



Create the ultimate home spa



Exciting, hands-on careers



Keep kids busy and having fun this summer



7 tips and tricks for greening your summer road trip

August 2021

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Career & Education

If you enjoy boating, these are the jobs for you



(NC) We all want our work to be connected to something we love, whether it's a cause we're passionate about or hobby that can pay the bills. But what if you love boats and the water? No need to move to Hawaii - there are plenty of opportunities right here in Canada.

If you're thinking of changing your career path or advising your kids on theirs, here are some jobs to consider on or near our national lakes and oceans:

Marine engineering

Marine engineering officers are responsible for the safe operation and maintenance of all equipment and structures aboard Canadian Coast Guard vessels. They keep the main engines and auxiliary systems of the ship in good working order under the supervision of the vessel's chief engineer. If you are resourceful, enjoy teamwork and have a good knowledge of math and physics, this could be a career for you.

Marine navigation

Marine navigation officers are responsible for the safety of their vessel, their crew and the environment. They pilot and follow routes from charts while taking depth, weather conditions and traffic into account. They are also responsible for radio communications. It's an ideal role if you're a good communicator, clear headed and logical.

Inshore rescue boat

Crew members of the federal inshore rescue boat service respond and help mariners in distress or need of assistance. They also provide public education on boating safety topics, such as hypothermia, rules of navigation and personal watercraft use. This is the perfect job for post-secondary students looking for a summer job, as operation is seasonal and requires workers attend college or university in the fall.

Find more information at ccg-gcc.gc.ca/careers.

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College programs that virtually guarantee jobs



(NC) Thinking about your child's post-secondary education? If your child is a bit older and thinking about post-secondary, you want to make sure they have a job lined up once they complete their program. Here are some jobs they can consider:

Marine Communications and Traffic Services

Perfect for those interested in marine safety and environmental protection, the Canadian Coast Guard College offers students unique and specialized training with the opportunity to work in one of its twelve locations. Not only can your child gain continued employment with the coast guard once they complete the program, while still in enrolled in the program, they'll receive a fully paid education, along with residence style living quarters and meals. Taught in English and French, the program includes extensive training, classroom theory and practical use of radio operations and communications simulator.

Personal Support Worker (PSW)

As our population continues to age, demand is increasing for people who can help older folks stay in their homes longer and offer support at retirement and long-term care residences. This rewarding career makes a meaningful difference in people's lives and is especially needed during the pandemic. Most provinces require you to complete a college program to become a PSW. Some long-term care homes are even offering to pay for part of the degree and a job upon completion.

Skilled Tradesperson

In recent years, skilled trades have become more coveted career path. This is for good reason, as the pay is good, the need in society is high and the path to a permanent position after an apprenticeship is solid. Compared to many other well-paying, in-demand jobs, the time required in school isn't very long, and a lot of on-the-job training takes place. If your child is thinking of this route, a trade deemed essential like plumbing or electrician is a smart move.

Find more information on a marine education at ccg-gcc.gc.ca/college

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Exciting, hands-on careers



(NC) If the thought of sitting at a desk all day doesn't appeal to you, you're not alone. Many of us wind up in these kinds of jobs because we might not be aware of more hands-on and adventurous career paths. Whether it's time to make a change or you're just entering the job market, here are some exciting jobs to think about:

For animal lovers

Do you have a passion for animals? Then veterinary technician or technologist may be the career for you. These specially trained professionals help veterinarians treat and diagnose cats and dogs, plus all kinds of other animals. If you're up for extra excitement, you can look for a position in a zoo or wildlife conservation centre.

For water enthusiasts

Can't get enough of the great outdoors? A career with the Canadian Coast Guard is an excellent option. Jobs in this organization save lives, protect the environment and help our economy grow. Offering exciting and rewarding opportunities, the Canadian Coast Guard is a professional and inclusive organization that is committed to creating a diverse workforce reflective of the communities it serves.

For born helpers

Do you love helping people and have a cool head in an emergency situation? You may be destined to be a paramedic. Working under pressure and offering assistance to others when they need it most, paramedics are essential workers who are in demand across Canada. They also spend a lot of time on their feet in different environments and are usually part of a union with strong benefits.

Find more information at ccg-gcc.gc.ca/careers.

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DIY

Pool Installation tips and tricks



(NC) You're one step closer to realizing your dream of the perfect pool in your backyard. And once all the planning is done, you're ready for the next stage — installation.

But installing a pool takes a lot of work. Here, we share a few things you need to know as you get started.

Choose a location

The most important thing to consider is location. There could be overhead and underground powerlines on the property, and it is imperative to know the location of both.

Remember, it's not just your installer's responsibility to check this, although they may be able to help make the whole process easier. Try contacting your local electrical utility, which will have minimum safe distances and other important information you need to know.

Confirm powerline locations

Before you start digging your inground pool or even when levelling the ground for an above-ground pool, you have to check that no powerlines are buried underground. Contact Ontario One Call to locate all utility-owned underground infrastructure. This includes natural gas, communications and power lines, and water and wastewater pipes.

One thing to remember is that the organization cannot locate customer-owned underground infrastructure, such as supply to a separate garage or shed. Private location services will be required for these.

Hire professionals

Installing a pool isn't a DIY project, so it helps to go to the pros. Do some research and speak to a few of them before making your selection. When it comes to the electrical wiring for your pool, a licensed electrical contractor will ensure that the work meets the safety requirements of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code.

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Create the ultimate home spa



(NC) Of all spaces to renovate in your home, the bathroom might be the most rewarding and best investment. Create a room that's serene and indulgent with these DIY tips for an at-home spa haven that don't require a full overhaul.

Soothing colours

A simple coat of paint in calming hues of aqua, sage green or lilac can transform the feel of your space instantly and take it from drab to dreamlike.

Favourite candles

With their warm glow and soothing scents, candles are a staple of the home spa. Mix and match your favourite fragrances with unscented ones to boost the glowing comfort without creating a muddled scent. Set the mood using Bic's new EZ Reach Lighter; an extended wand makes it easier to light hard-to-reach places. They also come in a variety of colours so you can coordinate with your home décor.

Deluxe fixtures

A small update that makes a major impact, swapping out your faucets, drawer pulls and cupboard handles for sleeker fixtures can add instant luxury, not to mention savings if you choose an eco-friendly option. A new rainfall showerhead is also one of the easiest ways to find spa-like indulgence every day.

Purifying plants

Tuck plants of varying size in a corner or in a vertical garden to make your home spa feel like a jungle oasis. Choose low-maintenance, humidity-happy greenery such as bromeliads, air plants, bamboo or golden pothos. You'll also benefit from their air purifying properties, so you can leave your new spa feeling refreshed.

Going all out

If you're inclined to take on a bigger project and have room in your budget, consider upgrading to heated floors, building a private outdoor shower or installing a basement home sauna for maximum comfort and luxury.

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How to design your dream DIY reno



(NC) If you've spent the last several months daydreaming about your ideal renovation project, you're not alone. Whether it's a reno for a new kitchen, your own spa bathroom, a basement media room or a beautiful backyard oasis, there's no shortage of dreams to take on.

Here are a few tips to make your vision a reality:

Spend time planning ahead.

The more you think about your project before you begin, the better you'll understand your wants, needs and priorities.

