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Perfect time to get out and explore Ontario

Mark Pavilons

With many vacation plans on the back burner this summer, it may be the ideal opportunity to get out and explore this province of ours.Last summer, our family travelled to Prince Edward County for the first time and I was amazed and surprised.Again, even though much of the drive was on the highway, the closer we got to the destination, the prettier the landscape became. Boy, this area is wonderful and I?get it why people want to live there.My son and his friends venture further to Kingston for the day and they fell in love with the place.?The scenery, boat cruisers and history are simply captivating.The last time I was there was with my parents when I was a teenager and we also did a thousand islands tour and that memory is still embedded in my now thick skull. From what I remember it was really cool.We also visited Tobermory for the first time in years and again, this drive was long, but at the same time, relaxing.This little gem of a community is also really neat. The village by the marina offers plenty for visitors and tourists. It was quite a busy little place.Our trek included a glass-bottomed boat trip to view old ship wrecks and a stint at Flower Pot Island.It was there, floating in the pristine waters that I realized just how massive and gorgeous our province is. Rocks older than civilization; wind-swept trees and isolated islands that beg to be discovered. It's incredible.I've always had an appreciation for nature, something passed on by my parents. I've found that it's vital to stop and smell the roses every chance you get. During our day trips and cottages stays, I?try to just record everything in my mind ??every sound, every bird, every wave. It's music to my ears and comfort for my soul.I?also think it's important to stress these things to our children. They're so linked in, connected and stuck to their devices, that nature provides such a breath of fresh air.?We try to expose them to as many experiences as possible and I think they are all on board.My oldest daughter and son would love to take a trip together but logistics may get in the way.I've been lucky over the years, travelling when it wasn't as expensive as it is today.?I've explored Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia (visiting Expo 86). I have yet to visit the east coast and that's something on my clam bucket list!I'm one of those people who just loves watching nature shows and particularly Canadian natural wonders. Our country is so vast it would take several lifetimes to explore it fully. Heck, you could spend decades discovering every spot in Ontario. There are more than 250,000 lakes in our province, all of which contain some 20% of the world's fresh water supply.The summer of 2020 aside, Ontario is a huge attraction for Europeans who simply love to get in an RV and drive. German tourists in particular can't get enough of our scenery. Ontario is roughly 1 million square kilometres and is home to 11 million people. Germany, by comparison, boasts a population of 80 million and is only 357,022 square kilometres, which means it could fit into southern Ontario quite nicely.The Germans, like many Europeans, make it a point of taking holidays and travelling abroad. They understand the concept of taking a break from it all and getting away.Again, this summer will definitely test our mental health and well being.?Tourism, both here and around the world, is taking a huge blow. Let's hope the situation will ease and restrictions will lift so we can all get out and explore a bit more.Even though there are limits to what we can do, Ontario is open and welcoming. We are quite lucky here because we can enjoy the rural splendors and some amazing attractions that are only an hour away. Sure, trips to Prince Edward County and Tobermory will take a few hours, but let me tell you, it's well worth it. You can see a great deal of wide open spaces in a day, or weekend.Fill up the tank, pack the car and hit the open road.

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