

Lifestyle Tips



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Physical Activity and Parks and Trails



If you're smarter than the average bear, you already know that Canadian parks are a great place to get active and experience nature. Our parks offer people of all ages—from preschoolers, to teens, to parents and grandparents—space to stretch

our legs, explore the outdoors and be physically active.

Each July, Canada celebrates Parks Day. This year, Parks Day will recognize the International Year of Biodiversity, as well as the 125th anniversary of the creation of Banff, Canada's first national park. And in May, 2010, Nature Canada and the Historica-Dominion Institute launched the "My Parks Pass" program, offering

400,000 grade eight students across the country, and secondary students in Quebec, twelve months of free access to 27 national parks and 68 historical sites administered by Parks Canada. The pass also provides discount incentives for kids to visit with their families.

Whether you're taking advantage of park programs or exploring the woods on your own, there are plenty



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of creative ways to inject some adventure and activity into your family's next park visit:

Nature scavenger hunt – Make a list of items that would most likely be found in the area you are hiking or camping in, such as wild flowers, pine cones and certain leaves, and then take pictures or make notes or sketches of the items you find on your list. Be sure to leave the environment as is and tread lightly on the natural surroundings—remember to “take only pictures, and leave only footprints.”

Alphabet walk – Find objects during your walk that start with each letter of the alphabet. Go in order from A to Z.

“Ministry of Silly Walks” – Do you remember the Monty Python sketch? Instead of walking normally, challenge yourself and your kids to make up silly walks. Take long strides, short strides, walk on your tip toes, scissor kick or walk in a zig zag pattern as you explore the Great Outdoors.

Tree or bird identification – Bring a long a tree or bird guide book and try to identify the birds and trees you see on your walk.

Geocaching – Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers called “geocaches” and then share your experiences online. For more information, visit www.geocaching.com

Canada has many national, provincial and territorial parks for you to take advantage of. If you are looking for information on campground reservations, park passes and travel planners, there are plenty of resources available online:

Canada – <http://www.pc.gc.ca/>

Alberta – <http://www.albertaparks.ca/>

British Columbia – <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/>

Manitoba – <http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks/>

New Brunswick – <http://www.tourismnewbrunswick.ca/Home/Destinations/Parks/ProvincialParks.aspx>

Newfoundland and Labrador – <http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/parks/>

Northwest Territories – <http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/tourismparks/parks/>

Nova Scotia – <http://parks.gov.ns.ca/>

Nunavut – <http://www.nunavutparks.com/>

Ontario – <http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/index.html>

Prince Edward Island – <http://www.tourismpei.com/pei-provincial-parks>

Quebec – http://www.sepaq.com/pq/index.dot?language_id=1

Saskatchewan – <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/Parks>

Yukon – <http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/parksconservation/yukon-parks.php>

For more information on Canada's Parks Day, visit: <http://www.parksday.ca/eng/index.html>