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Planning a Northern Ontario getaway? Within these pages, you’ll find everything you need—attractions, events, shopping, restaurants, hotels, inns, cottages and historical sites. In the unlikely event we missed a few details, visit ontariotravel.net/north to explore even more.

THIS ISSUE

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Design, Layout and Editorial Direction: Lucidia

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© 2014 Printed in Canada
Printed: St. Joseph Communications-Print Group, Concord, ON
E&OE 01-15-8100 000995

ON THE COVER:
Discover Northern Ontario’s picture-perfect waterfronts

To find out about Northern Ontario’s Great Outdoors just:
Food just tastes better outdoors. And as my wife and family are discovering, actually angling for the main course adds a whole new dimension to the experience.

By James Smedley
If you’re interested in catching your own meal, Northwest Ontario offers an abundance of challenging (and delicious) possibilities. Covering over 310,000 square kilometres (120,000 square miles) this Northern Ontario region boasts over 150,000 lakes, rivers and streams, and all teeming with fish. Species are just as varied—walleye, northern pike, muskie, small and largemouth bass, and trout. Is it any wonder why the Northwest has earned a reputation as the most popular fishing destination in Canada?

It’s certainly one of my top spots, a thought that’s present as we drift over a rocky shoal of a large Northwest Ontario inland lake casting jigs for walleye. My wife and I are in one boat, my parents in another and my daughters are in a third boat with our guide. It’s been a busy morning—catching and releasing large fish from shoals, shoreline and weed edges.

As breakfast starts to wear off, the focus shifts to the shore lunch our guide has promised. He’s situated the girls right over the fish, and an instant later, my 12-year-old swings a 17-inch walleye into the boat. Even my mother gets into the action, contributing several of the 14 to 17-inch fish our guide says are best for eating.

By the time we nose the boats onto a sun-drenched sandy beach our attention is squarely on lunch. While our guide fillets a mountain of fish, the girls collect firewood and the rest of us watch the deep iron pan of oil heating as fish fillets are dredged in a mixture of flour, salt, pepper and other spices. Only after the oil is smoking hot does the cooking start, with the union of hot oil and coated fillets producing an audible sizzle. Within minutes, crispy golden-brown chunks of fish emerge from the pan.

After the corn, beans and coleslaw have been set out, and the potatoes and onions have accepted a light dusting of salt, we line up and load our plates. A notable silence falls over the group as we sit on a log on the warm sandy beach and savour the classic Northern Ontario shore lunch.

Monster Hunting

Once you’ve filled up at your shore lunch, it’s time to burn off those calories. With thousands of fishable lakes teeming with virtually every species in the province, Northwest Ontario will give you a great workout as you hunt down your next trophy catch. And remember—when angling for these big fish, the region has a catch-and-release policy in effect.

Walleye

Typical walleye stretch from 15 to 17 inches long, and trophies can exceed 10 pounds.

Trout

From lunker lake to speckled and rainbows, a good day on the water in Northwest Ontario is the norm. Brookies at eight pounds are possible on remote arctic waterways. The Nipigon River has the Ontario-record brook trout at 14.8 pounds. The region also boasts hundreds of cold, deep lakes where lake trout over 30 pounds can be found.

Muskie

With waters such as Lake of the Woods, Eagle Lake and Lac Seul, the region produces a great number of muskie, along with many super-sized catches. It’s not unusual for anglers to haul in fish exceeding 50 inches in length and weighing over 40 pounds.

Northern Pike

This fighting fish is a favourite for many anglers, with some of the largest fish exceeding 45 inches in length and tipping the scales at over 30 pounds.

Bass

With both small and largemouth bass, Northwest Ontario is home to some of the biggest bass tournaments in Canada.
SOMETHING FOR EVERY “TASTE”

by Elle Andra-Warner
Art, history, culture and great food. Northwest Ontario has it all—rock art created thousands of years ago, award-winning museums and art galleries, festivals celebrating everything from blues and folk music to multiculturalism, Norseman bush planes (Red Lake is the Norseman Capital of the World) and, of course, great restaurants to sample and savour.

Go stargazing using one of the largest telescopes in Central Canada or take a Star Walk at Fort William’s new David Thompson Astronomical Observatory.

Fur-trade history continues to be a big part of Northwest art, culture and heritage. To bring that history alive, visitors can step back into 1815 at the 10 hectare (25 acre) Fort William Historical Park in Thunder Bay (the world’s largest reconstructed fur-trade post) and experience the fur-trade era through its 42 reconstructed historic buildings.

For a better sense of the region’s history visit Kenora’s award-winning Lake of the Woods Museum, the Nipigon Historical Museum (love the building’s front mural) and the Dryden Museum (home to the Dryden Buck and thousands of other artifacts). You’ll also want to check out the design of the Geraldton Interpretive Centre. It’s built on the site of an old gold mine beside the highway. Lastly, the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre, with its cool multi-media exhibits and historic displays, along with the innovative exhibits at Thunder Bay Museum are certainly worth a visit.

After you’ve taken all of that in, you’ll probably want to stop off for a bite to eat. The only difficulty you’ll have is choosing what to enjoy. There are many restaurants to choose from that offer an equally diverse range of cuisines. The multitude of grills, restaurants, bistros and bars have every palate covered—with dining experiences inspired by Japanese, East Indian, Thai, Jamaican, Lebanese, Polish and Portuguese cultures.

