Fours Seasons of Adventure Travel in Canada

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Canada is a vast land with enough rugged terrain, absolute wilderness and opportunities for travel adventure to keep you going all four seasons, from sea to sea.

STORY BY:
KAREN CATCHPOLE AND ERIC MOHL OF THE TRANS-AMERICAS JOURNEY

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Winter: Wake up to Polar Bears

Want to wake up with polar bears in your front yard? From October to mid-November, Frontiers North Adventures operates what they've dubbed the Tundra Buggy Hotel. This one-of-a-kind innovation combines the ice travel capabilities of a tundra buggy with moveable, bunk-style "hotel cars," which are not unlike sleeper cars on a train. The Tundra Buggy Hotel travels to prime bear-viewing areas where guests can watch the bears from the comfort of "home" 24 hours a day if they want. Mind blowing sunsets and aurora borealis nighttime light shows are the icing on the cake (starting at CA$3,799 per person).

Spring: Kayak with Humpback Whales

In a specific part of the world (Witless Bay, Newfoundland) during a brief period of time (May and June) you can sea kayak amidst breaching humpback whales and bobbing ice bergs. Both of these massive natural wonders migrate through the waters here offering a unique opportunity to check them out up close (CA$59 for a two hour trip).

Summer: Get Your Cowboy On

The Calgary Stampede (July 6-15) is the largest and richest annual rodeo in the world. This year, the Stampede celebrates its 100th anniversary. With a full roster of rodeo events, concerts, a midway full of carnival rides, a beer garden and more your attention will be pulled in many directions. However, if it's adrenaline you're after be sure to catch the nightly Chuckwagon Races.

Meant to recreate the important duties of traditional chuckwagons—the mobile kitchens which fed the pioneers heading west by covered wagon train—each modern-day chuckwagon team includes the following: a smaller, lighter replica of a chuckwagon, a chuckwagon driver, a team of four thoroughbreds to pull the chuckwagon, a team of four outriders on four additional thoroughbreds, a barrel to represent the chuckwagon's traditional cast iron stove and a pair of poles with a tarp between them to represent the chuckwagon's traditional tent.

At the beginning of each race all four outriders from each chuckwagon team must dismount. One of them throws the barrel into the back of his team's chuckwagon and another tosses in the poles and tarp. Then the chuckwagon speeds off as the four outriders re-mount on the gallop so the whole team can fly through a figure-eight course before thundering (the ground literally shakes) around an oval racetrack in a frantic bid to beat three other teams doing exactly the same things at exactly the same time. It's (barely) controlled chaos.

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Fall: Fly Through the Air with The Greatest of Ease

The 90-metre high tower at the Canada Olympic Park in Calgary was built for ski jumpers. Now it doubles as the launching pad for North America's Fastest zip descent. The aptly-named Monster is a 500-metre long thrill ride which starts with a 100-metre vertical drop. Riders can reach 140 kilometres per hour, which is why you take along a personal parachute to be deployed near the end of the line to help you slow down. (CA$60 per person, must be 12 or older).

Look for Karen Catchpole and Eric Mohl's Just Add Adventure! series every Wednesday and Friday all summer long on Travel and Escape!

KAREN CATCHPOLE AND ERIC MOHL OF THE TRANS-AMERICAS JOURNEY

In April of 2006, journalist Karen Catchpole and photographer Eric Mohl left their jobs and apartment in New York City and embarked on the Trans-Americas Journey , a 200,000-mile working road trip through all 23 countries in North, Central and South America. After many years on the road they are still nowhere near their goal of Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America where the road

literally ends. Until then, their slow and steady overland exploration of The Americas continues.

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