Food

Tours. The

nine-course

tasting menu

in Grey County is worth a

special trip

way through

a chance to

KINGSTON FOOD TOURS

Calling all history buffs! If you're looking for a fun-filled day complete with the perfect mix of history, culture and food, the locally owned and operated Kingston Food Tours is perfect for you. There are a couple different tours that Kingston residents and tourists alike can enjoy and although each tour has its own special features, all of them are facilitated as intimate groups led by a passionate local guide, so you know you'll be in good hands.

Pick the two-hour, child-friendly Classic Kingston Tour to get a local's perspective into Kingston's culture. This experience will take you on a walking tour downtown to discover Canada's original capital city's culinary scene. Enjoy exclusive tastings from the city's best local restaurants, all while taking in highlights of the people and places that contribute to the city's legacy. Or, try out the Tapas Tour, which takes all of the educational value of the Classic Kingston Tour and rejigs it to discover four delicious tastings, each paired with an alcoholic beverage. Whichever tour you end up choosing, by the end of it you'll be an expert in the best spots to grab a bite in Kingston.

Ontario's **Octoberfests**

FROM GT2



That intimacy and sense of connection is something that Justina Klein, one of the co-founders of the Toronto Oktoberfest, loves about the celebration. "It's such a friendly festival, because it's about camaraderie," she says. "A 70-year-old can sit down next to a 20-year-old, and they become best friends by the end. Everyone's talking to each other, and everyone just wants to have

Klein and her partners started their event in 2012, inspired by a visit to the Kitchener-Waterloo festival. "I was shocked that Toronto didn't have its own," she says "Oktoberfest is one of the biggest fall festivals around the world. How could we not be celebrating this? Their first event, held in a hall across from St. Lawrence Market, drew 800 people. Ten years later, they see around 8,000 people over two days at Ontario Place.

As part of the team who launched the Toronto Christmas Market, Klein had spent lots of time in Germany, and was determined to make this Oktoberfest as authentic as possible.

'We brought in the real Bavarian tables," says Klein, referring to the long, thin wooden style with bench seating. They also use authentic glass beer steins, which as Klein says, "is not without risk, but people love it." Their beer, unlike other festivals, which may do a mix of local and international, is only from German or European brands. In fact, this is one of the few places where you can get your hands on German brewery Erdinger's annual Oktoberfest brew, which is flown in specially for the festival. They go through 25,000 pints of beer each year, washing down 10,000 schnitzels and

"It's so important that people walk into that festival hall and they're transported," says Klein, who uses Bavarian fabric swags, garlands and wreaths to decorate the ceilings. "We've had people who've been to Munich tell us they can't tell the difference," she adds with

The entertainment which started off with George Kash, an Oktoberfest legend who's been entertaining crowds with "oompah" music for over 50 years, has also grown to be an important part of the Toronto Oktoberfest. "We've created our own vibe," says Klein. Think a cabaret-style show that features a Bavarian burlesque singer, and a dance competition called "So You Think Can Tanze," where traditional Bavarian dancers teach amateurs some moves, and the audience votes. "We try to mix the old with the new," says Klein, of the festival that will be taking place at Ontario Place on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 this year

Over in Vankleek Hill, near the Quebec border, all eyes are on the stage as well. Specifically, the moment of the first keg "tapping," when a ceremonial beer is poured to kick off Oktoberfest at Beau's Brewery, followed by the singing of the German and Canadian national anthems, plus a land acknowledgement.

'It's the only time that I'm up on stage throughout the festival, and I'm looking out at a sea of little green hats, and the biggest smiles you ever saw," says Jennifer Beauchesne, senior brand manager at Beau's All Natural Brewing Co., a craft brewery in the town. "It's just that moment when you know that you've created something magical for people and you see the impact of bringing people together.

Beauchesne will be the first to tell you that Beau's Oktoberfest started as a marketing stunt to launch a new seasonal beer. "We knew we were in love with nice, clean German beers, and we had this one coming out that was specifically an Oktoberfest beer, so we

thought, why not?" In nine weeks, they pulled together a festival, serendipitously booking George Wendt, aka Norm from Cheers, which got them some press. "We sold 5,000 tickets," she recalls of the surprising reception. "We thought a couple hundred people would come out and stand in a field and drink beer with us, so it blew us away."