It was right here in the Northwest where First Nations artists developed the stylized paintings of the Woodland School of Art led by the legendary Anishinaabe trailblazers Norval Morrisseau and Roy Thomas.

Woodland School is a visionary art style using bold colours in dramatic representations of the spirits, legends and traditions of Ojibwa culture. Norval Morrisseau founded the school in the 1960s while he was working the gold mines in the Northwest community of Red Lake. A permanent exhibit, containing his famous painting Thunderbird, is housed in the world-class Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre.

About 20 years later, the self-taught Longlac-born artist Roy Thomas, guided by memories of his grandmother’s teachings and stories of Anishinaabe culture, brought his own distinctive influence to the Woodland School of Art. His interpretation of the “Life Spirits of Air, Land, Water and Fire” have placed him as an icon in the Woodland art movement.

For more information go to visitnorthwestontario.com

Down by the T-Bay

Thunder Bay’s awe-inspiring landscapes and rich cultural history make it a must stop. Northern Ontario’s second-most-populated city has a lot to offer, including attractions like Fort William Historical Park and the awesome Sleeping Giant. Thunder Bay is also unique, as it’s the only Northern Ontario city that features an international airport; so getting there is made that much simpler.

Then there’s Prince Arthur’s Landing at Marina Park—Thunder Bay’s signature recreation destination. This $130 million development is a mixed-use village and animated waterfront park that has reconnected Thunder Bay’s downtown core to the glistening shores of Lake Superior. Prince Arthur’s Landing features 22 art installations, including eight major sculptures, along with restaurants, accommodations, shops and more coming in Phase 2 of the expansive development.

You can find out more about the Waterfront District and Thunder Bay by checking out visitthunderbay.ca
A SUPERIOR STRETCH OF ROAD

by Rick Vosper
The drive through Algoma Country along Highway 17 from the Big Goose (located in scenic Wawa) to the waterfront in Sault Ste. Marie should take two and a half hours. I’ve never been able to do that. There are too many trails to hike, waters to fish, views of Lake Superior to gasp at, historic sites to see, Native pictographs to marvel at, art galleries and restaurants to visit, beaches to lie on, cabins to stay in, canoe and kayaks to paddle, birds to watch… Okay, you get the picture (oh, and hundreds of pictures to take). This is a “Superior” stretch of highway.

You pull away from the shadow of Wawa’s Big Bird and head south on King’s Highway 17. Perhaps you’re still savouring the memory of paddleboards on Michipicoten Bay and the morning sun at your lakeside lodge.

As you descend the hill at Old Woman Bay, the world’s largest lake flashes diamonds and distracts you from finding the face of the Old Woman Nokomis, hidden in the towering cliff. She entices you in to the pebble beach guarded by her stony gaze.

Something, Nokomis perhaps, gently tugs you into the campgrounds and trailheads of Lake Superior Provincial Park (LSPP) and onto the beaches at Katherine’s Cove and Sand River. She leads you to ancient rock paintings and into the Agawa Bay Visitors Centre, where you can hear all her stories.

At Montreal River Harbour, the highway dips down to the lake 500 feet (152 metres) below, revealing rocky outcrops and cozy cabins nestled in the protected cove.

Boat launches and canoe rentals provide admission to the canvas you’ve been admiring from above. Kayaks now beach along three kilometres (1.9 miles) of sand at Pancake Bay, where voyageurs in Montreal Canoes once tarried over lunch. You can tarry too—over fresh whitefish and lake trout in Batchawana or overnight at one of the motels, cabins or campgrounds.

So much to see and do! At Chippewa Falls, the halfway point of the Trans-Canada Highway, the trout and salmon battle the raging water as they head home for spring or fall spawning. There are beautiful beaches at Harmony and Haviland, plus mountain biking and hiking, with rooms and food nearby.

You savour one more glimpse of that marvellous lake as you climb the Mile Hill and onto more memory-making moments in Sault Ste. Marie. The trip only took me eight hours this time. You can linger even longer on King’s Highway 17.

Amazing vistas and stunning panoramas are your constant companion as you cruise slowly south towards new discoveries.

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NATURE AND ADVENTURE
Backpacking, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, golfing, cycling, wildlife viewing, skiing, snowshoeing—there are so many ways to explore this beautiful region of Northern Ontario.

FISH AND HUNT
Drive, fly or train in, Algoma has some of the best fishing in Ontario. Cast your line for walloping walleye, powerful northern pike and bodacious bass. For hunters, the region has healthy populations of moose, bear, deer, smaller game and wild fowl.

GRAND ALGOMA TOUR
“The Grand Algoma Tour is a premier ride for motorcyclists seeking the perfect weekend getaway. Riders will come home with a new appreciation for the scale of this province and a desire to go back as soon as possible.” – Motorcycle Mojo

DEER TRAIL TOURING ROUTE
Hike along ancient lake bottoms, pass cascading waterfalls, and check out the view from 100-foot (30.5 metre) cliffs on this breathtaking 120 kilometre (72 mile) journey.

For more information visit algomacountry.com
Between 1918 and 1922, five members of the Group of Seven—Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer and Frank Johnston—retreated to Northern Ontario to paint the rugged scenery east of Lake Superior. Boxcars on the Algoma Central Railway served as their mobile studios and overnight residences while the artists spent their days sketching from canoes and atop high rocky vistas.
Not so long ago, riding the rails was how most people travelled. While trains have taken a backseat to other modern modes of transportation, many look forward to experiencing a journey that takes them down this particular memory lane.

