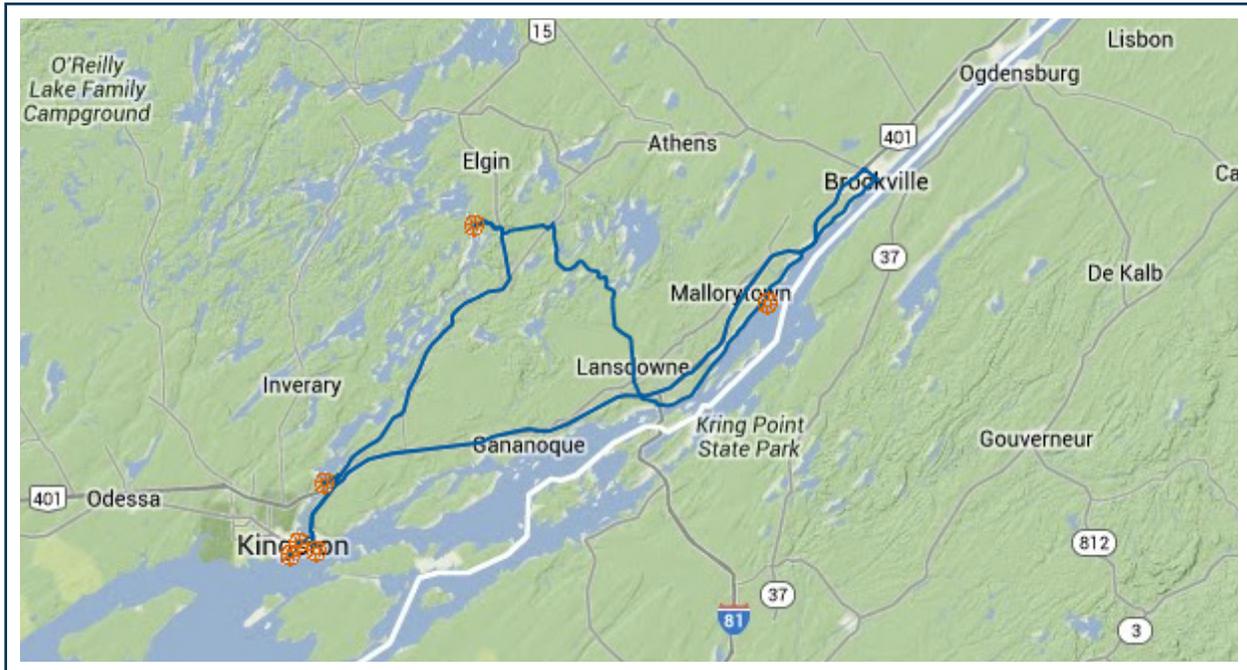


FAB EXPERIENCES

Eastern Ontario, Canada

Defining A Nation- Upriver



Even in the centuries before Europeans came to North America, the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes were natural boundaries between peoples before they became a boundary between nations. The Thousand Islands, the Garden of the Great Spirit, came to be shared by First Nations peoples, at the edge of each traditional territory.

The first settlement on the upper St. Lawrence was on the site that would become Kingston. Built in 1673, Fort Frontenac was a fortified trading post. Its strategic location controlled the north channel entrance to the river and Lake Ontario, and was a safe harbor to launch patrols and trade. In years that followed, other small settlements sprang up along the upper St. Lawrence, at the site of Maitland east of Brockville, and across the river at the site of Ogdensburg, New York.

It wasn't until after the War of Independence, when the American population that remained loyal to Britain was forced into exodus as United Empire Loyalists that this region was more broadly settled. Even then, there was an unease across the waters that impacted community growth.

Through the 18th and 19th Centuries fortifications on both sides of the St. Lawrence River, from Kingston to Prescott in Canada marked this river corridor and natural boundary as a region that would be tested by the wills and militaries of nations as they sought power over trade and lands.

This tour will take you to the various sites of military installations and conflicts in this upper part of the St. Lawrence, and Thousand Islands. No war is a cause for celebration, but the sites have a tremendous value in learning and remembering their cause and effect.

1. Chimney Island

Lat: 44.468772
Long: -75.834401

Notes:

The St. Lawrence River was the only practical transportation route from the east coast to the Great Lakes. During the War of 1812 – 1814, it was quickly apparent how vulnerable that passage was to attacks from either side. The British solution was to escort boats and protect that supply line. Gunboats were built as escorts – shallow draft for the myriad of shoals in the Thousand Islands, with an easily handled sail rig and yet possible to row, these craft could carry a small cannon or two, as well as a good deckload of cargo.

Chimney Island was about a good day's travel upriver from Prescott, and downriver from Kingston. A blockhouse on the island gave a haven of protection, and rest. The river is deceptively open at this point – there are dozens of rocky shoals around the island, and in the relatively shallow waters between the Canadian and US mainlands here. Approach by attacking ships was far more difficult than it looks.

The blockhouse was built behind an earth rampart on the south shore. The chimney was apparently poorly built and filled the building with smoke, so troops often camped on the mainland.

The chimney still seen is not that of the blockhouse, but was built from rubble of the original in the early 1900s to remember the old, and long demolished blockhouse.

Driving Directions: From Brockville, drive west on King St., which becomes Cnty. Rd. 2, for 9.5 km.; exit right onto Hwy. 401 west, drive 2.2 km. to exit left at Exit 685 to Thousand Islands Parkway, west; drive 6.7 km. west to parking pull-off on river side of Parkway.