A great place to start is thinking about why you're doing this project in the first place. Is it to create more space? Add functionality? Freshen up décor? These questions will help you make the right decisions during your project.

Know when to call in the pros.

Many home reno projects might seem DIY, such as laying tiles and flooring. But for anything structural, mechanical or electrical, it's best to hire a properly licensed professional. You don't want to cause any fires or leaks that could lead to more time-consuming and costly damage to you or your home.

Save on splurge-worthy finishing touches.

Add creature comforts and finishing touches that make completing your renovation all the more rewarding. From a luxurious Nespresso espresso machine, to the perfect Cuisinart kitchen gadgets, to that coveted Napoleon barbecue, you can use Air Miles Reward Miles to save big on must-have items for your newly renovated space.

Find more information at rewards.airmiles.ca/merchandise.

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Family & Community

5 tips to make climate education part of your family activities



(NC) Learning how to spell, form sentences and read are key early education milestones, but just as important is ensuring your child understands how a sustainable lifestyle can help ensure a healthy planet for the future.

Here, Tim Faveri, vice president of sustainability and shared value at Maple Leaf Foods, the world's first major carbon-neutral food company, shares five fun ways to incorporate sustainability education into your family routine.

1. Grow some knowledge.

We've enjoyed more meals at home over the past year, and families can extend food education even further in the garden.

"If you have the space, growing a vegetable or herb garden with your children is the perfect way to educate them on where your food comes from," says Faveri. "You can create delicious, nutritious dishes together using the food you harvest."

2. Reduce and re-use.

Reducing food waste helps put less stress on our food system and has the added benefit of reducing our food costs. Teach mindfulness about food waste with every family meal. "Get creative with leftovers and engage your children in the kitchen to create inventive recipes together, like flavourful soups or stir-fries," suggests Faveri.

To make the most out of the vegetables in your garden, harvest only what you will use, and can ripe seasonal produce like tomatoes so you can enjoy them into the winter months.

3. Leave the car at home.

Walk and bike as a family. Not only is this a fun bonding activity, it helps you stay active and explore your community, and the carbon emissions you avoid help protect the planet.

4. Back-to-school sustainability.

Practice sustainability during the school year by providing children with a reusable water bottle and recyclable lunch kit, like Greenfield Lunch Kits or a packed lunch featuring sustainable products in a reusable container. "Look for our 'Carbon Zero' logo to feel confident you are making sustainable choices," says Faveri.

5. Colour to stop climate change.

"We recently developed a climate change colouring book that's available for free download on our website to help families learn more about what they can do to combat climate change," says Faveri.

Each drawing in the book includes information and tips on real issues affecting the planet in a clear, easy-to-understand format so the whole family can learn together.

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Keep kids busy and having fun this summer



(NC) School was tough for everyone this year. After months of adapting to new ways of learning, many kids—and parents—are ready for something new.

Here are a few ways to keep everyone having fun this summer:

Build a backyard waterpark.

Kids of all ages love running through water from a sprinkler or hose on hot days. Take it up a notch by adding a DIY slip and slide, a splash-worthy kiddie pool and a bucket of water balloons. You'll all keep cool and refreshed and be entertained for hours.

Host an outdoor movie night.

This is a great one for tech-minded tweens and teens. Have them help you hang a big white sheet in your yard or driveway, and then set up a projector to stream your favourite family flicks under the stars. It's easier than you think; don't forget to pop the popcorn.

Save on boredom busters.

You can get hours of entertainment for free by using your Air Miles Reward Miles towards something fun for the whole family, like a Nintendo Switch gaming system, a Spotify subscription for music and podcasts, Cineplex movie tickets or a trampoline for your yard. There are lots of options you don't want to miss out on.

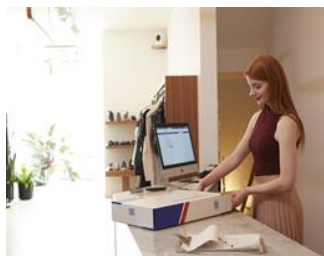
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Supporting local businesses can be easy



(NC) From lockdowns to restrictions, local businesses have faced many challenges this year, impacting their ability to maintain revenues and keep staff employed. In fact, 45 per cent of the country's small businesses owners have to work significantly longer hours, according to a report from Canadian Federation of Independent Business. At least 152,000 Canadian small businesses have adopted e-commerce since the start of the pandemic.

Supporting them is important to your community and local economy. For those looking to help local small businesses, consider these easy and free ways to show your support.

1. Write a Google or Facebook review.

Leaving a positive review can help others in your community discover the business and encourage them to visit. Highlight your favourite item on the menu or share a positive experience you had with an employee.

2. Follow and interact through social media.

Behind every great Instagram account is a small business owner who is having a difficult time managing costs or staff during this challenging time. Like, comment, or share their posts with friends and family to help drive awareness to their services. It can bring a smile and encourage them to stay resilient.

3. Nominate them for a financial grant program.

Many small business owners are running at full speed to meet demands, and don't have the time to look for help. Show support to your favourite local businesses by nominating them for funding programs, such as the Purolator True North Small Business Grant Contest. This grant can help them with financial investment to drive business growth.

Find more resources at purolator.com/small-business-grant.

How Canadians can help local businesses succeed



(NC) The global pandemic continues to challenge many community business owners to maintain their revenues and keep staff employed, despite provincial lockdowns and restrictions. In fact, according to Canadian Federation of Independent Business, over half of business owners agree that their business model has changed or will significantly change with 45 per cent of business owners having to work significantly longer hours to maintain their business.

Fortunately, we can all help to support our favourite small businesses and create a positive impact in our local communities. For those wanting to show their support, here are three simple tips:

1. Support a local store when stocking up on supplies.

Instead of grabbing your bread during a weekly grocery shop, visit a local bakery to get a fresh sourdough loaf or a few delicious pastries, which in turn will support your local economy.

2. Send a personalized message or positive review.

There's nothing like sharing a unique and thoughtful message of your positive experience with a small business. Take a moment to share your experience on social platforms such as Facebook or Instagram and recommend them to friends and family.

3. Nominate a small business for financial funding.

Many small business owners are running at full speed to meet the demands from the pandemic. They're often so busy pivoting to new concepts and ways of operating that they don't have the time to look for investments. Show support by nominating them for funding they might not know about, such as the Purolator True North Small Business Grant Contest. This can help businesses expand and boost the local economy.

Find more information at purolator.com/small-business-grant.

Food & Recipes

3 tips to add sustainability to your summer grilling traditions



(NC) The return of warm weather doesn't just signal the start of summer, it also kicks off grilling season. Whether you're cooking just for yourself or a small gathering of close friends and relatives, it's important to think of the planet when you grill.

With many of us heading outdoors to enjoy quality meals this summer, Tim Faveri, vice president of sustainability and shared value at Maple Leaf Foods, shares his top tips to serve up sustainable and delicious barbecue all season long.

1. Green your plate with greens.

When it comes to summer grilling, the sides are just as important as the main. From bold salsas to charred grilled vegetables and bright salads, sides offer limitless opportunities to put your own spin on summer grilling and make sustainable food choices.

"Pair your grilled entrees with local, in-season produce to reduce the environmental footprint of your meal," suggests Faveri. Not sure where to shop? "Your local farmers market is a great destination or try your hand at gardening to go directly from garden to grill."