This holds especially true for the Agawa Canyon Tour Train. A one-day excursion that carries you 183 kilometres (114 miles) north of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario—culminating in an hour-and-a-half stop-over in a wilderness park. Along the way, you’ll cross impressive trestles, glide alongside shimmering waters, chug through ancient granite rock formations and witness the vast mixed forests of the Canadian Shield.

The journey is made even more captivating with some recent improvements made to the train cars. These include larger windows, GPS-triggered narration in various languages and a locomotive-mounted camera for a bird’s-eye view of what lies ahead. It’s a truly remarkable adventure, which explains why some of the famed Group of Seven’s most renowned works were inspired by the rugged landscapes you’ll witness during your tour.

Historical Beauty

Even a passing visitor would agree that Sault Ste. Marie lives up to its motto of “Naturally Gifted.” To the north and east, the Trans-Canada Highway bisects a rugged gauntlet of Canadian Shield hills; from atop the International Bridge, Lake Superior gleams like quicksilver, and the St. Mary’s Rapids race between sandstone shores. The signs of human occupation appear minuscule alongside the Algoma region’s endless sprawl of lakes, rivers and trees.

Now imagine over a century ago when this was truly a frontier. Early painters captured tantalizing scenes on canvas: Ojibwa paddlers navigating birchbark canoes through wild rapids, a log fur-trading post set on the fringe of a dark forest, and a town of French-Canadian voyageurs. Artists like Anna Jameson, George Catlin, Paul Kane and William Armstrong travelled through the Algoma region in the 19th century.

The area’s first resident artist was F.J. Falkner, who moved to Sault Ste. Marie in 1863 and called it the prettiest place he had ever seen. His oils and watercolours, many of which are stored in trust for the museum at the Art Gallery of Algoma, capture scenes of a waterfront village, including the Government Dock, the Ermatinger Old Stone House and the town’s original pulp mill.

“If you want to get inspired just like those renowned artists that formed the Group of Seven, it’s time to catch a ride on the fabled Agawa Canyon Tour Train. You can choose from some great two-or three-night packages that include accommodations, train tickets and passes to some great local attractions.

Booking your trip is as easy as visiting saulttourism.com
THE (REALLY) GREAT OUTDOORS

By Laura Gregorini
A Treasure of an Island

Whether arriving by crossing the iconic 100-plus year-old swing bridge in Little Current, or by boarding the MS Chi-Cheemaun ferry (also known as the BIG Canoe) in Tobermory, Manitoulin Island is a must stop. The largest freshwater island in the world has more than 100 inland lakes and offers plenty of hiking trails, like the famous Cup and Saucer Trail. For those who are looking to enjoy nature from a comfortable seat, Manitoulin’s long, winding roadways and breathtaking scenery are perfect for slow scenic drives and motorcycle touring.

If you’re interested in exploring the Island’s unique geological formations, visit Misery Bay Nature Preserve. The animals, plants and glacial features found in this provincial park are among some of the rarest in the province—the perfect place to geocache a little relic of your own. Stop in at the eco-friendly visitor centre or enjoy the fresh air on one of the park’s numerous hiking trails.

To immerse yourself in the Island’s rich heritage and culture, visit the Great Spirit Circle Trail, which specializes in authentic Aboriginal experiences that embody the traditions of the Anishinaabe people of Manitoulin Island. This nature-based attraction offers wilderness eco-adventures and educational tours. Led by Aboriginal hosts, guides and storytellers, the Great Spirit Circle Trail is truly an authentic experience that can’t be missed.

With its borders stretching over 184,000 square kilometres, or nearly 71,100 square miles, Northeastern Ontario is undeniably BIG. But more than being just a big region, Northeastern Ontario also boasts BIG outdoor experiences and bucket-list-worthy wilderness experiences.

We begin our journey in Killarney Provincial Park—renowned as an outdoor adventurer’s paradise and a haven for those who love paddling on tranquil waters. With crystal blue lakes, towering white quartzite ridges and iconic windswept pines, it’s no wonder why it’s considered the crown jewel of the Ontario Parks system. Take the day to hike or canoe and enjoy the solitude and stark beauty of this untouched natural setting. For avid adventurers, visit one of the area’s guides and outfitters who are waiting to customize your outdoor experience or take the short drive to the Town of Killarney for world-famous Georgian Bay fish and chips, cozy accommodations and unparalleled hospitality.

Next it’s on to Temagami—a Northern hotspot for outdoor enthusiasts. Cruise or paddle the waters of Obabika Lake in search of ancient pictographs (Indian rock paintings) or set your sights on Caribou Mountain and the Fire Tower and test your comfort with heights. The 100-foot (30-metre) tall tower stands on the summit of Caribou Mountain—400 feet (122 metres) above the town and 1,300 feet (396 metres) above sea level. It’s an ideal spot to take in the majestic old growth pines that make Temagami a sight to behold. Your Northeastern Ontario journey continues as you’re taken back in time to ride the rails of the Polar Bear Express to the towns of Moosonee/Moose Factory. Nestled along Moose River, which connects to James Bay, Ontario’s saltwater coast, these unique communities are only accessible by air or by rail, both of which depart regularly from Cochrane, Ontario. If you venture out to Moose River where it empties into James Bay, you can drop a line in the water for a chance to reel in the “big one” or view playful seals as theycut through the northern waters. Take a guided boat tour to James Bay for a breath of the fresh saltwater air and a glimpse of the region’s beluga whale population when in season.

