

# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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TRAVEL SUPPLEMENT 2012

*Travel*

## *A Cabot Trail Odyssey*



**Playful, daring and exuberant, the Cabot Trail is an organic thing. To traverse it is to ride the whale's back**

by JOHN ARKELIAN

**C**APE BRETON is a place of sea foam and wind, roaring surf and rugged, rock-hewn coasts, quaint coves and forests that stretch to the horizon. Featuring grand vistas and dramatic skies, Cape Breton is a place that feels like home and keeps beckoning me back.

Swooping and turning through Cape Breton is the Cabot Trail, an organic thing that is playful, daring and exuberant. It swoops and turns, plunges and climbs, clinging to looming mountainsides, lingering by rocky shores, darting into immense woods and boldly descending at breakneck angles toward the glistening sea. To traverse the trail is to ride the whale's back, thrilling all the while at the wild life coursing beneath you.

My embarkation point for the 300-kilometer trail is the town of Baddeck, where the attractive Inverary Resort provides a comfortable respite after my three-and-a-half hour drive from Halifax. I'm pleased to find the Lakeside Cafe open at the edge of Cape Breton

Island's inland sea, the Bras d'Or, though it's dark by the time I sit down to eat. PETER GRAHAM

On the trail the next morning, near the Acadian town of Cheticamp, where quaint homes perch on knolls with their backs to the mountains and their stoic faces to a wild sea, a sudden, ill-considered impulse to seek a photo opportunity on the other side of the road propels me between an offroad pothole and an unimpressed oncoming motorist.

There aren't many fellow travellers at this time of year—a benefit for those who appreciate nature best in its pristine solitude—but neither have the leaves changed colours yet. It's only the beginning of October and autumn's finery is still a week or more away. I miss the colours, but the rolling mountains, glorious vistas and ever-present sea offer ample compensation. This place is lovely, whether clad in plain green or bedecked in red, yellow and vermilion.

See **Cabot Trail**, p. 3.



destination **Cabot Trail**

NATALIA BRATSLAVSKY

# Get your grey matter going

*It's not always relaxing, but travel grows your brain*

by DIANA SWIFT

The prospect of an ambitious trip is sometimes daunting. The booking cost and passport renewal. Closing up the house, cancelling the papers. A few sleepless hours in bed before your 3 a.m. wakeup call from the taxi to the airport. Once there, the herding, prodding, scanning, the babble. And on the plane, the vanishing seat and leg room, the tablespoon of stale peanuts that passes for food. Thoughts of these may tether some of us to the comfy familiarities of home.

But remember this: humans evolved as a migratory species. We did not acquire these big brains of ours by hunkering down around the same old firepit in the same old habitat. We hoisted a tot onto either hip and strode off in search of new forests to forage in, news shores to fish at and new plains to hunt on.

Travel to unfamiliar parts is a kind of modern equivalent on a shorter timeline. Negotiating the mysteries of the Paris metro system or grappling with intricate maps of Rome is rejuvenating for your grey matter. Ditto for figuring out how much to tip the waiter in Turkey or searching your pocket dictionary for the Greek word for butter.

According to modern neurology, the brain is not a static thing, full-sprung by adulthood. Given due stimulus, it can change and reshape itself in a process called plasticity. "Plasticity

is the capacity of the brain to change with learning. Changes associated with learning occur mostly at the level of the connections between neurons. New connections can form, and the internal structure of the existing synapses can change," writes Dr. Pascale Michelon, a cognitive science researcher at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

The demands of travel can provide new learning—without enrolling in a course. Daily survival on unfamiliar terrain in a foreign language becomes a brain-rebooting exercise. And by wrenching us out of our familiar mental ruts and away from our quotidian obsessions—cleaning the eavestroughs, reorganizing the tax files—the distance imposed by travel may give us new insights into the problems we leave behind. We

may view old vexations in a clearer light and be more able to dispel them. What was it T. S. Eliot said in *Little Gidding*:

"We shall not cease from  
exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we  
started  
And know the place for  
the first time."

So don't wait until you've paid off your mortgage or got the house shipshape for resale. Plan a mind-expanding journey now. Your neurons will pay you back in spades. Ω

*Diana Swift is a contributing editor to the Anglican Journal.*





NATALIA BRATSLAVSKY

- cover: (large) **Oceanfront house in Cape Breton**
- cover: (small) **Crashing waves at lighthouse**
- left: **Sandy beach near Inverness**
- right: **Cabot Trail**



NICOLAS RAYMOND

## Cabot Trail

Continued from page 1

Can a place, as well as a person, be a kindred spirit? With two-thirds of the Cabot Trail behind me, I find such a place near Ingonish. There, the Middle Head Peninsula points like an impossibly long, rocky finger into the deep blue heart of the sea. Buttressed by steep cliffs, with the pounding surf as its moat, this fortress of rock and forest is my heart's true home—a sanctuary of beauty and tranquility that befits the idylls of a king. Perched atop this sea-girdled promontory of dreams, the Keltic Lodge is a gleaming white castle of wood, commanding the heights like its resident eagles, its long green lawns adorned with bright wooden chairs in red, white, yellow and blue as birches and spruce stand vigil beyond.

