



FAB EXPERIENCES

Eastern Ontario, Canada

Wild About Water



Tour Description

Amazingly, 60% of all the lakes on the planet are in Canada. The Frontenac Arch Biosphere is a sample of this Canadian fresh water landscape: over 30% of FAB is lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, lakes and bogs. There are near 3,000 islands, and close to 1,000 lakes and ponds on the Arch. This isn't something to see and experience in just one day.

There are a raft of water experiences! This tour lays out two days of experiences, each a completely different character.

Day 1 is the big picture—touring by boat tour for a river experience, followed by a land route that shows how water power shaped the history of the region, and the birth of industry in Canada.

Day 2 is an up close, and personal experience with the water environment of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere – learning about water travel, and understanding the enormity of the task of exploring one of the largest countries on Earth. This tour could expand to more than a day, if you wanted to spend more days on the water, camping or staying at B&Bs to explore the heart of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.

Tour from the FAB Kingston Gateway

fabkingston.ca

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1. 1000 Islands Cruises

Lat: 44.230200
Long: -76.478440
Tel: 613-549-5544

The “Discovery Cruise” of this company rambles along the waterfront of Kingston at the east end of Lake Ontario, and touches upon the western-most of the Thousand Islands. This is a great introduction to the look and feel of the eastern-most of the Great Lakes, and how it begins to funnel into the St. Lawrence River, some 40 km. downstream.

263 Ontario St., Kingston across from City Hall

Notes:

2. Marine Museum of the Great Lakes

Lat: 44.225400
Long: -76.483240
Tel: 613-542-2261
Email: marmus@marmuseum.ca

The Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston, founded in 1975, is at 55 Ontario St., just west of downtown on the waterfront. It is the only federally built dry dock on the Great Lakes, and houses the original pumping station and steam engines built in 1891.

The Museum displays a wide-ranging collection of marine artifacts and exhibits, a significant fine art collection, and library. Current exhibits highlight the growth of ship building and shipping technologies, the history of boat building, the life of the sailor, as well as regional Kingston’s maritime history and its place on the Great Lakes. The recently opened “Eco Gallery” focuses on environmental issues/successes related to the Great Lakes.

The Museum Ship Alexander Henry was built in 1959. A former buoy tender and light icebreaker for the Canadian Coast Guard, the Alexander Henry is a fine example of shipbuilding from the last century. With its twenty ton crane, block and tackle, hydraulic ram and other functional machinery, visitors can learn first hand about the ship and about ice breaking in Canadian waters.

The ship is available for tours from May - October, weather permitting. 55 Ontario St.

Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca

3. Kingston Mills Lock Station

Lat: 44.292700
Long: -76.442680

Water shaped the history of Canada – its transportation routes, where communities were built, and how industry evolved. Those three parts of the Canadian story come together here, at Kingston Mills.

A series of falls where the Cataraqui River spilled into a deep bay, just a few kilometers in land from Kingston, was an ideal site to harness the water power for mills. Both a grist mill and saw mill were built by the British government, in 1784, on the falls to serve the residents of the Loyalist settlement that is now Kingston. “King’s Mill” was key to the growing community, where farmers from even two day’s travel away could bring grain to be ground for flour; and where the rich inland forests fed the saw mill, to build homes and communities.

Beginning in 1827, defense and transportation trumped milling, and the site was cleared to build locks for the Rideau Canal. The locks would enable boats to bypass the falls. Four locks were constructed, all of which have a lift of 3.6 metres. The Cataraqui, before the canal was built, was scarcely a river, but more aptly a creek. The mills were fed by the torrents of spring run-off, but the canal system needed greater and seasonally longer volume of flow. As part of the canal building, there are dams on 57 inland lakes to feed the flow. An interpretive display in an old lockmaster’s house provides more of the story.

On the east side of the upper locks at Kingston mills, there is a hydro electric generating station, dating to 1914. Water is funneled through massive, barrel-like tubes to the generator turbines, and onto the grid.

Above the locks is Colonel By Lake – named for the British engineer who stoically overcame bureaucratic and wildness obstacles alike to see the canal to completion. An earthen dam around the southern end of what was once lowlands and marshes created this very shallow lake, and other just to the north, called River Styx, as part of the reservoir system of the canal.