2. Jones Falls

Lat: 44.544868
Long: -76.235741

Jones Falls is a major lock station on the Rideau Canal, the fourth flight above Kingston. The high drop of water from lake above to stream below called for three locks in total, and what was in the day the greatest dam project on Earth.

Atop a hill at the lock station, with a commanding view of the landscape is a lockmaster's house – but one that was a small fortress. Heavy shutters could seal the windows, and there were wedge-shaped slits in the walls from which one could shoot outwards, but would make it all but impossible to be shot from outside.

Despite cross-border tensions of the years following the War of 1812 – 1814, attacks never came.

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<p>Notes:</p>	<p><i>Driving Directions: Follow Thousand Islands Parkway west approx.. 21 km. and turn right at Reynolds Rd./Cnty. Rd. 3; drive north approx.. 28 km. to intersection at Cnty. Rd. 33 at Lyndhurst; turn left, drive .75 km. to turn right onto Briar Hill Rd., and turn left at top of hill approx.. 4 km. west to Village of Morton; turn right onto Hwy. 15; drive north .5 km.; turn left onto Jones Falls Rd.; approx. 3.9 km. to parking for Jones Falls Lock Station.</i></p>
<p>3. Kingston Mills</p> <p>Lat: 44.292596 Long: -76.443690</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Kingston Mills is the first flight of locks on the Rideau Canal, inland from Kingston. While a sublimely serene scene and experience today, the canal was actually an engineering response to circumvent potential US military threats along the vulnerable transportation route of the St. Lawrence River. The canal was hewn along the course of rivers and lakes, wetlands and waterfalls, and through rock ridges and points of land, to reach the Ottawa River, where shipping could then travel between Kingston and Montreal well in (then) British territory.</p> <p>In the late 1820s construction period, only the old Fort Henry existed to guard the canal entrance, and so a Blockhouse was built at Kingston Mills for its defense. Exhibits at the lock station tell the story.</p> <p><i>Driving Directions: Drive back 3.9 km. to Hwy. 15; turn right, drive approx.. 35.6 km. to Kingston Mills Rd.; turn right, drive approx. 2.2 km. to parking at Kingston Mills Lock Station.</i></p>
<p>4. Fort Henry</p> <p>Lat: 44.225400 Long: -76.454170</p> <p>Tel: 613-542-7388 Email: getaway@parks.on.ca</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>The original Fort Henry was built at the outset of the War of 1812 – 1814, to repel probable attacks by American forces against the naval dockyards at Kingston. The fort as seen today was built between 1832 and 1837, as tension between Britain and the US grew. The fort, and the accompanying four Martello Towers, were an imposing defense system at the entrance of the also newly built Rideau Canal, and the upper St. Lawrence, and became the strongest fortification west of Quebec City in Canada. In fact, the fort – both the 1812 version and the present fort – was never attacked. Today Fort Henry is a National Historic Site, and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site with the Rideau Canal. It is operated by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.</p> <p><i>Driving Directions: Drive back to Hwy. 15 approx. 2.2 km.; turn right, drive south approx.. 7.8 km. to intersection with Kingston Rd. 2; turn right, to turn left at stoplight at bottom of hill, onto Fort Henry Drive, and arrive at Discovery Centre parking at top of hill. 1 Fort Henry Dr, Kingston.</i></p>

5. Fort Frontenac

Lat: 44.233590
Long: -76.479019

Notes:

The original fort, a crude, wooden palisade structure, was called Fort Cataraqui but was later named for the Governor of New France, Louis de Buade de Frontenac – Count Frontenac. Fort Frontenac was to control the fur trade in the Great Lakes and northward, and to discourage the English who were competing for control of the trade. Another function of the fort was the provision of supplies and reinforcements to other French installations on the Great Lakes. Frontenac, who largely financed the fort and settlement himself, hoped that the trade done at the fort would repay his investment. Friction between the French and the Iroquois arose because of rivalries in the fur trade. Several Iroquois, including women and children, until then friendly to the French, were captured and imprisoned at Fort Frontenac. Fort Oswego was built by the British across the lake from Fort Frontenac in 1722 to compete with Fort Frontenac. By the 1750s Fort Frontenac essentially served only as a supply storage depot and harbour for French naval vessels, and its garrison had dwindled. In 1758, the British under Lieutenant-Colonel John Brdastreet left Fort Oswego with a force of a little over 3000 men and captured Fort Frontenac. The British would eventually build Fort Henry, better positioned on higher ground across the bay.

Driving Directions: Drive back to Kingston Rd. 2; turn left, drive approx. 1.1 km. across LaSalle Causeway to park in the lot west of the K-Rock Centre, walk to the east side of K-Rock to ruins of Fort Frontenac.

6. Murney Tower

Lat: 44.222292
Long: -76.490296

Tel: 613-572-5181

Notes:

The British military new a good thing when they saw it. In February 1794, two British warships, 74 guns and 32 guns, unsuccessfully attacked a barrel-shaped stone tower at Mortella Point in Corsica. The tower eventually fell to land-based forces after two days of heavy fighting. The British were held off by the tower's two eighteen pounders that fired seaward.

Vice-Admiral Hood reported: "...The Fortitude and Juno were ordered against it, without making the least impression by a continued cannonade of two hours and a half; and the former ship being very much damaged by red-hot shot, both hauled off..."

Such towers were adopted by the British in many places, and four were built as part of the defenses at Kingston. One sits on Cedar Island near the fort, and the others are built in a line westward and lake-ward from Fort Henry along the shoreline. The westernmost, called the Murney Tower, is open as a museum.

Directions: King St. W, at Barrie

Your Trip Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca