

Discover Indigenous Culture in Ottawa



Long before French explorer Samuel de Champlain arrived in what is now in Ottawa, the region was a place of hunting, a place of trade; travelling along the Ottawa River in birch bark canoes to hunt, fish and trade goods. Deriving from the word “adawe”, meaning “to trade”, the Ottawa region is home to 40,000+ Indigenous peoples. Discover the stories of Indigenous people through cultural experiences, museums, and monuments and find authentic handmade items from the many local Indigenous-owned shops.

To Visit



Mādahòki Farm

Madahoki Farm's mission is to share the land, stories, and food from an Indigenous perspective as an Indigenous owned-and-run tourism business. Mādahòki Farm offers authentic experiences that showcase culture, history, food, music, art, fashion, dance and even entrepreneurship that is reflective and respectful of Canada's diverse Indigenous heritage. Stop by for a self-guided tour, visit the farm animals or the endangered Spirit Horses, walk the legacy trail or book an experience on their website.

www.madahoki.ca

Beandigen Cafe

Located in the heart of Landsdowne, Beandigen Café is an Indigenous-owned café that offers various types of coffee, tea and bannock. Biindigen, in Anishinaabemowin means welcome, so we welcome you in, to order your favourite coffee or tea and try the delicious hand-made bannock. While you sit and enjoy your coffee/tea, enjoy the surroundings, the pictures and artwork on the wall, and browse the marketplace that allows you to purchase authentic handmade items from local Indigenous community members.

www.beandigen.ca

Indigenous Walks

Indigenous Walks was launched in May 2014 and is an active, educational, and fun way to learn about Indigenous peoples' experiences in Ottawa. This guided walk and talk provides a layer of knowledge of Canada's capital through art, culture, history, and landscape. Guests walk through downtown Ottawa and/or Gatineau and gain a contemporary Indigenous perspective on what they see.

[email: jaimemorse2017@gmail.com](mailto:jaimemorse2017@gmail.com)



Makatew Workshops

Explore the authentic Indigenous workshops and ceremonies hosted at their beautiful facility in Carp. Events are always changing – from moccasin workshops to mitten-making to cooking bannock around the fire. Stop by for a tour of our facility or book a unique experience for small groups.

www.makatew.ca

Bougie Birch

Delve into the significance of dreamcatchers in Indigenous cultures and engage in open discussions about Indigenous lived experiences. Explore topics including reconciliation, cultural appreciation, decolonization, and Indigenous teachings. Bring your creativity and questions, and join us for camaraderie, laughter, and new friendships.

www.bougiebirch.ca/workshops

SHOP Indigenous

Adaawewigamig

A storefront supporting Indigenous youth, artists and community.

Adaawewigamig is a social enterprise to support the ongoing work of Indigenous grassroots youth organization Assembly of Seven Generations.

55 Byward Market Square #19, Ottawa, ON

Beaded Dreams

At Beaded Dreams you will find a range of items including jewelry, moccasins and mitts, dreamcatchers, Native art, handmade candles and soaps, smudge medicines (ie. sage), books, stones and crystals, craft supplies and much more.

426 Bank St, Ottawa ON

ADAAWE Indigenous Hub

ADAAWE provides Indigenous entrepreneurs and creators with a safe and supportive space, community, helpful resources, programming and advisory services to build and grow thriving businesses. Stop in to visit their front-facing store that exhibits locally made Indigenous products from earrings, to soaps, shawls, dreamcatchers, and much more!

338 Somerset St W, Ottawa, ON



Mādahòkì Farm Marketplace

The Indigenous Marketplace features over 75 artisans and indigenous owned businesses exhibiting indoors and outdoors onsite during festival hours and online 24-7.

Normal hours - Open Thursday-Sunday 11-4pm
4420 West Hunt Club Road, Ottawa, ON

Khewa Native Art Boutique

Owned by Nathalie Coutu, has Indigenous products but also does traditional ceremonies on request. She is always eager to speak and teach about Indigenous culture and traditions. Her shop is located in the small town of Wakefield, Québec, a half-hour's drive north of Ottawa.

www.khewa.com/apropos-about_e.html

737 Riverside Drive, Wakefield, Québec

Beandigen

Browse their marketplace that allows you to purchase authentic handmade items from local Indigenous community members. From beaded earrings to t-shirts, their wide selection of items will have you shopping for that special someone, or even a gift for yourself.