Driving directions: Turn west on Kingston Rd. 2, to Hwy. 15, north past 401 approx. 7.8 km.; turn right on Kingston Mills Rd.; 2.2 km to Kingston Mills Locks

Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca

4. Seeley's Bay

Lat: 44.478800
Long: -76.263900

During the building, of the Rideau Canal in the early 1830s, Cranberry Marsh was flooded, becoming a lake, to create depth for shipping and canal locks. The Seeley family had set up a teepee-style trading post around 1825, and in 1841 the village took the family name. The bay and village became a stop for steamers plying the Rideau Canal.

Logs were in demand fuel for steamers, heating and for mills to turn logs to lumber for homes and furniture. Thousands of cords of wood were shipped out of Seeley's Bay. Another early industry in the community was an ashery, to make potash used for bleaching and making soap. In the late 1880s, grain, lumber and livestock were being steadily shipped from the village landing. Today, Seeley's Bay is a quiet but vibrant rural community, celebrating its heritage, and still a busy port on the canal for recreational boaters.

Driving directions: Follow Kingston Mills Rd. east to Hwy. 15, turn left; approx. 25 km. to Seeley's Bay, turn right onto Main Street to village centre.

Notes:

5. Lyndhurst

Lat: 44.549900
Long: -76.125300

The Rideau Canal in early planning stages was to enter the St. Lawrence not at Kingston, but instead at Gananoque because the volume of water was greater on that river – but Kingston won out, because it was more secure, and the canal was all about a protected route for national security. Had Gananoque been the chosen route, there would have been a flight of canal locks at Lyndhurst, and a very different story for the town.

There was a substantial fall of water at Lyndhurst, pouring down a channel from Lower Beverly Lake to the north, and into Lyndhurst Lake. Waterpower was harnessed for mills for grain and lumber, and used in an early iron foundry – the first in what was then Upper Canada. The footings for the mills are still visible on the east side of the stream.

The bridge over Lyndhurst Creek, built by the mill owners in 1857, is the oldest standing stone bridge in Ontario. In the park on the northeast side of the bridge is a long dock and a launch ramp – very popular among paddlers and fisherman. Display panels near the bridge show images of the community's early days.

Driving directions: From Seeley's Bay, follow Main St./Adelaide St. to Hwy. 15 approx 1.5 km.; turn left onto Hwy. 15, north; approx. 3.2 km., turn right onto Lyndhurst Rd./Cnty. Rd. 33; approx. 8.2 km. to Lyndhurst

Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca

6. Delta Mill

Lat: 44.610200
Long: -76.122300

Tel: 613-928-2584

Email: info
@deltamill.org

While there were once many mills along the course of the Rideau Canal, few survived the building of the canal, as the falls sites were cleared for locks. Away from the canal, however, several mills still stand. Exceptional among these is the Old Stone Mill at Delta. It was built in 1810 by William Jones, who built several mills in the region. Upper Beverley Lake, before the mill was contemplated, was a broad marsh and surrounding farmland. A small but strategic dam backed the water up, drowning out the farms amid much dismay, but created a fall of water for the mill.

This is one of the earliest surviving, fully automatic, grist mills of Upper Canada. In 1817 the mill was described as “unquestionably the best building of the kind in Upper Canada”. It is the only surviving pre-1812 stone grist mill in Ontario.

In 1963 the last owner of the Mill, Hastings Steele, deeded the Old Stone Mill to a group of four people in trust, for the sum of one dollar. Mr. Steele’s prime concern was that the Mill should be preserved and would in time become a museum of milling technology. These four founded The Delta Mill Society, incorporated in 1972 as a Non-profit Corporation.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada declared the Old Stone Mill at Delta to be a National Historic Site in 1973. The Delta Mill Society has restored the structural integrity of the mill and made it operational once again. Excellent exhibits and from time to time, millers at work, bring the story of how such mills shaped the communities of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.