2. Enjoy plant-based protein.

Meat is a nutritious part of our diet, but it's important to eat meat as part of a balanced diet. Today's innovative plant-based protein products offer the taste you've come to enjoy in meat and poultry while helping diversify your protein sources. You may find even the pickiest eaters at your table won't notice the difference.

3. Everything in moderation.

If a meatless menu isn't an option, choose local and sustainably produced meat and poultry. "From hamburgers to sausages and chicken breasts, just look for the 'Carbon Zero' logo on packages of Maple Leaf brand products." You can enjoy your favourite foods and know that you're reducing your environmental impact on the planet at the same time.

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3 food security myths - debunked



(NC) Food plays a major part in our lives, and is tied to daily sustenance, healthy childhood development and lifelong memories with family and friends. The thought of going hungry may not enter our minds frequently, but for many Canadians, food insecurity is a constant reality.

Sarah Stern, leader of the Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security, a registered charity with a goal to reduce food insecurity in Canada by 50 per cent by 2030, addresses three food insecurity myths.

Myth 1: Food insecurity is not a problem in Canada.

"Even though Canada is a country of considerable wealth and abundant farmland, more than 4.4 million Canadians struggle to access the food they need.," says Stern. One in eight households and one in six children are affected by food

insecurity, and this number rises 2.5-3.5 times among Indigenous and Black households. “Over the past decade there has been no decrease in food insecurity, and in some provinces the numbers are rising.”

Myth 2: More food is the answer.

Though expanded food donations and availability may seem like the solution for those who are food insecure, there is a strong link between poverty and food insecurity.

“Lack of money is the single greatest cause of food insecurity, not a lack of food,” explains Stern. “That’s why our team advocates for sustainable, structural solutions to food insecurity that pair poverty reduction with tangible support and resources for communities and individuals.”

Myth 3: People who are food insecure are unemployed.

“Sixty-five per cent of food insecure households rely on wages as their primary source of income,” says Stern. Precarious income leads to compromises in the quality and quantity of food and a lack of access to healthy, nourishing meals.

Learn more about how you can help end food insecurity at feedopportunity.com.

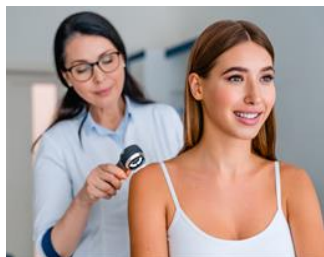
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Health & Wellness

Refresh your skincare routine



(NC) Over time and with changes in season and age, your skin may develop new unique conditions like dry patches or even adult acne. It may be time to try something new to take care of them. Follow these tips to help reevaluate and refresh your skincare routine.

Give your skin care routine a makeover

Take stock and assess your current skincare routine. Is there anything missing? Does it include cleanser, toner, moisturizer and sunscreen?

Take a step back and make sure you're following a basic three-step skincare routine with a gentle cleanser, moisturizer and sunscreen. Once you've committed and can regularly practice these basic steps, you can add to your routine or target specific skin concerns.

Care for your skin from head to toe

Don't limit your skincare practices to just your face. Your skin is the largest organ in your whole body and acts as a barrier between the environment and your internal organs. That's why it's so important to ensure you give it regular TLC, especially any overlooked areas like your elbows, knees and back. Make sure you regularly cleanse, exfoliate and moisturize to restore your skin's natural moisture barrier.

Consult an expert

Determining what your skin needs can be an overwhelming task. If you're not sure where to start, what you need or how to treat more problematic conditions like eczema or body acne, book an appointment with your family doctor or dermatologist to learn about which treatment options are right for you. There have been huge advancements in Canada regarding acne treatments recently, including a topical retinoid treatment that treats both facial and body acne.

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3 common acne myths debunked



(NC) According to the Canadian Dermatology Association, acne is the most common skin condition in Canada, affecting up to 5.6 million and approximately 80 per cent of teenagers and young adults between the ages of 20 and 40.

Despite being the most common skin condition, there are many misconceptions about acne and how to treat it.

Only teenagers get acne on their face.

Unfortunately, it's not a given that you will grow out of your acne. Many suffer from acne well into their 20s, 30s and 40s. Although facial acne is the most common form, 52 per cent of patients with facial acne also experience body acne — acne on the back, shoulders and/or chest.

Eating junk food causes acne.

Diet may impact the acne on your face or body, but it is unlikely that to be the root cause of your acne. Chocolate, fries and other tasty junk foods are okay on occasion, but moderation is key. A mindful diet without processed and refined foods may help acne suffers.

Toothpaste can be a quick fix.

When it comes to acne, there isn't a quick fix, but acne medications have made great advancements in the last 20 years. Recently, a new topical retinoid treatment was approved in Canada to treatment both facial and body acne. Speak to your doctor or dermatologist to learn more acne treatment options.

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Transition out of lockdown with a summer of self-care



(NC) Many of us are anxious about what a return to normal could look like this fall, with schools going back to in-person learning and many offices reopening. Prepare for this potentially stressful time by indulging this summer and taking care of your mind and body. By looking after yourself now, you'll be in much better shape to take on the world come September.

Be your own BFF

Becoming your own cheerleader is often one of the biggest hurdles when it comes to self-confidence and care. Before starting negative thoughts or self-talk, ask yourself, "would I say that to my best friend?" Of course not. So, treat your internal dialogue as a conversation between you and your friend and help cheer them on.

Schedule some me time

Take time to pamper yourself and do things that are good for you and make you happy. Try a bubble bath, face mask or going for a walk while listening to your favourite podcast. Although me-time will look different for everyone, it will have the same effect – improving your mood and self-confidence.

Check off your to-do list

Is there something you've been meaning to do forever but haven't gotten around to? Whether it's scheduling a massage or speaking to your doctor about a skin condition like acne, do it now. There have been great advancements made in the last 20 years, including a topical retinoid treatment that treats larger areas like the chest and back, so chances are there's something out there that can help solve a long-time issue.

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House & Home

Stylish outdoor living ideas



(NC) The pandemic really showed what a difference outdoor space can make for your own well-being, whether it's a backyard, balcony, patio or porch. Now that we're able to entertain a little more, here are a few tips to transform outside space into your favourite spot in the home.

Think comfort

Make sure to consider your outdoor furniture carefully. So much has improved in recent years that you can easily find pieces as stylish and comfy as what you use in your living room that are also built to last through the elements.

Think lighting

Don't forget modern and stylish lighting for your outdoor hideaway. Make use of the space into the evening even as the days get shorter by using a mixture of solar-powered lanterns and torches, plus flickering candles for a warm glow. For an effortless way to light, you can try BIC's new EZ Reach Lighter, which has an extended wand that makes it easier to light candles or your barbecue from any angle.

Think green

From local native plants in your garden to cushions made from recyclable materials, there are many easy ways to get more environmentally friendly outside. Try a timed sprinkler that won't turn on in the rain for a set-it-and-forget-it eco-friendly setting.

Think temperature

Even as restrictions lessen, there's no reason to stop enjoying the outdoor space that's become so essential to your home during the pandemic. Add an outdoor fan to give movement to hot, humid air in the summer, and invest in a heat lamp, fireplace or cozy blankets early so you can enjoy your space into the fall.

