

SPECIAL INFORMATION FEATURE

EXPLORE ONTARIO AUTUMN'S BEST ADVENTURES

Every drive into the fall colours needs a great destination. Here are the season's best reasons for hitting the highway: culinary adventure, creative discoveries and woodland walks with a twist.

1 SHROOM AND ZOOM

The ultimate mushroom foray is Long Point Eco Adventures' three-day getaway to the north shore of Lake Erie. Like mushrooms, participants spend lots of time in the dark. There's an observatory stargazing session looking for nebulae and planets through a 16-inch telescope. Add a thrilling nighttime ride on the zipline—without headlamps. By day, naturalist Robin Tapley and mycologist Bob Bowles lead the foraging foray into Carolinian forests in search of chicken mushrooms, black trumpets, chanterelles, king boletes and puffballs. Forest finds are turned into risotto, soups, salads, pastas and pastries under the guidance of local chefs, and then enjoyed in a leisurely lunch paired with wines from the local Burning Kiln Winery. Guests are accommodated in luxurious tents complete with flush toilets, showers, electricity and comfy queen and double beds. Mushroom forays are also available as a one-day experience.

www.lpfun.ca
www.norfolk-tourism.ca

2 ROLL OUT THE BARREL

If Walter Ostanek is here, this must be Oktoberfest. In addition to Canada's Polka King, rocker Ronnie Hawkins and others entertain at the Vankleek Hill Oktoberfest (Sept. 28 to 30) near Ottawa. Presented by the local family-run Beau's All Natural Brewing Company, this popular event includes a sausage-eating contest, malt sack race, keg toss, homebrew competition and more. No wonder tickets sell out early. Bus packages from Ottawa available.

www.beaus.ca/oktoberfest
www.ottawaturism.ca

Also on the same weekend Ok-

toberfest Ottawa taps a celebratory brew from the local Hogs-Back Brewing Company, served up along with schnitzel, sausage and a musical line-up ranging from alt rock to oompah.

www.oktoberfestottawa.com

3 COOK IN THE COUNTY

Tuscan-themed cooking classes in Cynthia Peters' heritage kitchen celebrate the bounty of Prince Edward County, with plenty of practical technique. Although guests won't be using either of the two antique butter churns, the historic ambience of the 1830s house feels a bit like working in a very luxurious pioneer museum—if only the pioneers rolled their own mushroom-filled ravioli and washed it down with local wine. Cookbook author and personal chef Peters knows the County's food scene and will introduce guests to many of her favourite suppliers. Crunch a colourful carrot picked fresh from the earth at Vicki's Veggies and sip a brilliant Baco Noir on the patio at Sandbanks Winery.

www.fromthefarm.ca



Discover encaustic painting at Love Nest Studios, Prince Edward County

4 GO BEHIND THE SCENES AT SHAW AND STRATFORD

In the best traditions of insider gossip, Stratford Festival cast and crew share some of their most delicious tales of backstage mishaps and theatrical gaffes in Sixty Seasons of Stories and Laughter, September 22 and October 13. A buffet lunch follows. Learn more about the Festival's illustrious past at Most Rare Visions, an exhibit of costumes, props and an interactive lighting display.

www.stratfordfestival.ca

Discover how a dramatic work goes from page to stage in a three-day Play-by-Play Autumn Experience at Niagara-on-the-Lake's Shaw Festival. Artistic director, actors, crew and craftsmen talk about their roles in the production process. Tour the props and costume warehouses, see the works on stage and dine on the members' terrace.

www.shawfest.com

5 FIND FALL COLOURS AND FARMS

Take a drive in the country to discover some great close-to-home food at Kawartha Farmfest (Sept. 29) a self-guided driving tour event linking ten farms, two farm markets, a live animal auction and more. Learn how to grow a giant pumpkin at Stellmar Farm, meet heavy draft horses working at Lunar Rhythm Gardens and retired racehorses in retraining at Valentia Equestrian centre. O'Brienvue Organic Farm is known for its Belgian Blue cross-bred cattle, a double-muscle breed known for its lean beef. Discover alternative agricultural methods and potbellied pigs at Greenshore Eco Farms.

www.kawarthafarmfest.com
www.explorekawarthalakes.com

6 MAKE YOUR OWN ART

You can buy a work of art on a studio tour, but why not make your own at Prince Edward County's new interactive event, Artrageous (Oct. 5 to 8)? Participants paint, learn and play at art studios and galleries. Love Nest Studios encaustic artist Andrew Csaferdi guides would-be artists through the process of making their own encaustic painting with bee's wax, oil paints and pigments heat-fused onto a wooden board. Csaferdi teaches many non-artists, "This is one of the mediums where even your mistakes look great." Visitors see Csaferdi's work in his old barn gallery, surrounded by fields, a contrast to the sleek and sophisticated Oeno Gallery at Huff Estates Winery where director Sandra Goldie will be talking about making contemporary art. No painting experience is required for Joanna McFarland's workshop in fluid acrylic on watercolour paper. "We'll spray, scrape and experiment, then produce a work that can be taken down the road to SideStreet Gallery to mat, mount and frame. People will come away with something they can hang." Don't care to drive? No problem, the event features two bus tours.

www.artstrail.ca

7 PUBS AND POULTERGEISTS

The spirits on Stratford's Pubs, Pilsner and Spirits walking tour are not just the bottled kind. When local tourism officials were thinking up heritage-themed tours, they realized that many of their historic haunts were, well, haunted. The three-hour tour visits six pubs for a drink and tale at each. Besides covering the basics of brewing, guide Nancy Musselman shares

some supernatural history. While quaffing half a pint of pumpkin beer, the group hears how James P. Vivian opened Stratford's first brewery, only to die in jail from excessive drinking. "He may be the one who slams the doors in the upstairs apartments," says Musseleman. He's just the first of a mischievous collection of spirits haunting the town's taverns. The ghost of George, once a bartender at Foster's Inn, blows cold air on people standing in his spot at the bar; the spirit haunting the Queen's Inn is reputed to recite poetry by Kipling. It helps that participants sample half a pint at each locale. Tours are scheduled for October 25 and 30.

www.visitstratford.ca

8 SIP AND SNACK IN NIAGARA

It's been another great year for grape growers and winemakers so there's special reason to celebrate at the Niagara Wine Festival (Sept. 21 to 30). Sample some winning wines with local nibbles at six of the 33 participating wineries with a \$30 pass. Among the delicious discoveries: zweibelkuchen "onion cake" with pinot blanc at Konzelmann Estate Winery and rustic mushroom tarts with chardonnay and pinot noir at the Good Earth Food & Wine Co.

www.niagarawinefestival.com

9 DRINK SOME GOLDENROD

The towering yellow weeds add a touch of gold to the fall colours and make a distinctive wine at Kawartha Country Wines. Try some at the tasting room housed in an 1866 log cabin east of Buckhorn. More conventional brews include bestselling rhubarb and elderberry.

www.kawarthacountrywines.ca