Driving directions: From Lyndhurst, follow Cnty. Rd. 33 east approx. 6.3 km.; turn left onto Cnty. Rd. 42, approx. 3 km. to Delta

Notes:

7. Gananoque

Lat: 44.327100
Long: -76.164060

Gananoque’s history is entirely shaped by water. Long before European explorers and settlers ‘discovered’ the region, the site figured in First Nations’ camping, trading and travel. The Gananoque River was a canoe route inland from the St. Lawrence River for 3,000 – perhaps 4,000 years. Paddlers still trace that route today.

A falls, just inland from King Street, still thunders in spring runoff. The considerable water flow powered several mills between those falls and the St. Lawrence. An ingenious canal was built atop the west bank of the Gananoque, and sluiceways fed several mills below the banks. The first industry, as elsewhere was flour and lumber milling, but by the mid-1800s the town boasted factories for tools, wagons and carriages and even fishing lures. It was nicknamed the Birmingham of Canada, eluding to the industrial city of Britain. Some of the old factory sites are still there. *continued on next page*

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca

Continued from Gananoque

There were other factories too, for milk and cheese production, serving the farms inland.

By the late 1800s, people from big cities, especially in the US, were discovering the pleasures of the great outdoors, and fishing and sight-seeing that went with that. The islands, after some fancy publicity work, became the place to be and islands were snapped up for cottages, castles and inns. Gananoque was a hub for early tourism – and builders, inn owners and tour boat operators cashed in. The town today still serves the pleasure of tourists from the world over in the heart of the Thousand Islands.

Driving directions: From Delta, take Cnty. Rd. 42 east approx. 3 km., turn right onto Cnty. Rd. 33, through Lyndhurst to Hwy. 15 approx 14.5 km.; turn left onto Hwy. 15 for approx. 1.1 km.; turn left onto Cnty. Rd. 32 approx 20 km. to Gananoque, where Cnty. Rd. 32 becomes Stone St.

Notes:

Return to Kingston on Cnty. Rd. 2

Return to Kingston on Cnty. Rd. 2, approx. 29 km.

Day 2 is an up close, and personal experience with the water environment of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere. If you have your own canoe or kayak, there are plenty of choices, selecting from routes mapped on the frontenacarchbiosphere.ca site. Weather and wind may influence your decision. The St. Lawrence can be a challenge on breezy days, but inland lakes offer more shelter.

But perhaps you are trying out paddling for the first time. Here are three options for on-water experiences for a day's outing, where you can rent, learn and get acquainted with the landscape.

1. Frontenac Outfitters

Lat: 44.492000
Long: -76.563200

Tel: 613-376-6220

Email: frontenacoutfitters@gmail.com

On the southern edge of Frontenac Provincial Park, Frontenac Outfitters can equip you, and as well has courses scheduled many days through spring to fall. The staff will help you settle in to an experience at your level, and point you to routes for your skill and enjoyment.

www.frontenac-outfitters.com 6674 Bedford Rd, Sydenham

Notes:

2. Gould Lake Conservation Area

Lat: 44.461000
Long: -76.588000

Tel: 613-546-4228

Email: crca@cataraquieregion.on.ca

Just five km. north of the village of Sydenham is the Gould Lake Conservation area. The lake is at the edge of the Frontenac Arch, and easy to explore. Arrangements can be made to rent, for the day, kayaks and canoes, including the safety gear. You launch from a sandy beach, and are soon paddling along rugged granite shorelines.

www.cataraquieregion.on.ca/events/pop_up/canoerentals.htm
1540 Gould Lake Rd, Sydenham

Notes:

3. 1000 Island Kayaking

Lat: 44.323880
Long: -76.163500

Tel: 613-329-6265

Email: kayaking@1000ikc.com

From the town docks at Gananoque, 1000 Islands Kayaking has guided excursions into the Admiralty Fleet of islands nearby, or can equip you for exploration, with route maps, on your own. To get out among the sheltered channels in the islands, you first exit a busy summer harbor, and cross a wide and well-trafficked channel. Novices would want to arrange lessons, and take guided tours – great experiences.

www.1000islandskayaking.com 110 Kate St, Gananoque

Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca

Your Trip Notes:

Explore more at: frontenacarchbiosphere.ca