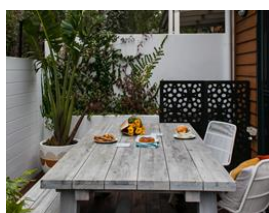
Think convenience

Any major upgrades should make your life easier and fit with how you use the space. Whether that means an outdoor kitchen setup complete with fridge, sink and grill, or an entertainment zone with Wi-Fi and a projector, go with what makes your everyday life better.

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Avoid the #1 mistake in pool installation



(NC) Installing a pool seems straightforward in theory – hire an installer, dig the ground and install it. Easy peasy. But there’s a lot more to it than meets the eye.

One of the biggest mistakes homeowners make is not hiring a professional to do the wiring. So, before the work begins, ask your installer if they have hired a licensed electrical contractor. Ontario law says only a licensed electrical contracting business can be hired to do electrical work in your home.

A licensed professional has the expertise, equipment and training to do the job safely. You won’t have to worry about any issues that could put a dent in your wallet or compromise your safety.

They would have an ECRA/ESA licence number, proving they are allowed to operate their business. General handypersons or certified electricians are not permitted to do any electrical work on your property unless working for a licensed provider or if their business holds an electrical contractor licence number.

You may know someone who can do the job for cheap, but don’t take a chance. Shoddy work could lead to something fatal. Pools pose a higher risk because there’s water involved.

At the end of your pool installation, you will be provided with a Certificate of Acceptance from Electrical Safety Authority for your records, which you need for insurance purposes.

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How to plan your dream backyard makeover



(NC) There are many things to love about the summer, and spending time outdoors is high on that list. So, why not create the outdoor living space of your dreams?

Here are some tips and tricks to help you get started:

Do some research

Updating your yard or patio is probably a good investment, so don’t rush into it. Take your time and think about what works best for your house and your wallet. Look at different options and think about what you and your family would get the most benefit from. Is it a water feature or an outdoor kitchen? A gazebo or storage shed?

Hire an arborist

If you have any trees in your backyard that you want to remove, call a certified utility arborist. They will have all the necessary tools to ensure the work is done in the safest way possible and that no powerlines are affected.

Contacting a utility arborist is a good idea even if you only want to prune trees that are growing close or into powerlines. Never take chances with powerlines because electricity can jump to you and your tools. Touching a tree that’s near or in contact with a powerline could result in an electric shock. Remember to keep three metres back from a powerline.

Consider a pool

If you have the space for it, a pool could make your backyard more enjoyable for the whole family. Start by choosing the type of pool based on your unique space. Above-ground pools may not seem the most attractive, and some digging might be required to level the ground, but the installation is super easy. Plus, they tend to cost much less than in-ground pools.

On the other hand, in-ground pools require a lot of work and can be expensive, but it also gives a facelift to your property. There are thousands of options to choose from, and for a little extra money, you can customize it the way you want.

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Lifestyle

Planning a wedding in the wake of the pandemic



(NC) Weddings are one of many life events that have been changed by the global pandemic. With so many ceremonies postponed, couples might be struggling to decide the best way to go about their special day.

Celebrations need to be reimagined for the new normal. Here are a few ways to make your day unique in these strange times.

Make it intimate

We're all used to it by now. Smaller gatherings are safest for all of us. No matter where your wedding is or what case counts are like, enjoy your special day with those who matter most by sharing it through a live stream.

Make it outdoors

Outdoor weddings have also seen a major rise in popularity this year as we crave spaces with excellent airflow to boost safety. Booking a canopy or tent will save you the headache of thinking about ventilation or the weather at your venue.

Have a contingency plan

What we learned last year when it came to any event was to have a contingency plan. If something does cancel your day or turn your plans against public health orders, know what you're going to do, how you'll inform your guests and how you'll keep your spirits bright.

Elope

Gaining in popularity, the option of running away together for a private ceremony holds great appeal for many couples and families. Whether you keep it a surprise for just the two of you or shout your plans from the rooftop, whether you make it a vacation or choose a local haunt - it's something everyone's getting behind these days.

Try a destination wedding

This one might be counterintuitive, but it quickly makes sense. As travel is safer and safer, this may be a great way to get the heat and sunshine you crave and make your milestone moment extra special.

Planning a destination wedding can seem like a stressful job with a lot of legwork. But booking a wedding group package with a provider like Air Canada Vacations can remove some of that stress. You'll have coordinated stays with trusted partners, flexible booking, private transfers, complementary upgrades and dedicated professionals to help everyone enjoy the trip. You can even try booking seats on a spacious, all-Business Class aircraft.

Find more information about group packages at aircanadavacations.com.

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5 tips for looking your best on video calls



(NC) As many of us continue to work from home and take plenty of video calls and meetings, many of us are looking for ways to upgrade our Zoom game and appear poised and professional virtually. Boost your self-confidence with these helpful tips:

1. Keep skin looking fresh and dewy by washing your face, bedding, and makeup brushes regularly. Cleaning items that touch your face, smartphone, and pillowcases can help your skin.
2. Dress for the camera by choosing statement shirts that will show well on screen. Think bold colours, funky patterns and collared shirts that are a bit livelier than what you might regularly wear to the office.
3. Take advantage of less time spent in front of others to take a break from wearing makeup and let your skin breathe. Not only will it give your skin time to heal and look better in the long run, but it can also help you feel more comfortable in the skin you're in.
4. Have a skin condition like body acne or psoriasis? Make an appointment with your family doctor or dermatologist to learn about any treatment options that might be appropriate for you. There have been huge advancements in Canada regarding acne treatments recently, including a topical retinoid treatment that treats both facial and body acne.
5. Don't forget the importance of sunscreen. Make sure you're protecting your skin, even through a window.

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Money

Helping small businesses build for the future



(NC) The costs of running a small business during a pandemic can add up quickly. From ongoing lockdowns and ever-changing safety procedures, Canadian small businesses have been challenged to maintain revenue, keep staff employed and meet shifting financial obligations.

Small businesses play a critical role in our economy by providing jobs to over eight million Canadians. Yet, over half of business owners agree that their business model has changed or will significantly change due to COVID-19 and at least 152,000 Canadian small businesses have adopted e-commerce since the start of the pandemic, according to a Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey.

But did you know there are financial investment programs that can help?

Many providers and stores have seen growth since the pandemic, but it can be scary to take a risk and invest in growth. Financial investment programs can help small businesses ask for investment and capitalize on the new opportunities.

Financial supports like the Purolator True North Small Business Grant Contest are designed to help small businesses by awarding them money and shipping credits to help them maintain revenue or expand. The grant helps small businesses enjoy more flexibility to pivot their financial models to e-commerce or product delivery.

Through the Purolator program, Canadians can help nominate their favourite businesses to show support and give exposure to local companies during the pandemic.

Find information on eligibility and the nomination form at purolator.com/small-business-grant.

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New mortgage stress test rules make home ownership tougher



(NC) If you're in the market for a new home or follow real estate news, you're likely aware of Canada's new mortgage stress test rules that came into effect in June. While the new rules are designed to help cool the country's overheated housing market, they also lower a buyer's purchasing power.

If you're buying a home, the mortgage stress test requires a bank to confirm that you can still make your mortgage payment at an interest rate that is higher than what you actually pay each month. That qualifying rate has increased from 4.79 to 5.25 per cent.