In time, the festival eclipsed those modest beginnings. Always designed as an Oktoberfest for "a high-level lover of beer," Beau's added an educational component, including seminars about food and beer pairings, for example. They began to bring in beers from other breweries, debuting around a dozen new beers every year. They pioneered a "Stein hold struggle" - like tug-of-war but with a beer glass - and a sausage eating contest. They're also well known for their bands, with a reputation for booking up-and-coming acts just before their big breakout (think, Neon Dreams), as well as "tickle your fancy" acts like Fred Penner. "Our approach is 'ridiculousness upon ridiculousness,'" says Beauchesne. "Like, how can we pile it on so it's just more and more fun?"

Rather than doing food trucks, local restaurants apply for the festival, preparing a special menu. "It's a foodie festival," says Beauchesne. "There's more food than you could ever possibly eat. Like, every year it's like, 'Oh, I didn't get to try that poutine made of spaetzle!'"

Beau's community will have to wait a little longer to enjoy Oktoberfest; though many cities are celebrating their first year fully back after the pandemic, Beau's is sitting this year out, though Beauchesne says they'll be back "bigger and better" in 2023. In the meantime, though, they are continuing with what has been a major pillar of all Oktoberfests: giving back.

'It's always been conceived of as our signature fundraising event of the year," Beauchesne says. "What's neat is that if, say, the local Lions Club gets together 50 people and you come and volunteer at the festival, we pay back that volunteer time as a donation to the organization," she says. "It's a win-win, because instead of paying, say, a third-party sanitation company, we can directly make a donation to their organization." In usual years, there are also individual activations, like a dunk tank or a midway that raises funds for charities like Hidden Harvest

This year, though there won't be an in-person event, Beau's is hosting a two-month long virtual ride, where participants can pledge to cycle any distance and raise funds for United Way in the process.

And if that's not the spirit of Gemütlichkeit, we don't know what is.

The perfect beer lover's road trip

Follow the True Brew Path through Hamilton, Halton and Brant for satisfying sips and delicious snacks

Launched in 2016, the palate-pleasing True Brew Path has steadily grown to include 24 wineries, breweries and cideries. The goal is to celebrate Ontario-grown ingredients and seasonal flavours, and adventurous travellers will definitely do that on this sample itinerary we've put together below.

8:30 A.M. Caffeine please

Kick off your journey with a steaming cup of java in the cozy surroundings of Hamilton's The Cannon, a cafe known for single-origin coffees sourced from around the globe. The house specialty is waffles, but if you're feeling especially indulgent, consider adding this unique sweet/salty item to your order: Waffle Bacon, crispy strips of bacon coated in waffle batter and fried.

10 A.M. Down on the farm

Just 30 minutes from downtown Hamilton, Puddicombe Estate Farm, Winery & Cider in Winona has been operating since 1797. Friendly farm staff will guide you to create a hand-selected flight at the tasting bar including options such as a medium-bodied Puddicombe Estate Loyalist White, a blend of Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier, a fruity Summerville Sangria Spritz, or one of nine Loyalist-style Puddicombe Cider Co. flavours.

11 A.M. Bubbly personality

Located on the edge of the Niagara Escarpment, Ridge Road Estate Winery offers red, white and sparkling vintages paired with stunning views from its vineyard. Tastings can be done inside or al fresco on the patio.

NOON Hot lunch

An oversized neon lightbulb light marks the entry to Merit Brewing in downtown Hamilton, where fruit, herb, spices and tea add unique flavour to their handcrafted IPAs, lagers and goses, which are salty, sour beers that originated in Goslar, Germany. Order a Party for One, a hopped sour paired with a flavourful house-made sausage and fries tossed with secret hot wing sauce.

1:30 P.M. Patio calling

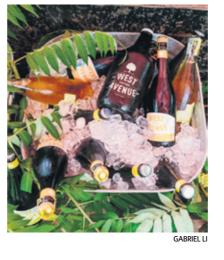
As the first taproom opened in Brant County's Paris in over 100 years, The Paris Beer Company is serving up lagers, ales and IPAs made with hops grown on the owners' farm. Curated flights like Anything Gose or easy-drinking Mow My Lawn can be savoured on its Biergarten Patio and if nibbles are needed, options include a sourdough pretzel with beer cheese, Mexican street corn or a delicious charcuterie board.

3 P.M. Slushie, shandy or sour? Choose from small batch beers at

family-owned Grain & Grit Beer Co. in Hamilton. Innovative sips include a Beer Slushie made with Berry Good, a raspberry-blackcurrant sour, the Sunshine Shandy, with Little Thrills German pilsner and mango lemonade or the Margarita Sour, a gose beer kicked up with blue agave and lime.