For more information visit northeasternontario.com
BIG ADVENTURE IN NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO

by Laura Gregorini
BIG Attractions

Get up close and personal with nature’s scientific wonders at Science North in Sudbury. Science North is Northern Ontario’s largest attraction and offers hands-on experiences like defying gravity in the gyroscope, handling a flying squirrel, or being surrounded by butterflies in the butterfly gallery.

The Big Nickel is another BIG attraction in Sudbury, which is literally 64 million times larger than the nickel you’d find in your pocket.

BIG Tours

North Bay, which is nestled on the shores of Lake Nipissing, seems to be built for touring. Walking tours of the vibrant downtown, or the Kate Pace Way to North Bay’s waterfront, are simple ways to uncover the city’s true beauty. Along the waterfront, you’ll find the Heritage Railway & Carousel, as well as the Chief Commanda II cruise line. You can choose from cruises navigating the Manitou Islands, the French River, or Callander Bay by the light of sunset.

BIG Gatherings

Cities in Northeastern Ontario tend to do festivals in a BIG way.

The new Liskeard Bikers Reunion rings in the summer on the last weekend in June. It is arguably the biggest motorcycle event in Northern Ontario, packed with live performances, family-fun activities and camping. It ends on a high note with a freedom ride to raise funds for community cancer care.

Haweater Festival takes over Manitoulin Island on the first weekend in August. Haweater was a name given to people from the island who regularly ate the Hawberry. The Wíkwemikong Annual Cultural Festival and Pow-wow takes place on the same weekend, and ushers in traditional Aboriginal drummers and dancers from around the world.

Ribfest says it all, doesn’t it? Sudbury’s Ribfest on Labour Day long weekend has gotten so BIG they shut down Elgin St. for three days. Six professional rib teams, a family fun zone, demonstrations, live music, and a huge car/motorcycle show make this event a perfect summer send-off.

Find a full listing of festivals and events on northeasternontario.com

BIG Highways

The call of the open road is strong. Sweeping expanses of highways connect the cities in Northeastern Ontario, and they’re just waiting to be explored. There are five touring routes: The Georgian Bay Coastal route, Manitoulin Island Tour, Lake Temiskaming Tour, Lake Nipissing Circle Tour and the Great Legends Tour will expose you to the majesty and mystery of “The North.” You need only visit ridethenorth.com to find out more.
With something for everyone, the Explorers’ Edge region of Ontario is the ideal destination for folks who want to get away from it all—without having to go far.

By Kate Monk
For generations, the Explorers’ Edge region of Ontario has welcomed visitors who seek to experience the Canadian wilderness in all its magnificence—without having to travel long distances to get to it.

Located just two hours north of Toronto by car, easy access to Canada’s sparkling blue waters and lush forests isn’t the only distinct feature of the region.

Here, in every season, you can enjoy the wilderness in your preferred style of travelling, from being pampered at exclusive accommodations to relaxing in a resort cottage, to indulging at a spa and roughing it at one of the many wooded campgrounds.

Options for experiencing the incredible landscape are unlimited, too.

Head off the beaten path and explore over a dozen national and provincial parks, as well as the “Amazing Places” of the UNESCO-designated Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve. Kayakers, canoeists and stand-up paddle boarders have their pick of thousands of miles of waterways to discover, including the stunning Pickerel River system in Loring-Restoule and the portage routes of Algonquin.

Snowmobilers, motorcyclists and ATV fans can tour exceptional loops and trails, developed and recommended by fellow motorsports fans (visit ridetheedge.ca for details).

No need to travel to the North Pole for an adrenaline-filled dogsled expedition either. Dozens of mushers in Explorers’ Edge are waiting to introduce you to the winter activity on everyone’s bucket list. Something to add to your winter bucket list as well: the Ice Trail at Arrowhead Park—a mile-long loop that takes skaters through a picturesque snow-tipped forest.

It’s only natural the landscape that inspires visitors along with Canada’s Group of Seven feels right at home in a thriving, year-round arts scene. Creative studios and galleries dot the towns, villages and countryside, and the live performances are second to none, including the Muskoka Sound outdoor modern music festival, and the Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound—Canada’s favourite summer classical event.

With something for everyone, the Explorers’ Edge region of Ontario is the ideal destination for folks who want to get away from it all—without having to go far.

Home to some of the most iconic landscapes in the nation, including beautiful Algonquin Park, the rugged shores of Georgian Bay and the renowned lakes of Muskoka, a getaway to Explorers’ Edge will introduce you to unforgettable adventures in Canada’s (seriously) Great Outdoors.

**HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR WILDERNESS?**

**SPRING**
Enjoy the return of warmer weather on hundreds of multi-use trails which includes the 321-kilometre (200-mile) Park to Park Trail, on a fabulously muddy ATV tour or join the spring cycling peloton at the Spin the Lakes ride.

**SUMMER**
Enjoy the return of Ontario’s summer hotspot, which is headquarters for outdoor adventure on the region’s famous lakes. From paddling to swimming, boating to fishing, hiking, biking and more, endless discovery awaits. Raise a glass at one of four award-winning craft breweries and the Muskoka Lakes Winery, cruise the lakes on beautiful historic vessels and spend a day with the kids at Santa’s Village.