This means that under the old rate, a couple in the market for a home with a combined annual income of \$100,000 and no debts would qualify for a mortgage amount of \$535,000. With the new qualifying rate, this couple now qualifies for a mortgage amount of \$510,000.

If you're currently house hunting and are worried that you may not be able to afford a home with these new rules, consider land lease. This option is increasing in popularity because it allows families to purchase their own home without buying the land, making homeownership more affordable.

Plus, homes in many land lease communities offer several other untraditional benefits. For example, Parkbridge, an owner-operator of land lease communities, offers community management, which includes maintaining shared spaces like

roads and sidewalks. Many Parkbridge communities also come with shared amenities including pools, golf courses, lawn bowling, fitness centres and more, which are also managed and maintained by onsite teams.

As for getting a mortgage, the process for buying a land lease home is quite similar to buying a freehold home, though you may have to shop around for a mortgage specialist who is familiar with land lease. With a lower purchase price for the same amount of square footage than a freehold home, land lease is becoming a more popular way for first-time buyers to break into the current housing market.

Find more information at parkbridge.com.

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From buying a house to retiring – planning for life's milestones



(NC) As we emerge from the pandemic, many of us are planning on how to get our lives back on track to achieve our goals in life, whether it's buying a house, setting aside money for our kids' education or retiring comfortably.

Whatever stage you're at in life, proper planning can help you successfully navigate life's milestones. Get the ball rolling by following these helpful tips and tricks:

Your first home

While about 68 per cent of Canadians are homeowners, real estate prices been running hot in the country's major markets for the last couple of years, making it more difficult for first-time buyers to find a home.

So before you start shopping for real estate, it's a good idea to take a step back and carefully plan your purchase. The first step when saving for a down payment is to get your finances in order and seriously think about what you can afford.

While saving for a down payment should be your priority, also put aside some money to cover closing costs. Make sure you look into first-time homebuyer incentives, as these opportunities may make purchasing a house more affordable than you think.

Your kids' education

Hundreds of thousands of young people are about to head off fresh-faced to post-secondary institutions this fall, armed with dorm room posters, stacks of textbooks and... a realistic budget? If the student in your life doesn't have one, it's not too late to plan.

Include all the costs of student life when making a budget; you can find a template online. Think about tuition fees, student fees, health insurance, books and other course materials, and living expenses, then try to make room for some fun in there too.

Your retirement

If your retirement plans got derailed by the pandemic or you've had to dip into your savings, there's still at least one source of income you can count on. The Canada Pension Plan is the foundation for your overall strategy, which could also include a workplace-related pension, personal savings and investments.

Independent studies have confirmed that the CPP will be there when you retire, even for those just heading off to university or entering the workforce straight out of high school. In fact, CPP Investments, the professional investment management organization that manages the fund, recently reported a record return of 20.4 per cent for its 2021 fiscal year, growing the fund by more than \$87 billion to a total of \$497.2 billion.

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Getting your retirement plans back on track



(NC) It's likely that your retirement plans have changed since the beginning of the pandemic. Many Canadians have had to reduce or freeze contributions to their retirement savings due to financial challenges during the past year, and some may feel they are falling behind on their goals.

While you think about getting back on track, consider that the Canada Pension Plan should be part of your long-term financial planning. Despite the recent financial hardships and ups and downs in the market over the past year, the fund remains strong.

CPP Investments, the professional investment management organization that manages the fund, recently reported a record return of 20.4 per cent for its 2021 fiscal year, growing the fund by more than \$87 billion to a total of \$497.2 billion.

The organization has a clear plan to ensure the fund is on solid footing for the next 75 years. Thanks to an actively managed portfolio that is significantly diversified across asset type, region and sector, volatility is minimized and the fund generates consistent returns.

This disciplined approach ensures the fund stays on track, building value when markets are strong and demonstrating resilience in periods of stress and market uncertainty. This helps provide a foundation upon which more than 20 million Canadian contributors and beneficiaries can build their financial security in retirement.

A strong fund removes at least one potential worry right now, so you can focus on getting back to your savings goals knowing the CPP will be there.

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Smart ways to save for a house or condo



(NC) With Canada's housing market hotter than ever, saving up a down payment can feel impossible. But wise spending and saving decisions can add up over time. Here, Vanessa Bowen, money expert and accountant, offers simple yet effective ways to save for the home you've had your eye on.

Ensure you have a good credit score

A better credit score means that you can qualify for lower interest rates and loans that you may require when investing in a future property. Working to improve your overall credit score, such as by avoiding late bill payments, will help make your savings go further as you look towards purchasing the house or condo of your dreams.

Contribute lump-sum payments to your savings

Large annual payments such as a work bonus or your tax return can be added as lump-sum contributions to your savings. Contributing larger sums helps you reach your end-goal more quickly, so remember to save these payments. It's money you don't count on in your day to day anyway, so it'll be easier to set aside and watch your savings steadily grow.

Switch to a no-fee bank account

A small step that you can take that will add up to big savings in the long run is switching to a no-fee bank account. The PC Money Account is the bank account reimagined with no monthly fees and opportunities to earn PC Optimum Points on every dollar spent everywhere you shop. Now, instead of having to pay monthly banking fees, you can put your hard-earned money towards saving up for a house or condo.

Cut down on unnecessary spending

Try cutting back on expenses such as takeout food and shopping for things you may not actually need, like subscription services. Instead, put this money, which could potentially add up to thousands each year, towards a significant investment opportunity, such as a future home.

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Will young Canadians ever be able to retire?

(NC) Today's job market looks tough for young people. Reports of unemployment and underemployment are common, and even for those who can find work that is rewarding, workplace pensions have gone the way of the VCR.

So how will an entire generation save enough money to retire comfortably?

Younger Canadians should consider the Canada Pension Plan as a foundation for their overall retirement strategy.

The most recent report by the chief actuary of Canada, released in December 2019, states the fund will continue to be sustainable for more than 75 years — long after today's cohort of young workers retire.

Young people will also benefit from the government decision to form the additional CPP account. This additional account will provide enhanced future benefits for contributors through increased CPP payments beginning in several decades.

The strength of the fund is underscored by the recently released annual report on the fund's performance. CPP Investments, the professional investment management organization that manages the fund, reported a record return of 20.4 per cent for the 2021 fiscal year, growing the fund by more than \$87 billion to a total of \$497.2 billion.

Thanks to a diversified portfolio designed to minimize short-term volatility and deliver long-term returns, the fund will be able to continue paying out to its beneficiaries for generations to come.

This is good news for young Canadians, who can count on the pension plan to be there for them when they retire.

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Be savvy with your dollars in a post-pandemic world

(NC) The pandemic has caused everyone to pay closer attention to their finances, taking stock of where every dollar goes. Make your money work for you in the new normal by following these tips and tricks for savvier spending from Vanessa Bowen, money coach and accountant.

Make and maintain a budget

A recent survey found that four in five Canadians are planning or taking steps to better manage their finances. Creating a household budget is one of the best ways to do this.

Although it may seem like a chore, by dedicating just a half hour a week to reviewing where your money goes, you can ensure you are the one controlling your money, and not the other way around.

Spend smarter

As people look more closely at their financial situations, they're also becoming more skeptical of unnecessary fees and are looking for ways to minimize or eliminate them. With the recent increase in banking fees from most major banks in 2021, this can be a good place to start.