4 P.M. Chasing waterfalls

Take a break from sipping and eating at Smokey Hollow Waterfalls, which once powered a local sawmill. Part of Ontario's Bruce Trail, the Great Falls Loop is a challenging 3.5-kilometre hike that leads



to the pretty vista: 10 metres of waterfalls framed by old-growth forest.

5:30 P.M. Happy hour!

Enjoy a post-hike pint from Freelton's West Avenue Cider House. Try smallbatch seasonal ciders, which are only available on-site, or one of the 14 flavours available year-round. Bonus: This cidery also provides non-alcoholic cider options and excellent wood-fired pizza, too.

6:30 P.M. Cheers!

After a day of tastings, raise a final glass at award-winning Quatrefoil in Dundas. This contemporary resto offers seasonally-inspired, contemporary French cuisine and locally-sourced wines, cider and beer. Save room for its luscious desserts, including the indulgent Dark Chocolate Dome.

Tawnya Brant is making it her mission to revive pre-colonial Haudenosaunee food culture

Through her cooking, the Mohawk chef hopes to share the flavours and traditions of her childhood with all Canadians

Growing up on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, food was so much more than just what chef Tawyna Brant's family put on the dinner table - it was a way of life. "We're agrarian people," says Brant, who is Kanyen'kehá:ka, or Mohawk. "Haudenosaunee communities eat according to seasonal cycles," she adds, which is how her family lived. Brant and her three sisters were raised in a timber wood house without running water and limited solar energy. In the spring, they would tap trees for syrup and plant corn in their big backyard garden. During summer months, they ate strawberries and tomatoes straight off the vine. Brant still eats seasonally – in fact, it's how she plans what to serve each week at her restaurant, Yawékon Foods, which is located in Ohswé:ken, a rural community within the Six Nations of the Grand River.

On a typical winter menu at Yawékon, you'll find hearty dishes like bison shepherd's pie or elk chili in a bread bowl. In the summertime, fresh fruit is offered up in the form of blueberry sweetgrass pulled pork and peach shortcake. The menu celebrates the flavours of her Haudenosaunee childhood and Brant sources ingredients (like corn, beans and squash) directly from the garden her mother maintains as a Mohawk seed keeper. "These seeds have been with us since time immemorial. In our creation story, Sky Woman brought them with her, she explains. That's why Brant fights for Indigenous food sovereignty. Her family garden is small, she says, and Haudenosaunee people need allies to help grow seeds. "I want to teach people that going back to traditional foods is a lot easier than they think.'

Brant's love for the food industry developed early – her father, a hunter and fisherman, got her a job waiting tables at a local café in

Ohswé:ken when she was just 12. Brant's favourite part of the gig was talking to the cooks, and she often volunteered to peel potatoes so she could pepper them with questions about ingredients. By high school, she'd moved to the head of the line as a cook herself, and after two years of studying culinary management at Fleming College, Brant left to become a freelance franchise support chef. Over the next 10 years, she helped open restaurants across Southern Ontario, in Western New York and on Manitoulin Island, Her freelance career was thriving, but everything changed when Brant had her own children. She realized that she wanted her kids to have the same kind of upbringing she had back in Ohsweiken. So she enrolled in the Aboriginal Small Business Management program at Mohawk College and in 2014, founded Yawékon, which means "it tastes good" in Mohawk.

Brant credits her mother with teaching her that the footprint she leaves is important. "The Earth doesn't belong to us; we borrow it from our grandchildren. You want to leave things better than they were when you got there," she says.

That's why she's so passionate about sharing her knowledge. Going back to traditional Indigenous diets can save us, she says, pointing out that many chronic diseases are linked with poor diet. "Peaches and cream corn came from our Haudenosaunee Sweet Buck corn, which is black," she adds. "How many nutrients were lost in that modification process? Foods with dark colours often have antioxidants and are very vitamin-rich."

Brant also believes it's possible for folks with food allergies to enjoy just as much as those without any. Growing up with one sister who was a vegetarian and another who wouldn't eat meat with fat on it made her enthusiastic about serving meals that everyone can enjoy. "Through Indigenous cuisine, it's really easy," she says, "because there is no gluten, there is no dairy and there are no processed sugars."

In the future, Brant hopes to create a line of affordable packaged food that can reach isolated communities in northern Canada, where a case of water can cost close to \$50. "I want Yawékon Foods to be like the 'No Name' of Indigenous foods," Brant says. She imagines a collective of growers who have excess food to share from their own crops. "It's heartbreaking to see so many people without access to food when there are gardeners who don't know what to do with an entire harvest."