**FALL**
Algonquin Park is recognized as one of the top spots to view the spectacular fall colours in Canada. And the oranges, yellows and reds are twice as mind-blowing here because they’re reflected in thousands of blue lakes and rivers. Autumn in Explorers’ Edge is doubly impressive—a gorgeous display of mirrored perfection.

**WINTER**
Winter turns up the fun in Explorers’ Edge with some of the best snow in Ontario for snowmobiling, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, pond hockey, skating, ice climbing, dogsledding and more. And be sure to inquire about “fat biking”—Ontario’s hot, new cold-weather adventure.

Plan your exciting adventure at explorersedge.ca
Exploring the Possibilities of Northern Ontario, Canada

Northwest Ontario

With over 70,000 freshwater lakes and countless lodges and resorts, Northwest Ontario epitomizes Canada’s Great Outdoors. You can also explore more urban fare in any of the region’s cities including Thunder Bay and Kenora.

Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma

Framed by Lake Huron and Lake Superior, Algoma is home to 64,750 square kilometres (25,000 square miles) of Northern Ontario wilderness. Whether it’s a fishing, hunting, kayaking, canoeing getaway, or an urban experience in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma Country must be experienced to be believed.

Northeastern Ontario

Unique is often a word used to describe this region of the province. And for good reason. Visit the polar bears in Cochrane or learn something new at Sudbury’s Science North. Or experience Canada’s renowned outdoor adventures in Timmins and beyond.

Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Muskoka and Parry Sound

This region also known as Explorers’ Edge is home to some of the most iconic landscapes in Northern Ontario. From Algonquin Park and Parry Sound to Loring and the lakes of Muskoka, Explorers’ Edge embodies the best of Canada’s Great Outdoors.

ONTARIO TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTRES

The travel experts at Ontario Travel Information Centres look forward to helping you customize a Northern Ontario getaway. You can find our Centres at ontariotravel.net/ind/plan/otics or contact the one that’s closest to you.

YEAR-ROUND CENTRES

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Porter: flyporter.com
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WestJet: westjet.com

Use this guide to plan your adventure. You can also learn more by visiting us online at ontariotravel.net
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for details on your local listings go to www.fishncanada.com or www.odjradio.com
Northern Ontario has some of the best fishing, hunting, outdoor adventures and touring anywhere in the world. That’s why you’re here, and we’ve got some great ideas to help you plan your next getaway. In the unlikely event you don’t find what you’re looking for, visit ontariotravel.net/north to explore even more.
Ride Northern Ontario for some picture-perfect winding roads, awesome dirt and snow trails, and gorgeous waterways. Here are some of the best stories told in photos across the province to help you plan your own adventure.

By: Mike Jacobs
The Muskoka Lakes by Personal Watercraft
There’s really no easy way to convey this “downtown-on-the-water,” as one personal watercraft rider put it. Martin Lortz travelled with Craig Nicholson this summer and perfectly captured the feeling of doing the Muskoka Lakes by PWC:

“An PWC tour in Muskoka is much like exploring the different neighbourhoods of a city but at a much grander scale. Here, the neighbourhoods are lakes and towns, and instead of a few blocks, it’s 200 miles! Lake Muskoka, Rousseau and Joseph are all within reach of a day’s ride.”

ATV All-Stars on the Voyageur Multi-Use Trail System in Mattawa
Ontario’s diverse geography is a big show-off in this section of Northeastern Ontario. Here, two of the most historically important (and stunning) rivers connect at the foothills of the Laurentian Mountains. Three summers ago the YouTube “All-Stars of ATVing” descended on this trail system. One rider said this about their fall tour:

“As we zipped through the yellow-leaved canopy of birch trees, the fallen leaves caught air on the trail behind the ATVs. If there’s a finer sight in this world, I don’t want to know.”

The Pijitawabik Palisades by Motorcycle
When it comes to scenic roads, the stretch between Nipigon and Geraldton is likely the most grandiose. This photo was snapped on a monumental 60-day road trip where yours truly tried to ride every paved road in Northern Ontario. One of the most memorable sections was cruising between two huge billion-year-old cliff faces as we crossed from the west of the province to the east.

The Abitibi Canyon in Northeastern Ontario by Snowmobile
There are dozens of hidden gems throughout Northern Ontario’s snowmobile trails. Perhaps one of the most rewarding, both for its size and remoteness of the trail, is the Abitibi Canyon Loop. One adventurous snowmobiler commented:

“When you’re riding the wide trails, you zone out. You don’t think about work or anything else—just when the next corner is coming or the next hill. It’s beyond freeing.”

Snapshots of Northern Ontario
If you’re looking for some great photo-ops during your Northern Ontario adventure, here are a few suggestions that will give your scrapbook some “oomph!”