106-900 Exhibition Way
Lansdowne TD Place
Ottawa ON

Explore Indigenous content at Ottawa's Museums



Canadian Museum of History

Canada's most visited museum, the Canadian Museum of History, is located just across the majestic Ottawa River in Gatineau, Québec. The beautiful, undulated structure, designed by Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal, features countless symbols that reflect Canada's landscape.

The museum's Grand Hall is home to the world's largest indoor collection of totem poles (as well as spectacular views of Parliament Hill and the Ottawa River). Look up at the domed ceiling at the end of the hall to see Morning Star, a painting by Alex Janvier. Known as one of Canada's great Indigenous artists, Janvier was a member of what was called the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation (commonly referred to as the "Indian Group of Seven").

The massive Canadian History Hall presents the largest and most comprehensive exhibition about Canadian history ever created. Over 15,000 years of Canadian history is recounted through 1,500 artifacts, with indigenous history incorporated throughout. And don't miss the First Peoples Hall's extensive collection of artifacts and detailed dioramas which provide a compelling look at the First Nations of Canada, Indigenous and Inuit peoples.

www.historymuseum.ca

Canadian Museum of Nature

The Canada Goose Arctic Gallery at the Canadian Museum of Nature presents interactive exhibits, multimedia and fascinating artifacts about the natural history and human connections with Canada's North.

The museum consulted with Indigenous groups and individuals from the region, such as the Inuit, to weave their perspectives throughout the gallery. Some of the highlights include: the Northern Voices Gallery, a rotating special exhibition space curated by Northerners; a multimedia installation called Beyond Ice, a co-creation with the National Film Board of Canada, which features projections of Inuit art onto real blocks of ice that visitors can touch; and a giant mural designed by an Inuk artist which colourfully presents key aspects of Inuit culture.

www.nature.ca

Canadian War Museum

Learn about the history of conflicts and wars fought by the First Peoples before and after European contact.

www.warmuseum.ca



National Gallery of Canada

The beautiful National Gallery of Canada is home to the world's largest collection of Canadian art, including Indigenous and Inuit art. Visit the permanent Indigenous and Canadian Galleries to see the largest display of such art in the museum's history. The items are presented side by side in chronological order, providing a complete picture of Canadian art. Inuit art is incorporated throughout the Indigenous and Canadian Galleries and more is on display in the museum's Inuit gallery.

www.gallery.ca

Indigenous Monuments and Statues

Chief Tessouat

At the Canadian Museum of History, a statue honouring Chief Tessouat, an Algonquin Chief from the Kichi Zibi Anishinabeg was erected in November 2017.

The National Aboriginal Veterans Monument

The National Aboriginal Veterans Monument stands on the west side of Confederation Park (along Elgin Street), honouring Indigenous war veterans:

www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canada/national-aboriginal-veterans-monument

Anishinabe Scout

In Major's Hill Park, the Anishinabe Scout statue recognizes the role of First Nations people in the development of Canada.

The Valiants Memorial

The Valiants Memorial in downtown Ottawa immediately east of the National War Memorial contains nine busts and five statues commemorating individuals who have played a role in major conflicts in Canada's history. Thayendanegea (also known as Joseph Brant) (1742–1807) was a notable Mohawk warrior and statesman, and principal war chief of the Six Nations. He led his people in support of the British during the American Revolution and, after the war, brought his people to Canada to settle near where Brantford now stands.

Events, Celebrations and Commemorations

Winterlude Indigenous events

Every February, the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau turn into a three-week winter festival perfect for the whole family. There are hundreds of free and paid events to participate in, including workshops, performances and demonstrations by Indigenous artists. Dates, times, and events change yearly so be sure to check out the official Winterlude website to stay up to date.

ottawatourism.ca/en/see-and-do/winterlude



Odawa Pow Wow

The Odawa Native Friendship Centre holds its' Annual Traditional Pow Wow during the last weekend in May, at the Canadian Police College campus located at 1 Sandridge Road in Ottawa, ON. The Traditional Pow Wow is well-known for starting the Pow Wow season off for over forty years. This year's event will bring together dancers, drummers, singers, traditional food, craft vendors and entertainment. Participants, guests and spectators will come from far and wide to witness and take part in the true meaning of Indigenous culture during this two-day event.

odawanativefriendshipcentre.ca/44th-annual-traditional-pow-wow

Ottawa Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival

The Summer Solstice Festival takes place June 21st – 23rd at MĀDAHŌKĪ FARM, a spectacular tourism experience and gathering place in Ottawa's Greenbelt. MĀDAHŌKĪ, which means "to share land" in Anishinaabe, builds on the growing interest in agritourism, farm-to-table culinary experiences and authentic cultural experiences from an Indigenous perspective. It is also the year-round home of an Indigenous Marketplace selling products made by Indigenous artisans, the permanent home of a small but growing herd of endangered Ojibwe Spirit Horses and other interesting attractions.

