

# HOT TIMES

Peyto Lake in  
Alberta, Canada

Canadians are a hearty lot. Here are just a few hotspots for those who like to fully embrace winter's charms.

BY HEATHER HUDSON

As Canadians, we don't just survive cold weather — we thrive in it. Our very identity comes to life in distinct ways when the air is crisp and the land is covered with a blanket of snow. We're more playful, nostalgic, content. We're reminded of the qualities that set us apart as Canadians. It's in our nature to make the most of a season loaded with possibilities.

Communities across the country come alive with celebration. We've chosen four unique festivals that succeed at putting the 'win' back in in winter. Climb into your warmest snowsuit and pull on that toque for a whirlwind tour of Canada's coldest hot spots this winter!

## NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

### Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights

November 18, 2017 – January 31, 2018

Is it possible to enjoy a winter wonderland without ever leaving your vehicle? If you're in Niagara Falls it is.

Every year, more than 1 million locals and tourists from around the world take the leisurely drive along the Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights' eight kilometre illumination route. Watch your passengers' eyes light up as they take in more than 25 brilliant light displays inspired by the majesty of the nearby waterfalls.



CREDIT: RICK BERKETA





Niagara Falls



CREDIT: CHRIS EMPEY



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Every evening from 5pm until midnight, drivers can tour the route and take in shapes, city features and creatures as they come to life through light. You'll wind through Niagara Parks, Dufferin Islands and other popular tourist destinations that celebrate famous landmarks and quiet landscapes in equal measure.

Favourites displays include Canadian wildlife, such as moose, deer and bison, the world's largest Canadian-American flag, Noah's Ark and an Inukshuk, along with willow buildings all dressed up.

But the drive is just the beginning. The Winter Festival of Lights also features spectacular events like:

- Laser light shows
- Weekly fireworks
- The Deck the Falls Holiday Walking Tour
- Nightly falls illumination
- Festival of Stars Concerts

This festival proves you don't need to be knee-deep in snow to celebrate winter.

For more information, visit [wfol.com](http://wfol.com).

## OTTAWA-GATINEAU, ONTARIO

### Winterlude

February 2-19, 2018

If it's snow and ice you're after, this is one festival you don't want to miss. This year marks 40 years of world-famous fun in the nation's capital.

Winterlude is home to the world's largest skating rink, breathtaking ice carving competitions and an enormous winter playground featuring majestic snow sculptures that have to be seen to be believed.

With three official sites and several other locations hosting myriad events and spectacles, you can choose from dozens of icy outdoor activities. Here are just a few popular options:

#### CRYSTAL GARDEN, CONFEDERATION PARK

The enchanted garden is designed to celebrate the symbiotic relationship between ice and light. Ice carvers from around the world come to play, teasing stunning works of art out of huge blocks of ice before your very eyes. Come evening time, dramatic lighting transforms the masterpieces into mystical works of art in tribute to our true north strong and free.



#### SNOWFLAKE KINGDOM, JACQUES-CARTIER PARK

This locale is family and fun central. Kids will have unforgettable fun whipping down snow slides, weaving in and out of snow sculptures and puzzling over the giant maze. More adventurous souls can hop on a mega zipline or dogsled for a wild ride. Plus, don't miss a chance to meet the Ice Hog Family, Winterlude's beloved mascots. The furry family embraces snow, wind and cold and loves to play, hug and pose for pictures with their fans.

#### RIDEAU CANAL SKATEWAY

Looking for the quintessential Canadian experience? It doesn't get any better than lacing



Rideau Canal Skateway

up your skates and gliding down the Rideau Canal. With 7.8 kilometres of runway, you'll skate your way through the heart of downtown Ottawa, with Parliament Hill looming gracefully along the way. Vendors along the skateway will keep you warm and nourished with hot drinks and classically Canadian BeaverTails pastries.

*Good to know:* If you're not a skater there are plenty of fabulous spectator activities along the skateway, including the Winterlude triathlon, the Annual Bed Race and the brand new Ice Dragon Boat Festival.

To learn more about everything this festival has to offer, visit [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) and search Winterlude.

## QUÉBEC CITY, QUÉBEC

# Carnaval de Québec

January 26 – February 11, 2018

There's a reason *The New York Times* included a visit to Carnaval de Québec in their 1000 *Places to See Before You Die*. It's considered a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but we can enjoy it right here at home every winter.

The festivities made their debut in 1894 to help a pioneering population endure harsh winter conditions, but it didn't truly come into its own until it was revived with a modern twist in 1955.

Today, more than 200 activities honouring the great Canadian winter and Québécois traditions take place across the city and in neighbouring regions, drawing nearly 500,000 visitors every year. Some of the most popular locations include:

### PLACE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE-NATIONALE

Considered the heart of the festival, the Loto Québec Zone is home to Bonhomme's Ice Palace. Visitors can watch graffiti artists at work, take selfies with Bonhomme himself and participate in military cardio, Snowga and



Zumba classes. And no visit is complete without a stop at the SAQ Bistro, ice bar and terrace.

### PARC DE L'ESPLANADE

Transformed into Bonhomme's World, the park is a hotspot for families throughout the carnival. Whoosh down a huge ice slide, trot through the mini-farm, play a game of floor-hockey and try your hand at the giant foosball table.

### PARC DE L'AMÉRIQUE-FRANÇAISE

Canada's most renowned artists are invited here to square off against each other in national and international snow sculpting competitions. This site is also home to an on-snow canoe race and night parade.



Must know facts about Carnaval de Québec:

- Bonhomme, a burly snowman sporting a jaunty red toque and traditional arrow sash, is the official ambassador of carnival. Representing the Québécois' joie de vivre, you'll see his likeness all over the festivities.
- For full access to most carnival events and sites, you'll need to purchase an Effigy pendant to attach to your coat. Each year, a new Effigy is designed, though they're always modelled after Bonhomme. It makes a perfect souvenir!

To learn more, visit [carnaval.qc.ca](http://carnaval.qc.ca).

## CITY OF IQUALUIT, NUNAVUT

# Toonik Tyme

April 2018

Just as winter is wrapping up in the south, the premier festival of Canada's Arctic goes into full swing. For more than 50 years, the Toonik Tyme Festival has been celebrating Inuit traditions and the return of spring.

What began as a small festival in 1965, featuring traditional Inuit games, throat singing and dancing and a community feast at Toonik Lake, has blossomed into a can't-miss cultural event enjoyed by residents and tourists alike.

### TODAY'S TOONIK TYME FESTIVAL

Every year, the Toonik Tyme Society, comprised of local organizations, businesses and more than 100 volunteers, puts on the cultural festival featuring a number of highly anticipated traditional activities that reflect Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, including: hunting and

fishing; Igloo building; dog team races; throat singing; drum dancing and harpoon throwing.

More modern events are also part of the festivities, such as:

- The family sliding party
- Skijoring (a winter sport that combines cross-country skiing and dog mushing)
- Seal skinning contest
- Iqaluit Idol

All events are designed to reflect and preserve Inuit culture and heritage, as well as provide a platform to share the culture with non-Inuit residents and tourists. Most activities are conducted in a combination of English, Inuktitut and French.

Get all the details about the festival at [tooniktyme.ca](http://tooniktyme.ca).