**Northeastern Ontario**
Guy Paul Treefall in Iroquois Falls
Big Joe Mufferaw in Mattawa
Ms. Claybelt in Temiskaming Shores
The Big Nickel in Sudbury
The Towne House (where Stompin’ Tom Connors got his start) in Sudbury
The Moonbeam UFO in Moonbeam

**Sault Ste. Marie – Algoma**
Winnie the Pooh in White River (home of the original Winnie the Pooh)
The Wawa Goose in Wawa
Old Woman Bay south of Wawa
Katherine’s Cove and Agawa Bay in Lake Superior Provincial Park
The Sault Locks in Sault Ste. Marie
The Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre in Sault Ste. Marie

**Northwest Ontario**
Husky the Musky in Kenora
Kakabeka Falls just outside Thunder Bay (more total volume of water than Niagara Falls!)
The Terry Fox Monument in Thunder Bay
The Hotto Restaurant in Thunder Bay

Find pics of powersports touring in Ontario by searching these hashtags on Twitter and Instagram:

#OntarioMotoroads for motorcycle touring
#OntarioQuadTrails for ATVing
#OntarioWaterWays for PWC and powerboating
#OntarioSnowTrails for snowmobiling

For more information visit gorideontario.com

EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES IN NORTHERN ONTARIO – 3
ALL-TERRAIN ADVENTURES

By Mike Jacobs
Riding Lake Superior
There’s only one word to describe riding Lake Superior—epic. It’s a route best suited for touring riders who aren’t afraid to put on some miles. Long sweeping curves through stunning mountains that surround the world’s largest freshwater lake explains why so many make it a point to ride Lake Superior. The route crosses through Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, but it’s the contrast between the two sides that will amaze you most. Bonus points go to riders who check out the Grand Algoma Loop, Highway 129 and Algoma’s burgeoning ADV scene.

A Passion for Powerboating
If you’re serious about powerboat cruising, there’s no match for Lake of the Woods. With 14,000 islands and more shoreline than Lake Superior, these waters offer unlimited discoveries. The city of Kenora is home base for the lake; the gas station, restaurants and grocery store all have docks! Locals generally congregate at the beaches, but first-timers should indulge in a weekend of exploring. Massive rock faces are plentiful, as are lodges that cater to captains and crew.

Snowtrails in the North
When people think of winters “the way they used to be” you can bet they’re imagining a place exactly like Northeastern Ontario. Home to the most legendary snow trails in the province, the Great White North is just that—legendary. With the most snow, the longest loops and most pristine forests, it’s no wonder the locals live on snowmobiles here.

Dirt, Mud and ATVing
Explorers’ Edge is home to the best ATV trails this side of the Hatfield-McCoy. For those who want wide open, straight trails perfectly suited for side by sides, check out the Park to Park trails. For technically challenging terrain, make a run for the Algonquin West trail system, with the town of Kearney and its ATV-friendly resorts as your home base. For the truly adventurous, there are thousands of miles of Crown land trails that the lodge owners in Loring-Restoule will guide you through.

For more information visit gorideontario.com
PLenty of fish in the north

By Gord Ellis
There are a lot of very good places to fish on the globe. Yet, when it comes to accessibility and sheer numbers of large fish, Northern Ontario rules. There are tens of thousands of lakes, rivers and reservoirs. Picking which of these great waters to fish in is a difficult assignment, but here are a few that stand out.

In the far northwest corner of the province is Lake of the Woods. This enormous body of water is really several different lakes sewn together by channels and narrows. Lake of the Woods may have more trophy-sized fish than any other lake in Ontario. From walleye to muskie, largemouth bass to lake trout, it would be nearly impossible to find a place where you could conceivably catch a trophy-sized specimen of each in the same day. You can here.

If world-class fishing on legendary waterways full of big trout is your thing, you should take a hard look at Lake Nipigon and the Nipigon River system. The world-record brook trout was caught here in 1915. Amazingly, that 14.8 pound trout hasn’t been surpassed in 100 years. Lake Nipigon is the most pristine cold-water fishery in the world, with enormous brook trout, lake trout and pike. The lower Nipigon River features hard-fighting species like Chinook salmon, steelhead and lake trout. It’s a trout angler’s paradise.

Lake Superior, the greatest of lakes, is more than just a beautiful vista along Highway 17. Superior has fantastic fishing for both cold-water and warm-water species. Lake trout, Chinook, rainbows and coaster brook trout are the main quarry, and thrive in these ice-cold waters. Some of the larger shallow bays, like Black Bay, have great opportunities for perch, bass and huge northern pike.

At Sault Ste. Marie, the St. Mary’s Rapids are famous for fly and spin-fishing opportunities. This churning section of river takes runs of Chinook salmon, rainbows and Atlantic salmon from Lake Huron. There’s also a great walleye fishery directly below the rapids. Every angler should have the St. Mary’s on their list.

Lake Nipissing, at North Bay, is another Northern Ontario fishery with a world-class reputation. Superb bass, northern pike, giant muskie and walleye fishing are all in the mix.

For more information visit gofishinontario.com

**Northern Ontario is home to the most unique and the healthiest freshwater fisheries in the world.**

Tackling Those Fish

For most angling in Northern Ontario, you can use a medium-action spinning rod of about seven feet, coupled with a quality spinning reel and eight pound test monofilament line. This set up can land everything from big pike to little creek trout.

For larger fish like muskellunge, salmon or lake trout, a baitcasting rod of about eight feet matched with a baitcast reel and 30 pound test braided line will do the trick. Telescoping baitcast rods called “flippin’ sticks” are a fine all-around big fish rod, and stow well in a boat.

For panfish and small trout, an ultra-lite spinning combo with six pound test monofilament is ideal. The Northern Ontario tackle box will include a variety of leadhead jigs with a selection of scented grub, twister or shad bodies in both natural and bright colours. Add some minnow-shaped crankbaits like the Rapala Husky Jerk. Crankbaits catch almost every species of fish.