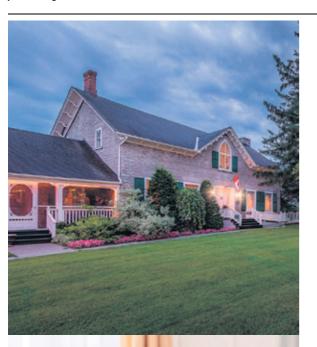
For now, Tawnya is bringing her message to the small screen as she competes on season 10 of Top Chef Canada on Food Network Canada. Indigenous food is too important to not be included in the national conversation, she says. "Let's see Canadian foods and real Canadians cooking it."

But her main mission with the show is to empower Indigenous youth. "I want kids to see some-body like them on TV. I know what it's like to haul well water, and what it's like to wake up freezing and get the wood stove started," she says. "I want them to know that they can grow up and be successful; to see a girl that looks like me doing it and know they can do it, too."

TRW



For chef Tawnya Brant, cooking is about purpose, and hers is advocating for Indigenous food sovereignty.





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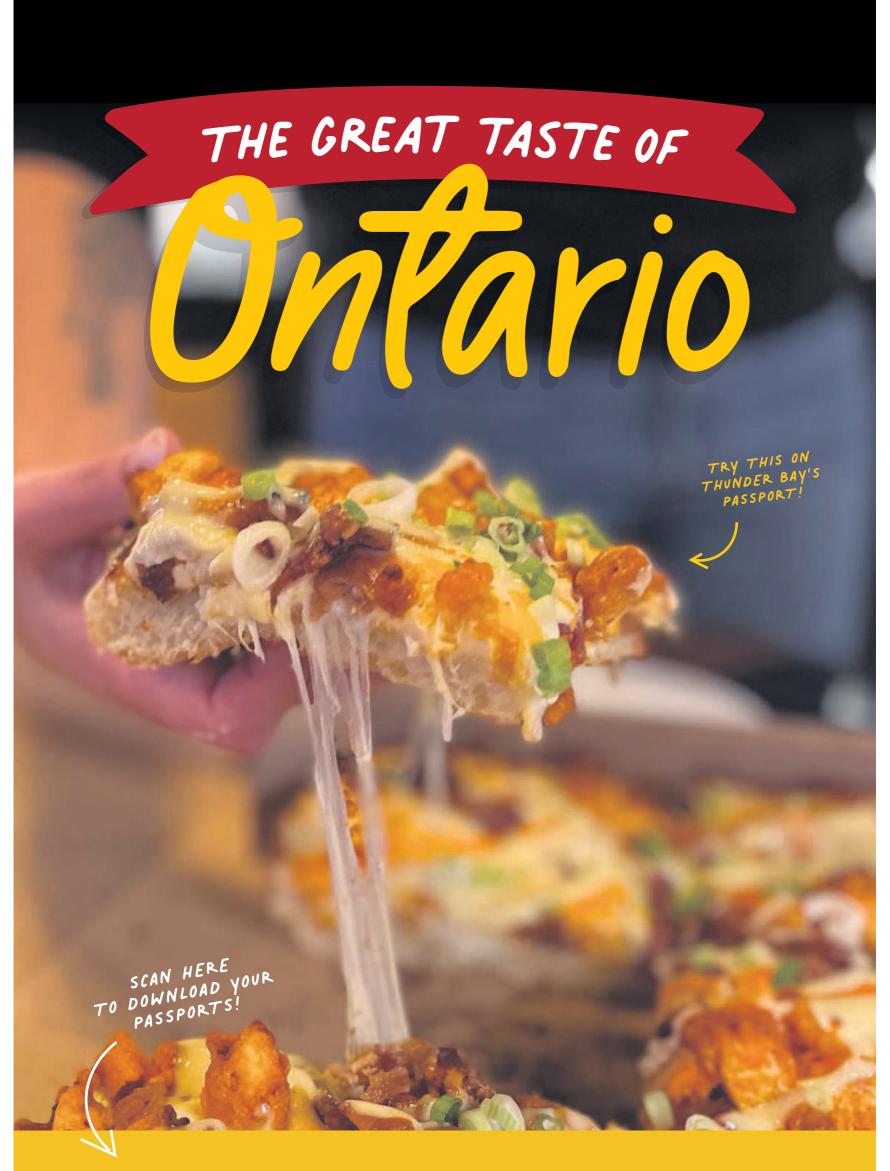














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