This place exhilarates and comforts at the same time. It is a destination for travellers and seekers alike, not the mere stopover I had imagined it to be. I sit by the cliffs, enraptured by the fjord-like scene, the brisk autumn wind and the sky ablaze with dusk's red glow, too enchanted to quit my post till the sun slips behind the mountains to the west.

I take my suppers in the main lodge's lounge, an elegant room of palatial dimensions, full of pillars, fireplaces and intimate conversation areas. One evening, I chat, over an idiosyncratic Highland club

sandwich (in which traditional ingredients are joined by a fried egg!), with a charming couple from Tel Aviv, as a pair of talented singer/guitarists (Cyril McPhee and Rob Maclean) perform in the background.

The next night brings different company (a personable young woman from Finland), different cuisine (a striploin steak sandwich with mushrooms and onion rings on focaccia bread, garnished with garlic, and soup inventively blended from chicken and apple) and a different performer (Dublin's own Fran Doyle). A sprawling formal dining room hosts the daily breakfast buffet. It's a veritable cornucopia, the likes of which I've never seen, and I quickly acquire a taste for the fruit smoothies.

I devote one afternoon to hiking the Middle Head trail. I'm a brisk walker, but the moderately exacting route to the tip of the peninsula takes almost an hour one way. Negotiating the inclines and avoiding the tree roots make for moderate exertion. At times, the forest is dense overhead; at others, the path hugs the cliffs' edge, high above the crashing surf. And then I come to the world's end, where a plaque proclaims: "The end of land...Cloud, ocean and sun. Empty. Waiting for time. Like the beginning."

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*My companions are the cool wind,  
warm sun and silent forest of white  
spruce—an outpost visited only by rare  
passing butterflies, chickadees  
and gliding ravens.*

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Here I keep a long, solitary vigil, perched on a rock at land's end, high above the ocean. My vantage point is a small grassy meadow, peppered with tiny violet flowers, a silent place, save for the sound of the sea and the whisper of the wind. My companions are the cool wind, warm sun and silent forest of white spruce behind me—an outpost visited only by rare passing butterflies, chickadees and gliding ravens.

Far across the bay, white sails appear against the looming mass of Cape Smokey, whose intimidating heights I must traverse tomorrow. By late afternoon, I get a closer look at those heights as I wander the length and breadth of Ingonish Beach, a place that's lonely now but doubtless teeming with bathers in warmer months.

Before I know it, it's time to leave this place of sea and sky. But its hold on me is as strong as ever and I know that I will be back. Ω

*John Arkelian is a journalist and author based near Toronto.*



### IF YOU GO

At [www.novascotia.com](http://www.novascotia.com), you'll find travel information on the Cabot Trail and any other sightseeing option this glorious beaches-and-seacoast province has to offer.



# *In the land of fire and ice*

IMAGIX

## Iceland has left me with a ceaseless longing

by JOHN ARKELIAN

**I**HAVE BEEN to the Uttermost North, a place to which I have long been drawn. I swam in a lagoon the colour of blue milk with drifting mists floating above its surface, felt my heart leap with joy at the sight of mighty breakers crashing on a remote black beach at the top of the world, trod upon an ancient glacier, traversed moonscapes of breathtaking beauty, walked up a small mountain and visited an islet by boat for the lighting of a peace tower that hurled beams of blue light into the obsidian infinity of the night sky. Iceland has left me with a ceaseless longing that only a return can quell.

It begins with the shuttle ride to Reykjavik, home to two-thirds of this island nation's 317,900 inhabitants. Dawn is breaking in the east and the mountains ahead are backlit by a sky that's streaked with pink

and mauve. It's a dramatic backdrop for an unearthly landscape. Lava fields surround us in all directions. The earth's very bones have erupted—jagged and roughhewn—from the surface and they give silent testament to the age-old, relentless workings of time and the elements.

Although I reach the Hilton Reykjavik Nordica in time for breakfast, I opt instead for a 30-minute hike to the city centre. My ramble takes me to a simple hotdog stand, "Baejavins bestu," that's beloved by locals. Sure enough, there's already a queue for the stand's specialty—hotdogs made from lamb and topped with honey mustard.

Afternoon brings an awards ceremony at the elegant Hofdi house. This *art nouveau* manse hosted the 1986 summit of Reagan and Gorbachev, a meeting that marked the beginning of the end of the Cold



RUDOLF TEPFENHART



KIS



JOHN ARKELIAN

War. Today, it's the venue for the LennonOno Grant for Peace, an award set up to honour the memory of John Lennon. One recipient reminds us that a better world starts when we all live as if our every action matters. Who better to get things rolling, then, than the city's new mayor? Jon Gnarr is the prototype of the un-politician—a humourist who entered the political fray in the aftermath of the economic maelstrom that recently struck Iceland with volcanic force. His mission? To inspire people to trust their leaders again: "Utopia has no passports, only people."