<https://summersolsticefestivals.ca>

Indigenous Theatre at the National Arts Centre Our Stories are Medicine

Embrace the richness of Indigenous stories, traditions, and resilience. This season honours the heart of our communities, the matriarchs who raise us with love, impart wisdom, and hold our communities in their caring hands. Join us in celebrating their vibrant spirit resonating through each performance on our stages. Check our exciting lineup, from cultural workshops, comedy shows, and stories told through dance and music.

www.nac-cna.ca/en/indigenoustheatre

Asinabka Festival

The Asinabka Festival is an annual event, typically held in August, that features a diverse array of films across various genres and lengths, showcasing Indigenous cultures and nations from around the globe. Attendees can look forward to carefully curated art exhibits, engaging workshops, insightful panels, industry events, and innovative music and performance showcases. Join Asinabka this year at Winterlude to experience Indigenous films from the circumpolar North. Outdoors in a theatre made of snow from Feb 7-9th.

asinabkafestival.org

Commemorations

Check Ottawa Tourism's calendar of events to see the activities and happenings that are taking place in the city in honour of these days.

June – National Indigenous History Month

In 2007, an email and letter campaign were initiated to build support for a month to celebrate Indigenous achievements, artists, musicians, storytellers, etc. When the campaign caught the attention of a British Columbia MP, a motion was introduced to the House of Commons in 2008. When the motion failed, it was then again, re-introduced in 2009 and received unanimous consent. Since then, it has become a month to learn about and reflect upon Indigenous history. For Indigenous people, it's a time to be proud and celebrate their resilience, and showcase a vibrant culture.

June 21st – National Indigenous Peoples Day

On June 21, we celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day. You can celebrate Indigenous heritage by supporting the Indigenous-owned shops, cafes, farms and events across the Ottawa region.

September 30 - National Truth and Reconciliation Day

In 2021, the first annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30) was observed to commemorate the history and legacy of residential schools. Live and virtual events were held throughout the country, including several in Ottawa.

Explore History through the land

Indigenous people have deep rooted connections with the land, the waters and animals. As you explore the landmarks, interpretive panels (located at most locations), provide a historical context and importance of that location.



Chaudière Falls

The Chaudière Falls, waterfalls located on the Ottawa River (north of the Canadian War Museum), is a sacred place, a place of spiritual importance to the Anishinaabe Algonquin people of the region. It was a meeting place and trade route, where Indigenous travellers would make offerings of tobacco to ensure safe journeys to meet and trade.

Visit the Chaudière Falls to connect with the past, take in a breathtaking view and explore this historically significant site. Currently under the stewardship and management of Hydro Ottawa, it produces hydroelectricity that powers over 20,000 households in the region.

chaudierefalls.com

Māwandōseg Bridge

On August 15, 2017, the National Capital Commission renamed the bridge on the Voyageurs Pathway over Leamy Creek, in Gatineau, Québec (across the Ottawa River from Ottawa). The new name is Māwandōseg Bridge and it was chosen by young people from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, and it means "land where we once gathered for celebration" in Algonquin. Interpretation panels explain the history of the site, which is also home to some of the most popular archaeological digs in the region, and nesting areas offer homes for the at-risk northern map turtle.

www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/posts/pathway-bridge-over-leamy-creek-renamed-mawandoseg

Pindigen Park

In late June 2017, the National Capital Commission officially opened Pindigen Park at the southeast corner of Wellington Street and Booth Street in Ottawa (on LeBreton Flats, not far from the Canadian War Museum). The new park, which celebrates Indigenous culture and heritage in the capital region, was created in partnership with the local Anishinabe First Nation communities of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, and with the support of Canadian Heritage. The park aims to introduce visitors to one of the guiding principles of the Anishinabe people for which living well means finding harmony between the land, water, air, and people. Pindigen means: "Come on in! All are welcome here!"

www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/places-to-visit/parks-paths-and-parkways/pindigen-park