Review your monthly fees and service charges. If you're getting charged for a place to keep your money, look for no-monthly-fee banking options, like the PC Money Account. This account rewards you for everyday purchases and bill payments, which means you'll be making money instead of losing it monthly.

Create an emergency fund

The last year has taught us that anything can happen. To ensure you're more financially secure for the unexpected with your job, home or something else, be sure to have an emergency fund. Ideally, try to set aside about six to 12 months' worth of your salary to rely on should you need it.

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Everyday ways to save money



(NC) Many of us are feeling the pinch these days as costs increase. But even if you aren't feeling the squeeze, who doesn't want to save a few bucks? Here are a few tips to save in your day to day:

Stick to a budget.

You know this tip already, but it's worth repeating because those who budget are better able to adapt to changes in their finances, according to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada. With a budget, you'll have a better idea of what you're spending money on and where you can cut back. Plus, there are countless online tools and apps available to help streamline the process.

Re-evaluate your subscriptions.

So many services these days offer free trials that auto-renew, so review your bank statements for recurring monthly costs like cable TV, streaming services or magazine delivery. Chances are there's at least one you're not using regularly, so make the choice to cut it loose.

Automate your savings.

This simple step makes it easy to pay yourself first; saving becomes like a must-do bill payment, except you'll be the one to reap all the benefits! Remember, it doesn't matter how much you put away at a time; every little bit makes a difference.

Join a loyalty program.

Racking up rewards based on purchases you'll already be making, like groceries, is one of the easiest ways to save money. With a program like Air Miles, you can get promotions and discounts on your everyday shopping. Then you can get cash back or dream-worthy products, from video games to home appliances. If you pair your program with an affiliated credit card, you can get even more Miles on any purchase, plus perks like travel insurance.

Find more information at creditcard.airmiles.ca.

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Banking fees rising? It might be time to switch banks



(NC) If you've ever found yourself wondering what exactly you're paying for when you see banking fees on your monthly statement, you're not alone. In fact, it might be time to start paying closer attention, as some of Canada's big banks are actually raising their service fees and minimum balance requirements, hitting where it hurts you the most: your wallet.

But just because your bank wants to charge you more, or requires higher minimum balances to waive the fees, doesn't mean you have to pay up. Here, Vanessa Bowen, money expert and accountant, offers simple yet effective tips to save on fees and keep your hard-earned

money where it belongs.

Never use a bank machine other than your own

Every time you use another bank's ATM, you're charged a network access fee by your own bank of \$1.50 plus a \$1.50 fee by the bank that operates the machine. Private cash machines at your local convenience store often charge even more.

Take advantage of cash back when shopping

If you are paying with a debit card, many stores allow you to add extra money to your bill, so you can avoid paying an ATM fee.

Make fewer withdrawals

Instead of withdrawing \$40 three times a week, take out \$120 once a week. This will let you accrue fewer transactions, and the fees that go with them.

Maintain a minimum monthly balance

While many bank accounts will waive all bank fees if you maintain a minimum monthly balance, this — usually means having at least \$1,000 or \$2,000 in your account, but it can be as high as \$5,000 or more.

Switch to a no-fee bank account

Not all banks are created equal — and not all bank accounts charge fees. The PC Money Account, for example, is a no-monthly-fee bank account that actually rewards you for spending by offering loyalty points on purchases anywhere you shop, and there's no minimum balance.

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Helping your business build for the future



(NC) Small business owners have faced ever-changing obligations throughout this pandemic, while also trying to keep staff employed, complete safety renovations and keep inventory stocked. The costs to maintain a business are rising and continue to be a challenge.

With 1.2 million small businesses in Canada employing 8.4 million individuals, they play a critical role in our economy. Of those businesses, over half agree that their business model has changed or will significantly change due to COVID-19, according to Canadian Federation of Independent Business. At least 152,000 Canadian small businesses have adopted e-

commerce since the start of the pandemic.

"As Canadians, it's second nature to rally together to support the local restaurants and stores we love in our community," says Stacey Cummings, senior manager of marketing and customer solutions at Purolator. "By supporting our small businesses we're maintaining jobs and contributing to our economy, the fabric of our neighbourhoods."

For small businesses quickly expanding, consider these three tips that can help in financing:

1. Explore all available grant programs.

There are many resources and programs available to assist with the financial impacts of the pandemic, including the

Canada Emergency Business Account or the Purolator True North Small Business Grant Contest. These solutions can provide the critical funding or shipping credits your business may need to try a new solution or invest in new technology to improve productivity.

2. Speak with financial experts.

Reach out to your bank to discuss recovery plans or flexible credit options. There might be offers or opportunities to invest or find business solutions to meet your unique circumstances.

3. Take on challenges one at a time.

Take every challenge or opportunity as it comes and don't get overwhelmed by the uncertainty of the pandemic. Manage each situation as it arises and focus on what you can control to help reduce anxiety and the impact to your mental well-being.

Find more resources at purolator.com/small-business-grant.

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Retirement living: What are my options in today's housing market?



(NC) As more Canadians near and enter retirement age, there are more new and innovative housing options to consider than ever before. Whether you're planning for yourself or your parents, here are some exciting possibilities to think about, as well as the pros and cons:

Aging in place

An attractive option for those who are energetic and fit, staying in their current homes, or "aging in place," lets seniors keep enjoying the comforts and familiarity of home as long as possible. The downside is maintaining a house is physically taxing and expensive, and

renovations may be required to make the space more accessible for those who develop mobility issues or health conditions later in life.

Multi-family living

With the cost of housing skyrocketing, many families are deciding to co-habit across generations. While this used to mean young families creating an in-law suite in the basement, today a variety of arrangements are possible — from single-family homes converted to triplexes to university students rooming with the grandparents. These setups let younger folks afford a home while helping seniors with company and support, but the benefits may come at the cost of privacy for all.

Land lease

Perfect for those transitioning into their retirement years or already fully retired, land lease allows seniors to unlock money from their existing homes to buy a home without owning the land. This helps free up money for travel or daily living expenses while still maintaining equity in a home. Plus, those who choose a retirement land lease community from Parkbridge can also enjoy vibrant social activities, with amenities like community centres, activities, pools and parks, which are landscaped and maintained by an onsite management team.

Find more information at parkbridge.com.

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Travel & Leisure

Must-see destinations in Canada that you can get to now



(NC) While many travel plans were put on hold due to pandemic safety precautions, now is the perfect time for captivating escapes and activities to enjoy in our own backyard of Canada.

Canadian getaways cater to every craving, from scenic road trips to outdoor adventures and sophisticated city breaks. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Victoria

Take a walking tour of British Columbia's capital, which occupies a charming corner of Vancouver Island, complete with calming harbour vistas and neighbouring natural attractions. Victoria flaunts sprawling gardens and Edwardian estates, balanced by a proud First Nations culture and a modern, bohemian arts scene. The city's perpetually pleasant climate makes it an ideal spot for outdoor exploits by land or by sea.

Banff

A scenic spirit sweeps through the town of Banff, located in the heart of the Canadian Rockies and Banff National Park. Picture stepping into a postcard from Canada. Evergreen forests cling to commanding mountains, with surrounding lakes dyed emerald by glaciers. Alpine meadows neighbour limestone canyons and mineral hot springs for natural beauty and adventure. Explore it all with self-guided or small group hiking tours.

