



The Wickaninnish Inn sits on a rocky ledge of Vancouver Island's west coast. Photo: Russ Heint

TRAVEL

8 Stylish Hotels in Canada That Will Have Vaccinated Americans Rushing to the Border

Maple syrup tastes even better on pancakes from room service

By Jessica Cherner
August 13, 2021

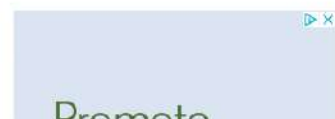
If the tragic number of lives lost and nearly a year and a half of an off-and-on lockdown aren't incentive enough to get vaccinated, consider the adventures missed because of several countries' strict vaccine mandates. Of course, the purpose of the harsh rules is to protect rather than to restrict, but either way, the vaccine is worth getting for anyone who wants to board a plane soaring over international waters. One country loosening its grip around its entry points? Canada, which is now welcoming fully vaccinated American citizens and permanent U.S. residents.

The Canadian government chose a good time to ease up on their travel restrictions for vaccinated guests, because the tail end of summer through the fall is perhaps the best time to visit the maple syrup capital of the world. The unrivaled scenery—especially the fiery-hued fall foliage—throughout Canada looks like something out of a Robert Amirault oil painting. Plus, the world's second-largest country boasts a bevy of design-forward hotels and resorts from Québec to Toronto.

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One of Wickaninnish Inn's two side-by-side treatment rooms in the ultra-serene Ancient Cedars Spa overlooks the crashing waves just outside. Photo: Peter Jackson

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Wickaninnish Inn

Nestled between an old-growth forest and the icy Pacific on Vancouver Island's west coast, the boutique Wickaninnish Inn, a Relais & Châteaux property, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this August. The Inn's neighboring structures—made using local cedar, fir, driftwood, stone, and glass—prominently feature sculptures and paintings from local artisans, especially the celebrated Henry Nolla and Maxwell Newhouse. Nolla designed the carved yellow cedar doors to the Inn, one of the property's most instantly recognizable elements.

Elegantly rugged architecture aside, one of the Inn's biggest draws is the unparalleled storm-watching. In the winter, storms form around the Aleutian Islands and spin out across the ocean, slamming into the west coast of Vancouver Island. "We get waves up to 30 feet high," says managing director Charles McDiarmid, whose family purchased the 100 acres on which Wickaninnish Inn sits back in the 1970s. "You can get a great complimentary Canadian west coast facial on a good day," he jokes. He and his family appreciate the ocean so much that they made sure each of the 75 guest rooms (and nearly all of the public spaces) face the water. They even installed a specialized microphone on the shoreline to bring inside the soothing sounds of the waves crashing.



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Tucked within charming Old Québec City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Auberge Saint-Antoine is infused with Canadian history in both its architecture and interior design. Photo: Auberge Saint-Antoine

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Auberge Saint-Antoine

Situated on the shores of the St. Lawrence River in Old Québec City, the 95-room Auberge Saint-Antoine is utterly charming, perfectly fitting in with its historical surroundings. In fact, the city itself is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the design team who took charge of the hotel's interiors, Décors Price Amyot Price, incorporated the city's storied roots with six historically themed suites and two guest rooms in the Maison Hunt, an 18th-century structure that, as of 2003, is connected to the main building.

The history-infused spaces don't stop at the guest accommodations; they continue throughout all common areas, including the cabaret room where a delectable dining pop-up, Au Jardin Chez Muffy, will reign throughout the summer. The pop-up has elegantly transformed the hotel's 19th-century cabaret room into a biophilic masterpiece, bringing the on-site garden indoors both in the decor and on the menu. The array of hanging and potted plants, delicate moss, and circa 1822 wooden beams complement the restaurant's gentle and organic feel.



The W Toronto's rooftop bar and restaurant, which serves Mediterranean-inspired fare. Photo: W Toronto

W Toronto

Neatly tucked within Yorkville, a quaint village turned posh shopping destination, the 254-room W Toronto, which will swing open its doors this winter, includes nearly every luxurious amenity a guest could want, including W Sound Suite, a private recording studio and creative space for artists. Plus, 30 of those rooms are suites and two, accurately named Extreme WOW suites, are more than 1,000 square feet of next-level extravagance. That said, the spot's centerpiece is easily the Living Room, a sprawling open-concept space with soaring ceilings and an inspired menu that ranges from tapas to house-infused spirits.