Trout like flashy spoons, including the Krocodile, Little Cleo and EGB. Both the Mepps and Panther Martin brand spinners are great for trout and bass. Muskie hit large buck-tail spinners and oversized top-water lures. Make sure you have a few steel leaders on hand when fishing toothy critters like muskie and pike.
HOOK, LODGE AND SINKER

By James Smedley
A Day At The Lodge

The bacon and eggs fill you up before a morning of plucking fat walleye from a rocky shoal. By noon we’re sitting on the granite of a pine-capped island, watching our guide expertly fillet, season and fry our catch. Coffee, golden fillets and sweet pickles never tasted so good.

An afternoon nap on a warm, flat rock is perfect prep for casting spoons into thick weeds for toothy northern pike. Eagles soar overhead, and loons ply the waters. We even spot a moose feeding on aquatic plants. Under the warm afternoon sun my partner catches a pike almost four feet long, and we hoist the trophy for photos.

The smell of prime rib wafts across the water as we approach the lodge in the late afternoon. We tie up at the dock and head to our cabin for happy hour before sharing dinner (and stories) with other guests. The hard-core anglers return to the lake for an evening of fishing while others play cards or shoot pool. We gaze at the map of the lake. So much water to cover, and only six more days to go.

For more information visit gofishinontario.com
IT’S ALL IN THE GAME

By Paul Beasley
Trophy hunter or adventure-seeker: these are the categories hunters typically get lumped into. When I began hunting, I was just looking for the experience. However, I quickly morphed into a trophy hunter and now I seek great adventure along the way; that’s why I look to Northern Ontario each fall to live out my dreams!

My first experience hunting in Northern Ontario was near the borders of the Thunder Bay District and the Algoma District. My brothers and I all shot great bears within a few miles of each other on our first evening hunt—we were hooked. Bears are growing older and bigger, so the opportunity for a trophy has never been better. Most bear hunting in Ontario is done from a tree-stand, as the rugged country is so thick that spot-and-stalk hunting is only effective in the logged or clear-cut areas.

The northwestern corner of the province (between Thunder Bay and the Manitoba border) is the best area to look for an abundance of whitetails, and the trophy quality is world-class. The deer hunting experience in Northwest Ontario is very unique. Hundreds of thousands of acres of nothing but solid deer habitat broken up by rivers, streams and lakes make it a true deer haven allowing bucks to grow old and supporting more balanced buck-to-doe ratios than anywhere else I’ve seen in the country. Tree-stand hunting and still-hunting (mixed with rattling and calling) are extremely effective in these parts.

Much like the black bears, moose inhabit the entire northern reaches of Ontario in very stable and consistent numbers, making for many great hunting opportunities. Fly-in hunts offer the ultimate in remote hunting. However, many great areas, accessible by truck and ATV, shouldn’t be overlooked. With many Ontario bulls scoring in the 180s to 200s B&C each year, I have never found a more affordable moose hunt, with such high trophy potential, anywhere in North America.

I’m more of a big game hunter but I’m also limited in my time away each fall; so the opportunity to combine a great hunting adventure with great fishing is always a big factor for me. Ontario is so full of incredible fishing destinations that when hunting, you’re never far from a great place to cast a line. With excellent hunting, fishing, ATVing, and scenery, I’m able to make the most of my trophy-hunting adventures all in one spot—Northern Ontario.

Hunting for your next adventure
If you’re wondering where to begin planning your Northern Ontario hunting excursion, here’s a quick guide to help get you started:

**Northwest Ontario**
This region of the province has a wide range of game, including moose, bear and deer. This is where you can find some of the very best big game hunting in all of Ontario. Northwest Ontario’s dense tree cover provides these species with an abundance of food and shelter, allowing them to thrive.

**Sault Ste. Marie–Algoma**
The Sault and Algoma Country are popular hunting destinations. And for very good reason. Majestic bull moose and black bear are the main attractions. But if you prefer smaller species, you can hunt a wide variety of smaller game as well.

**Northeastern Ontario**
This expansive region stretches from Georgian Bay to James Bay and has some of the most beautiful landscapes you’ll ever hope to see courtesy of the Canadian Shield. Deer, moose and bear can all be found in abundance, along with small game and waterfowl populations.

For more information visit gohuntinontario.com
Viewed from the air, the landscape north of Thunder Bay, Ontario reveals itself as a tapestry of trees, rock, lakes and rivers. This is the boreal forest—a broad band of spruce, birch, glacier-scoured granite and interconnected waterways that span Canada’s midriff like a sash. It’s the place where Ray Mears says he feels most at home. That’s because the boreal was the homeland of his heroes—indigenous Ojibwa and Cree people who developed survival strategies for this harsh land and European explorers who adopted native traditions and founded Canada.
Last September, Mears explored the boreal wilderness of Northern Ontario, which he describes as world-class. He paddled Wabakimi and Kopka River provincial parks and practiced the ancient skills of his mentors. Canoes were fastened to the struts of a Beaver floatplane and camping gear crowded the fuselage. The engine roared as the pilot prepared to land on a backcountry lake. The floats touched down in a spray of water, beginning the reconnaissance.

“...there aren’t many places wilder than this.”

From his home in Southern England, Ray Mears reflected on his experience in Northern Ontario:

First Impressions
The minute you step foot in the boreal forest it requires you to be calmer. The force of the forest demands your respect. My whole life has been about studying skills of the bush. Survival is the alphabet. What I focus on is something more—the language and poetry of life on this land.

