

# CANADIAN *Traveller*

GO  
WILD IN  
BORNEO

## CROSS BORDER GETAWAYS

Plus  
**PORTUGAL**  
PERCHED ON THE  
EDGE OF EUROPE

New York ★ Alaska ★ Seattle



72  
HOURS IN  
CAPE TOWN

SPRING 2015 \$5.95  
DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 16, 2015



05511370020



Overlooking the north shore dunes of Prince Edward Island, Crowbush Golf & Country Club enthralls all who take on the challenge to conquer one of North America's best courses.

# TRAIL BLAZERS

Canada's collection of golf trails link together some of the hottest courses in the country

By Donna Carter

**R**ENOWNED GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT, Pete Dye, once said the ardent golfer would play Mount Everest if somebody put a flagstick on it. An exaggeration, perhaps—but maybe it's closer to the truth than we care to admit. Among dedicated players, the sport fuels an unrestrained passion—some people might call it an obsession—that often knows no bounds. Understandably, there's a great divide between those who play the game and

those who don't. People who would rather poke their fist in a hornet's nest than hit the links will never understand the fascination shared by 1.5 million Canadians who regularly swing the sticks—as well as the 5.7 million who occasionally indulge in the sport.

With approximately 2,400 courses across the country, Canada is a golfer's Shangri-La. And then there are golf trails to explore—a clever concept that sprung up a few years ago. The logic is simple: establish an affiliation between a few

good tracks located in the same general vicinity and a golf trail is born that offers convenient accessibility and potential package savings.

Not surprisingly, this notion has caught on and Canada now boasts a host of highly-reputed trails. In addition, these trails embody much more than fairways and greens, as they typically celebrate the distinct flavour of an area together with a host of engaging things to see and do beyond the 18th hole. Here are some of the very best...





Crowbush Golf and Country Club has a five-star rating from *Golf Digest*.

### Vancouver Island Golf Trail

This is one of the longest established trails in the country where, thanks to a temperate climate shared by nowhere else in Canada, many of its 11 member courses remain open year-round. Stretching for 250 kilometres along the island's eastern perimeter, it is bookended by British Columbia's capital, Victoria, in the south, and the town of Campbell River in the north.

With courses designed by some of the top names in the business, tracks such as Bear Mountain, Olympic View, Crown Isle and Arbutus Ridge have high profile reputations, yet the trail overall is well rounded in terms of diversity, challenge and quality. The island's dramatic natural landscape of magnificent mountain settings, old growth forests, fertile valleys and stunning ocean vistas are the wonderful palette from which the courses emerged.

The trail is enriched with value-added

attractions and amenities. "I think the fact we have a large variety of courses in four distinctly different regions of the island sets us apart," says Jason Lowe, Arbutus Ridge general manager. A thriving culinary scene has produced oodles of excellent restaurants in Victoria and beyond, together with a host of winery and brewery tours and gourmet dinner cruises. The island's ocean waters are renowned for salmon and halibut fishing while freshwater streams offer excellent fly-fishing. One not-to-be-missed attraction is the 'The City of Totems', which lies just 60 kilometres north of Victoria. There, the town of Duncan has at least 80 totem poles masterfully carved by the island's First Nations Cowichan Tribe. [www.golfvancouverisland.ca](http://www.golfvancouverisland.ca)

### Columbia Valley Golf Trail

Lying in the southeast corner of British Columbia, this trail includes eight

courses within a convenient 35-minute drive from end to end. Framed by the Rocky Mountains and anchored by Radium Hot Springs in the north and Fairmont Hot Springs in the south, the scenic Columbia Valley provides the varied terrain from which the trail's diverse designs were crafted.

The courses range from rugged mountain tracks that put a golfer's skills to the test, to parkland-type designs on the valley floor where layouts offer different levels of difficulty. Two of its courses, Eagle Ranch and The Springs, have been ranked among the top 59 courses in the country.

"The area has been a golfer's playground for 40 years with its endurance significantly affected by a laid-back atmosphere and the region's overall appeal," says the trail's marketing manager, Andrea Tubbs. "Golf is a big draw, but many complementary activities enhance the destination." Among those she cites are whitewater rafting, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, ATV tours and hot springs. "Early in the golf season visitors can play golf and ski in the same day." [www.columbiavalleygolftrail.com](http://www.columbiavalleygolftrail.com)

### Sea To Sky Golf Trail

A mere three courses—Furry Creek, Nicklaus North and Big Sky—represent the smallest of all Canadian golf trails, yet the number is not a diminishing factor. These premier British Columbia tracks rank among the country's top courses and while there are cost-saving packages available, this is a high-end trail with stay-and-play prices to match.

All three courses are recipients of numerous accolades and they are on every ardent golfer's bucket-list. Situated 35 minutes north of Vancouver with panoramic ocean views, Furry Creek anchors the south end of the trail, which follows the Sea to Sky Highway north to Whistler and the Nicklaus North Golf Course. Just 25 minutes beyond Whistler, the arresting Big Sky course at Pemberton is towered over by the lofty Mount Currie. All three courses fall in the must-play category, with each of them showcasing magnificent layouts and

brehtaking mountain scenery.

Every imaginable outdoor activity is available in Whistler, yet among the most fulfilling are helicopter and floatplane sightseeing tours that reveal the truly awesome majesty of the area. Aerial gondola rides, bear-viewing tours and whitewater rafting are among the region's eclectic mix of off-course activities. [www.seatoskygolftrail.com](http://www.seatoskygolftrail.com)

### Niagara Golf Trail

This trail has nine member courses, including the venerable Whirlpool track, which dates back to 1951. Many who have played it over the years say that this course improves with age. Among the trail's several newer tracks, the latest is Thundering Waters Golf Club, which made its debut in 2005. Lying less than 1,400 metres from the Falls, the course was designed by PGA pro, John Daly. This is the same John Daly that in a publicity stunt attempted unsuccessfully

to drive a golf ball over Niagara Falls and land it in New York State.