Quebec City

One of North America's first settlements, this city makes past and present collide—from its old fortified walls to the trendy haunts of downtown districts. Proudly French Canadian and festive from summer to winter, nature lovers, history buffs and lively locals can converge on the oldest streets of Canada. The quaint streets and laid-back culture make this city perfect for cycling around.

Niagara Falls

Nothing prepares you for Niagara Falls. From the Canadian side, witness gushing water pouring over a horseshoe-shaped crest to hit the river bottom below. You can venture through the mist by boat or follow tunnels carved into bedrock to stand behind the falls. Once on dry land, explore the nearby village and its surrounding wineries and breweries.

Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Îles-de-la-Madeleine (or Magdalen Islands) is a set of serene islands floating in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Winter morphs the archipelago into a postcard-perfect picture of Canadian wildlife, hosting harp seals and their pups on snowy shores. Summer shines on the isles' red, cliff-ringed beaches and windswept, pastoral landscapes. Enjoy a warm welcome year round, the Maelinots (locals) serenade you with traditional island tunes.

If you're not so close to these destinations, the tourism industry has been developing appropriate health and safety protocols whether it's a ski hill, flight or hotel stay you're after.

If you're looking for a quick getaway or a longer stay, Air Canada Vacations has many flight and hotel packages with inclusions that let you bundle and save.

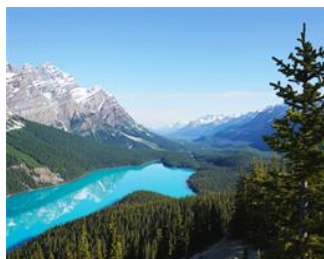
Find more information at aircanadavacations.com.

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Rediscover the great outdoors and explore Canada's hidden gems



(NC) Canada is known for its natural beauty and stunning landscapes, and this country has long been a favourite destination for tourists from around the world. With the pandemic changing many of our international travel plans this summer, now might be the perfect time to explore the beauty right here in the great white north.

In fact, 65 per cent of Canadians are re-discovering the joy of domestic travel, and nearly half are planning to take at least one road trip this summer according to new poll conducted by Toyota Canada.

Get some ideas for your summer road trip by learning about our country's lesser-know-but-incredibly-picturesque drives:

Mighty Fraser Circle Route

Follow this tour through the lower mainland, from Vancouver to Lillooet and back, discovering ancient traditions, historic sites and outdoor adventures. You'll get to visit the small communities that call BC's largest river home.

Crowsnest Highway

Stretching from Southern Alberta to Vancouver, the Crowsnest Highway route is full of mining history and beautiful scenery. The Alberta portion starts a couple hours south of Calgary, with the charming towns of Bellevue, Hillcrest, Blairmore and Coleman offering opportunities to explore the area's coal mining history. You'll also find picturesque hikes and quaint mom-and-pop shops along the way.

The shores of Lake Winnipeg

Did you know that Lake Winnipeg is even larger than Lake Ontario? This means it has a lot of shoreline to explore. One great route takes you from Gimli to Riverton along the gravel Highway 222, passing through Camp Pemberton and Hnaua Beach Provincial Parks, both of which both offer stunning views.

The Loyalist Parkway

This provincial highway hugs the shores of Lake Ontario, offering many scenic rest stops and picnic areas at the roadside. Throughout the 94 kilometres of the parkway, you can experience recreational activities that range from swimming, fishing and boating to exploring historical homes and museums as well as nature trails abundant with wildlife.

St. Lawrence Route

Enjoy a unique view of the St. Lawrence River and discover the beautiful Charlevoix region of Quebec on this 78-kilometre road. In addition to art and history museums, original watermills and windmills can be discovered on this road trip. You'll also have the opportunity to board the ferry to wander around L'Isle-aux-Coudres, a 23-kilometre island in the middle of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Sunrise Trail

This awesome summer road trip will take you along Nova Scotia's North Shore, with views of sandy beaches and the scenic Northumberland Strait. Begin your journey in Amherst and wind along the shore, making stops in Tatamagouche, Pictou, New Glasgow and Auld's Cove along the way.

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Why it might be time to take a cruise again



(NC) If you were planning on making 2021 your year to try a cruise for the first time, or you're desperately missing your annual trip on the high seas, you might be wondering: is it safe to cruise again?

Well, ultimately the answer is up to you. Cruise lines and vacation partners have worked diligently to upgrade their health and safety protocols to give passengers the best and safest experiences. Some are offering flexible booking features and programs too.

Should you decide the time is right, here are some first-timer tips so you're in the know:

- Do your research and ask an expert to make sure you choose a cruise that's right for you - whether you're sailing in the Caribbean seas or along European rivers.
- Pre-book excursions or at least book on arrival to avoid missing out.
- Book a beverage package from home to avoid an exchange rate, if applicable.
- Follow the daily ship's newsletter to get great tips on activities, dining and your next destination.
- Allow ample time when returning back to ship from shore excursions - if the ship is sailing at 4 pm, be back on board by 3 pm.
- Cruise ships usually use a cashless system, meaning charges for incidentals are charged to your room key card. You can check your charges daily and will be given an opportunity to review and confirm them on your last night.
- Bring some pocket money for the extra expenses. Smaller bills in the currency of the destinations you will be visiting are a smart idea.

Cruises offer countless experiences wrapped in one: you can cruise through your bucket list, discover new cultures and treat yourself to perfect service.

Plus, providers like Air Canada Vacations are including flexible cancellation policies and cruise price matching, on top of cruise lines' own health and safety protocols. You can find more information at aircanadavacations.com.

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4 wish-list destinations for when you choose to travel again



(NC) We all need something to inspire joy these days, whether it's a fresh hobby or a new tv show. But if you feel like you've seen everything on every streaming service, or already mastered bread baking and mask making, it might be time to daydream about your next sun-soaked vacation.

Try exploring these less crowded destinations that offer all the attractions of the big names. Whenever you're ready to travel, these beaches will be waiting for you.

Antigua

Boasting 365 beaches along its coastline, there's no shortage of sun and sand to savour in Antigua. From golden lively bays to secluded jade waters, there's definitely one for every taste. If you can break away from beaches such as Dickenson Bay or Jolly Beach, admire attractions like English Harbour, which is the former naval base of Nelson's Dockyard, and Shirley Heights Lookout.

Curaçao

Take old-world European charm, dip it in the Caribbean, soak it in the sun and you've got Curaçao. Doused in Dutch heritage, its capital is brightly painted in pastel tones. You can visit Willemstad for Curaçao nightlife and culture

influenced by Indigenous, Spanish, Dutch and Jewish settlers. Find excursions that include diving around coral reef or hiking in Christoffel National Park.

Barbados

Between beaches for every mood, from totally tranquil to windy and rugged, you'll find colonial houses, tropical gardens and rolling sugar cane fields. Nip into the national dish of cou-cou and flying fish or cut it to calypso classics. You can settle in the sand, but Bajan culture might keep you on your feet.

Nassau

The capital of Bahamas, Nassau injects urban flavour to the country's easy-going island vibe. On the island of New Providence, it decks the coast with historic structures in sorbet shades, overlooking divine beaches. Upscale resorts line shores seconds away from fine-dining bistros and charming seafood shacks. Nassau offers a taste of the tropics, tinged with big-city thrills.