Honouring History
If you look closely in Wabakimi, you can see signs First Nations inhabitants have left markers denoting good places to fish and old campsites. I have a great interest in First Nations’ techniques and knowledge. I learn from the past and project these teachings into the future. When you learn the skills of the forest, the forest will adopt you. It’s important for me to validate the old skills, using them on my journeys. There’s an old saying: “Hunters keep their knowledge in the forest.” The land itself teaches me.

Notable Moments
I like it best two days into a canoe trip, when the outfit gets settled in and everyone is relaxed. My favourite moment is when you become adapted to the environment. On the Kopka we came across the royal fern, an incredibly rare plant. To me, it was the justification of wilderness and proof that there aren’t many places wilder than this. A bald eagle soared through the dawn sky on the last morning—you only have these kinds of moments when you’re in a canoe.

An Explorer’s Guide to Thunder Bay
Thunder Bay has always been a gateway for travellers. This thriving city of over 100,000 is a jumping-off point for outdoor enthusiasts, but there are also plenty of attractions to make it worth a stay.

Stay: Whatever your style or budget, Thunder Bay can accommodate you. Full-service hotels, motels and inns, bed and breakfasts, cottages and resorts in the city and the surrounding area. The choice is yours.

Play: The fur trade comes alive at Fort William Historical Park with in-character interpreters in a reconstruction of Thunder Bay’s original settlement. Sign up for an outing with Sail Superior and make friends with the wind on Lake Superior. Celebrate the Northern Ontario winter by registering for the annual Sleeping Giant Loppet, a recreational Nordic ski race held each March.

Eat and Drink: Thunder Bay has an eclectic mix of dining choices to complete your stay. From fine dining and authentic ethnic cuisine to heartier casual fare at a roadhouse, café or bar and grill, your taste buds will be satisfied.

For more information visit ontariotravel.net/wateradventures

WIN a Great Canadian Boreal Forest Adventure
This once-in-a-lifetime adventure is led by Ray Mears, and courtesy of the team from Wabakimi Wilderness Outfitters.

Your epic 8 day adventure includes:
- Round-trip airfare from anywhere in Canada or the Continental United States to Thunder Bay, Ontario
- Floatplane into Wabakimi Provincial Park for 5 days of guided wilderness camping, paddling, bushcraft and wildlife tracking with Ray Mears and his team
- 1 night at Wabakimi Wilderness Eco-Lodge
- Tour of Fort William Historical Park
- All meals
- Plus $2,000 in outdoor gear from SAIL

Get all the details and ENTER FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN ontariotravel.net/contest
No Purchase Necessary. Contest closes 11:59 PM (EST), May 31, 2015. Prize redemption August 6–13, 2015. This contest is open to legal residents of Canada and the United States (48 contiguous states) who are at least 21 years of age or older at the time of entry. See www.ontariotravel.net for full contest rules and details.
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

By Michelle McChristie

Exploring Northern Ontario by SUP
There are about 250,000 lakes and over 100,000 kilometres (62,000 miles) of rivers in this province, so a paddler is never far away from a playground. The outdoor industry has responded swiftly to meet the demand for Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP); with retailers adding SUP gear to their inventory, and outfitters and paddling clubs adding introductory and advanced lessons to their paddling curriculum.

My family grew to love this sport after renting a board in 2009 and then buying one the following summer. After spending a weekend at Rock Island Lodge in Wawa in 2011, we were hooked. With an array of boards and paddles at our disposal and a warm sheltered bay in which to paddle, we spent a weekend teaching our kids the basics. As their confidence grew, they ventured farther out on the bay and out to the mouth of the Michipicoten River to play in the surf created by the clashing currents of the river and Lake Superior.

Accessibility and versatility are part of what makes SUP so popular. The boards are light and easy to carry and most people have the skills and intuition to manage basic paddle strokes. For those looking for a little more finesse, an introductory or advanced course provides the tools to paddle efficiently, confidently and safely.

Boards come in a variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from wide and stable recreational and fitness boards (SUP yoga, anyone?) to long and sleek racing boards. There are even inflatable boards that fit into a backpack.

Exploring Northern Ontario’s lakes and rivers by SUP gives an entirely new vantage point to familiar kayak and canoe routes. Standing means you can see farther and have the freedom to move around. It’s a great workout because the power in a paddle stroke comes from the paddler’s core muscles while a variety of muscles are involved in balancing on the board (if balance is not your forte, think of the SUP board as a swim platform!). Whether at a campground in Quetico or on the North Shore of Lake Superior, stand-up paddleboarding is an easy way to get on the water and discover a new corner of Northern Ontario.

More ways to explore. Let’s face it: the paddling season is short up here; our lakes and rivers are either icy cold or ice-covered from October to May. Don’t let that deter you from exploring their rugged shorelines—with the right gear, every season offers opportunities for adventure.

Hiking can be enjoyed year-round, but you might need to strap on a pair of snowshoes when the white stuff accumulates.

Mountain biking is best in the summer and fall, and fatbiking is gaining popularity, particularly in winter months.

Backcountry skiing and snowshoeing offer an opportunity to explore frozen shorelines and discover gigantic icicles and ice caves, or get a better view of rock formations and pictographs.

Ice climbing offers a unique experience as frozen waterfalls and seeps make for ideal routes.

For more information visit ontariotravel.net/wateradventures