Beyond golf, the city's main attraction is obviously the Falls. Tour boat rides get passengers up close and personal with the mammoth waterfall—so close they can feel the spray. Helicopter tours provide aerial views and there are also whirlpool jet boat rides on the Niagara River. What was once a somewhat subdued city now boasts a carnival-type atmosphere with its glitzy casinos, waterparks, crazy fun houses, Ripley's Believe it or Not museum and a wax museum filled with sculptures of celebrities. Well worth visiting is the nearby Lundy's Lane Battlefield where American forces unsuccessfully fought the British in an attempt to gain control of the Niagara Frontier in 1814. [www.niagaragolftrail.com](http://www.niagaragolftrail.com)

### Muskoka Golf Trail

A little over an hour north of Toronto, the Muskoka region is one of Ontario's



Legends on the Niagara, Ontario.



Eagle Ranch, British Columbia.

© Golf PEI



Dundarave Golf Course, PEI.



most popular tourist areas. With its great Canadian Shield topography of granite and Precambrian rock, together with vast stretches of unspoiled forest and numerous picturesque lakes, it is the ideal setting for the Muskoka Golf Trail.

Today, this 12-member trail boasts some of the top courses in the country: The Rock, Rocky Crest, Muskoka Highlands, The Ridge at Manitou and Deerpark Highlands. It also includes the superb Bigwin Island Club, as well as Taboo, which was once the home course of Canadian pro golfer, Mike Weir.

There is not a single course among the dozen tracks that is anything but top tier. Many of the layouts feature lots of rock outcroppings, plus forest-lined fairways and plenty of water. The trail's courses overall are generally not walk-in-the-park tracks, but tee box choices make them playable for all.

**WITH APPROXIMATELY  
2,400 COURSES ACROSS  
THE COUNTRY, CANADA IS  
A GOLFER'S SHANGRI-LA.  
AND THEN THERE  
ARE GOLF TRAILS TO  
EXPLORE—A CLEVER  
CONCEPT THAT SPRUNG  
UP A FEW YEARS AGO**

The Muskoka region is an outdoor paradise where there are endless fishing, kayaking, boating and spa opportunities. A host of resorts and abundant dining options have helped turn the region into a prime tourist destination. There are also lake cruises aboard the Segwun, North America's oldest operating steamship, which dates back to 1887.  
[www.golfmuskoka.com](http://www.golfmuskoka.com)

### PEI Golf

The 224-kilometre length of Canada's smallest province is one entire golf trail. "We have a closely aligned cluster of courses that, for all intents and purposes, can be considered a trail," says Mark McLane, executive director of Golf PEI. Given that people can drive the crescent-shaped island from tip to tip in less than four hours, there are golf courses around every corner. "To me that's a golf trail even if we don't call it that," adds McLane.

With praiseworthy courses such as the Links at Crowbush Cove, Dunderave,

Brudenell and Eagles Glenn, PEI has been on the golf community's radar for many years, and it is widely considered to be one of the top destinations in the country. A selection of great layouts was almost inevitable given that architects had an enviable landscape from which to craft their designs: coastal dunes, ocean views, pastoral rolling hills, pristine forests and the island's famous red soil.

Other than golf, this little island has a number of engaging attractions. Lobster and famous PEI mussels are featured in restaurants across the province, deep-sea fishing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding and charter sailing are widely available activities, and the island's 420-kilometre Confederation Trail is popular with bikers and hikers.  
[www.golfpei.ca](http://www.golfpei.ca)

### Cabot Trail Golf

Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island is home to the 298-kilometre, world-renowned Cabot Trail, which is widely considered one of the most scenic drives on the planet. Simultaneously—more by happenstance than intent—it's also a link to the island's five championship golf courses: Highlands Links, Bell Bay, Le Portage and the two newer additions of Cabot Links and The Lakes.

All five are exemplary tracks with layouts that repeatedly receive rave reviews and high rankings. Attached to the rest of Nova Scotia by a causeway, Cape Breton's topography has, for the most part, allowed architects to design courses embodying the true spirit of Scottish golf. With the planned addition of the Cabot Cliffs course this year, the island's reputation as one of Canada's most popular golf destinations will grow exponentially.

What the island has to offer overall is entirely unique to the rest of the country. With its special brand of Atlantic Canada hospitality, a golf trip there involves more than a few rounds of golf. Cape Breton is imbued with genuine Celtic roots that are revealed in music you'll hear everywhere. Boasting they have more fiddlers than anywhere else on the planet, there's always a performance, both scheduled and spontaneous, somewhere on the island. Among Cape Breton's must-see attractions are the Alexander Graham Bell Historic Site and the reconstructed Fortress of Louisbourg, which was established by the French in 1713 and besieged twice by the British before falling into ruin.  
[www.golfcapebreton.com](http://www.golfcapebreton.com)

## FUNKY FASHION ON THE FAIRWAY



### FUNKY FAIRWAYS

Golf isn't the plaid-clad, baggy-panted game it used to be. Just check out the latest uber-funky styles from Loudmouth, which debuted at the PGA Merchandise Show. The line features retro stripes, modern plaid, tropical designs, novelty prints and above all, plenty of colour and craziness. A skirt will set the ladies back around \$79.50, while the gents can expect to pay around \$99.50 for some stunningly stylish strides.  
[www.loudmouthgolf.com](http://www.loudmouthgolf.com)