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Just on the edge of its namesake body of water, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge is the perfect escape from the city. Photo: Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge

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Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge

After joining Baillie Lodges' portfolio of luxury lodges and undergoing a \$2 million renovation, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge, which sits on the banks of its namesake ocean inlet near Tofino, Clayoquot Sound, makes a good case for getting work done. With a specific focus on upgrading the property's 25 luxurious tents and their interiors, the retreat is still as tranquil as ever. For those looking for an escape from city life, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge will convince anyone to call off the search. In fact, it's accessible only by seaplane—that's how deeply engulfed in the beautiful Canadian wilderness it is.

There's also plenty to do: Horseback riding, whale- and bear-spotting, and scenic helicopter tours are just a few of the activities available on offer at the ultra-secluded lodge. Otherwise, there's no shame in spending hours on end in the tents, which are outfitted in locally crafted decor that's equal parts refined and luxurious.



1 Hotel Toronto's Flora Lounge is as thoughtfully romantic in its ethereal design as it is inspired by nature on its menu. Photo: Brandon Barre

1 Hotel Toronto


Though each of the six 1 Hotel outposts looks and feels different from another, they all share a very obvious commitment to sustainability and appreciation for nature—and 1 Hotel Toronto, which made its debut in early

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appreciation for nature (and a more serene) which makes its debut in early August, is no exception. For starters, one of the hotel's five dining concepts, 1 Kitchen, is a zero-waste restaurant that serves farm-to-table delicacies in a highly green-minded space. What's more, the 1 Hotel team has partnered with GreenPlanet to convert all of the oil and grease coming out of the kitchens into biofuel. Of course, it doesn't hurt that the Rockwell Group–designed 91 guest rooms (and 21 suites), rooftop pool overlooking the city below, and 3,600-square-foot lobby are impeccably outfitted with the surrounding natural beauty in mind. Rockwell even brought on The Athens Group, which specializes in the development of environmentally conscious hospitality.



In addition to the private deck, Manoir Hovey's Cartier suite also features its own private dock with a canoe and kayak for guests. Photo: Manoir Hovey

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Manoir Hovey

Commissioned in 1900 by Atlanta resident and Georgia Power's esteemed president Henry Atkinson, Manoir Hovey is a road trip–worthy spot that's just a seven-hour drive from Manhattan. Anyone who appreciates historically inclined architecture should move this Québec hotel to the top of their travel bucket list, because its exteriors are a nod to one of the most famous residences in the world: George Washington's Mount Vernon. In fact, Atkinson was so taken by the first American president's estate that he designed his Canadian summer home, now a 36-room Relais & Châteaux hotel, as a pretty accurate take on Washington's 21-room Virginia mansion.

The boutique hotel, which still feels like a sprawling private home, sits on 30 acres, encompassing highly manicured English gardens and nearly 2,000 feet on Lake Massawippi's shoreline. The centerpiece of the space, however, is one of the hotel's resident restaurants, Le Hatley, which takes its name from the quaint village in which the hotel resides. Chef Alexandre Vachon's Franco-Canadian delicacies seem even more decadent in the recently refinished dining room, which is wrapped in a quiet seagrass wallpaper and features a large-scale watercolor by local artist Sara Peck Colby.



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The two-bedroom John Jacob Astor suite at The St. Regis Toronto spreads across 2,035 square feet on the hotel's 30th floor. Photo: Brandon Darre

The St. Regis Toronto

Though plenty of hospitality outposts were forced to permanently close their doors during the pandemic, The St. Regis Toronto took that time to work on itself, enlisting the masterminds behind [Chapi Chapo Design](#) to reimagine the newly contemporary 258 guest rooms and suites. The hotel also completed the long-awaited 15,000-square-foot Iridium Spa on the 31st and 32nd floors. The wellness concept, which features 11 treatment rooms, expansive locker rooms (each of which has a steam room), a nail salon, and a lounge, is nothing short of an urban sanctuary. Just one floor above the spa is an infinity-edge saltwater lap pool and detoxifying infrared cedar saunas.



Post Hotel & Spa is situated on the banks of the Pipestone River. Photo: Post Hotel & Spa

Post Hotel & Spa

Built in 1942 in Alberta, the Post Hotel & Spa's main lodge gives a whole new meaning to the idea of DIY. Local Canadian guide and packer Jim Boyce gathered a crew of just 10 men and went to work using nothing more than logs they sourced in nearby Revelstoke and at the headwaters of the Bow River. With traditional guest rooms and suites, private cabins, and a 3,000-square-foot lodge on the banks of the Pipestone River, the Post's accommodations are as warm as they are sprawling. Did we mention that the lodge boasts a 23,000-bottle wine cellar?

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