If you really can't wait to go, remember to review health and safety measures that will be in place. Find more information about destinations and current safety measures at aircanadavacations.com.

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Summer glamping tips and tricks



(NC) Camping is a rite of passage for many Canadians. For some of us it's more of a nightmare. If you're not too keen on the discomforts of camping, you can add a little bit of luxury and go glamping with minimal effort. Here are some tips to make your excursion more enjoyable:

1. Glimmering light

More than looking pretty, some twinkling lights can also help you prevent mosquito bites and find your way around the site. Try placing citronella candles in glass jars at convenient intervals. Or poke holes in a pattern into clean tin cans and add tealights or short pillar candles. It's a fun craft that sparkles with beautiful patterns in the night sky. You can keep Bic's newest EZ Reach Lighter on hand to help set the mood. The extended 1.45-inch wand helps keep your fingers away from the flame, even when lighting tough-to-reach places like tea lights and kindling.

2. Sweet dreams

Camping isn't known for providing a great night's rest, but a few simple upgrades can help you sleep like a log. Bring a foldable cot or air mattress to lift your body above the hard bumpy ground without taking up too much space in your vehicle. Add a cushy mattress topper, soft and cozy bedding from home, and a couple of comfy pillows and you'll be all set for a restful slumber.

3. Fine food

There's no doubt camping has some classic meals and snacks, from trail mix to hot dogs, fresh-caught fish and s'mores. But with a Dutch oven or sturdy frying pan there's plenty more easy and creative food to be had. Why not step it up with fresh pancakes, peach cobbler or an aromatic stew? A little bit of prep at home can go a long way on the fire. You can also treat yourself with gourmet goodies like fancy chocolate for your s'mores, or unexpected additions to your trail mix, such as dried mango or candied nuts.

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7 tips and tricks for greening your summer road trip



(NC) While many of us have always enjoyed the open road, the pandemic has fuelled a newfound love for the outdoors and a greater desire to explore more of Canada on a road trip.

But before you head out this summer, Philippe Crowe, product education at Toyota Canada, has a few tips to make sure your next road trip has minimal impact on the environment:

1. Stay hydrated while reducing waste. Bring a reusable water bottle that you can fill up at rest stops as well as reusable bags, straws, cutlery and containers.

2. Eat local and sustainably. With the economy re-opening, you can support local businesses by stopping for a bite. To save on travel time, check their menus and make a reservation or call ahead to avoid any delays. You can also prep and bring meals from home to help minimize food waste.

3. Keep your vehicle well maintained. The more you stick to a regular service schedule, the more fuel efficient your car will be — and that means fewer carbon emissions. Along with regular service, be sure your tires are properly inflated to safeguard everyone on the road.

4. Make recycling a priority. This might sound like an obvious one, but recycling on your road trip is crucial. It's not always easy to find a bin, so keep a separate bag or container for your recyclables and drop them off in the appropriate receptacles when you find one.

5. Plan your route. Map out your journey in advance to avoid getting lost and having to use extra fuel to get yourself back on track. For safety, always use hands-free features to safely use your phone or adjust music while driving.

6. Pack light. The more stuff in your car, the less fuel efficient it is. Avoid overpacking to help both your wallet and the environment.

7. Upgrade your wheels. Choose a hybrid or plug-in hybrid vehicle to save on fuel and reduce carbon emissions. Electrified models by Toyota are more affordable than you think, come with great mileage and fuel savings.

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How to maximize fuel efficiency on your next road trip



(NC) Many of us developed a newfound love for the outdoors during the pandemic and are keen to stay green this summer. That means we'll be spending more time behind the wheel for day trips to the beach, weekend visits with family or road trips to explore our beautiful country.

In fact, a new poll conducted by Toyota Canada revealed that nearly half of Canadians are planning to take a road trip this season, with 76 per cent saying the pandemic has given them a new appreciation for the great outdoors.

Whatever your reason for hitting the road, maximizing your fuel economy will not only reduce your carbon emissions but also save you some money at the pump. Here, Philippe Crowe, product education at Toyota Canada, shares his top tips for using less gas this summer:

- Choose an electrified vehicle such as a hybrid or plug-in hybrid.
- Don't carry unnecessary weight and remove roof or bicycle racks when not needed.
- Map out your route ahead of time and listen to local traffic reports or use a driving app to avoid accidents, construction and other trouble spots while on the road.
- Avoid routes that travel through major cities with frequent stops.
- Use four-lane highways when you can and use cruise control where possible.
- Avoid idling your vehicle.
- Accelerate gently, maintain a steady speed and then, if traffic patterns permit, allow your speed to drop when you travel uphill, then regain momentum as you roll downhill.
- Use a fuel consumption display and learn how to track it.

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Try these Canadian vacation options - but don't forget to book early



(NC) For many of us, travel may still feel like a long way off. If you're looking to stay closer to home, here are some ways to get away this year that are simple, but still offer endless adventure and charm. Here are a few ideas:

The simple life

Whether you call it a cottage or a cabin, chances are you know the value of an out-of-the-way escape. Taking a few days to swim in fresh water, reading books on the dock or paddling that canoe is a calming and safer way to escape with your household. You might not see

another soul for days. Book early this year, as rental properties on the water went fast last summer.

RV trips

The freedom unleashed by travelling in an RV along the open road is legendary, if intimidating for some. An easy way to try it out is through Air Canada Vacations. Their packages already include flights, RV rental, airport transports and more - so you can enjoy your flexibility and explore places on your bucket list with minimal logistics to consider. RV rentals also sold out across the country last year, so don't wait to book.

Day trips

There are countless day trip options in every corner of the country, from majestic waterfalls to scenic canyons and grand mountains. Plan a series of outings now to give you something to look forward to throughout the spring and summer.

Camping

If you want to go even more hands off with amenities but more hands on in nature, grab a tent and some other basic gear

and camp out under the stars. Well-maintained but safe campsites are available each year across provincial and national parks. Check online to be first up when bookings open - these sites are popular.

However you travel this year, be sure to review all appropriate protocols and respect the health and safety measures put in place for your protection.

Find more information on RV packages at aircanadavacations.com.

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How to travel with peace of mind



(NC) After over a year of being homebound, sometimes you really really really need that vacation. Whatever your situation, here are some key safety protocols to check out before booking travel.

Country regulations

Review the entry and exit restrictions of your destination to ensure you're comfortable with their protocols. Some may require you to quarantine on arrival, and others may require a mask in public places or have curfews. Check this information frequently ahead of departure.

Also review what's going on at home - remember you'll probably have to isolate when you return to Canada, and you will have to wear a mask while travelling. Check your travel insurance and know what consular services are available

Transportation

How is your airline or tour operator handling safety right now? Read up on their website or give them a call to talk through how they'll be keeping you safe. Air Canada Vacations, for one, introduced new health and safety standards for your well-being as you travel, including working with suppliers and hotelier partners to ensure high standards of safety.

Hotels

Double check which amenities your hotel will be offering. For instance, many hotels have changed their dining options or implemented new rules for using certain facilities. If you can, choose one with outdoor facilities, activities or excursions for top safety. For added protection, many have also installed plexiglass barriers, are wrapping high-touch room items or putting a seal on the room after thorough cleaning, so you know it's clean and fresh.

Ultimately, if you're travelling soon, these simple checks will make sure you're prepared.

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