After a ferry ride to nearby Videy Island, a couple of thousand people walk under the starlight to the Imagine Peace Tower. It's a white circular stone well into which the words "Imagine Peace" have been carved in 25 languages. All of a sudden, intense beams of blue light shoot forth from the well, piercing the dark sky above. It's a touching moment, and a children's choir is on hand with a candlelit rendition of the Beatles' "Across the Universe." That's followed by a concert on the mainland, where Yoko Ono does a fair impersonation of a screaming banshee.

The next day, I visit the Reykjavik Art Museum and view the surreal collages of native son, Erro. Then, it's on to the Settlement Exhibition, which combines archaeological excavations and holograms to propel visitors back in time to the days of the Viking settlers. I have lunch at Laekjarbrekka, which occupies a charming 1834 house and offers up such culinary delights as lobster soup. Supper at the Seafood Cellar (Sjavarkallarinn) consists of platter after platter of mixed appetizers, main courses and desserts (one of the latter is presented with fog cascading down the sides of the bowl). These delectable offerings appease even a band of hungry sea-gods.

The following day's excursion starts with stark

lava fields that are punctuated by what I'm convinced must be the mountains of the moon. We pass Eyjafjallajökull—a volcano that's quiescent now but was active enough a few short months ago to disrupt air traffic across half of Europe. At the Skogar Folk Museum, a guide plays a few notes on the *pangspil* (a stringed instrument from the Middle Ages), demonstrates wool-spinning and leads us through

turf houses that date back to 1830.

Next comes the broad, 60-meter high Skogafoss, which is said to be one of Iceland's most impressive waterfalls and, truth be told, could give Niagara a run for its money. Then we enter a valley to encounter the Myrdalsjökull glacier.

The air is palpably cooler as we approach but not cool enough to spare this ancient river of ice its helpless retreat in the face of global warming. The highlight of the day is the black beach of Reynisfjara, a place that eminently deserves its title as one of the 10 most beautiful beaches in the world.

At the celebrated Blue Lagoon, an alien landscape stretches as far as the eye can see—lava rock, piled as high as a tall man and lightly sprinkled with moss and lichens. A sleek spa looks out upon an immense lagoon: it is milky blue, buoyant and warm—and half-shrouded in drifting mist. I melt in its embrace, half-expecting a mermaid to swim languorously up to me. Walkways and footbridges intersect the lagoon's coves and they are patrolled at intervals by staff in neon slickers with hoods. Could they be the keepers, and we bathers the exhibits, at some alien menagerie? For, surely, I am adrift in a lake on another world. One thing I know: this place is heavenly and not to be missed.

I wish I could say the same for the journey home. Whoever said getting there is half the fun obviously

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*I swam in a lagoon the colour of blue milk with drifting mists floating above its surface, felt my heart leap with joy at the sight of mighty breakers crashing on a remote black beach.*

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- opposite: Blue Lagoon geothermal baths
- top left: Beautiful Reykjavik
- top right: Girl playing in volcanic area in Iceland
- bottom right: Turf houses from 1830

hasn't flown lately. The flying sardine cans we call airlines have configured their interiors with the expectation that their passengers have left their legs at home. Unfortunately, I brought mine with me and I find myself with nowhere to put them. It's a miserable way to endure five-and-a-quarter hours. But, despite that ordeal, I'd line up tomorrow to return to the wild beating heart of the North we call Iceland. Ω

*John Arkelian is a journalist and author based near Toronto.*



## IF YOU GO

This mid-Atlantic destination is closer than you think. To find out more, go to [www.icelandtouristboard.com](http://www.icelandtouristboard.com)



PHILIP LANGE

## Visiting the mother church of your denomination is a wonderful way to connect with the roots of your faith

by RICK SHERIDAN



OTHER CHURCHES are often the oldest and most beautiful buildings related to your faith. In several cases, the founders of that denomination are buried at the mother church and it is still possible to attend worship services there. I have had the privilege of

visiting the mother church for several faiths, including Episcopal, Methodist, Quaker and Catholic. Here is a brief summary of my experiences.

**Canterbury Cathedral** in England is the mother church of the Anglican (Episcopal) faith and is a magnificent structure that takes up several city blocks. It is a masterpiece of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Inside, visitors can see stained glass windows dating from the 12th century and the medieval tombs of King Henry IV and Edward the Black

Prince, as well as those of numerous archbishops. The cathedral is also the site of the shrine to Archbishop Thomas Becket, who was martyred here in 1170. His shrine became one of the most visited by pilgrims during the Middle Ages, many of whom travelled the famous Pilgrims' Way to see it.

Canterbury Cathedral is one of the oldest and most famous Christian structures in England and forms part of a World Heritage Site. It is the official cathedral of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of All England and religious leader of the Church of England. I had the unique opportunity to meet Dr. George Carey, the recent Archbishop of Canterbury, when he was waiting to be photographed. The Episcopal Church is the official name of the Province of the Anglican Communion in the United States. They consider themselves a middle way, between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.



KATE CONNES

**The Chapels of the Vatican** serve various purposes and are widely considered to be the mother church of the Catholic faith. I have visited twice and was amazed by the beautiful artwork, religious images and festive atmosphere of the crowds. The Sistine Chapel is the palatine and court chapel where all papal ceremonies and functions and papal elections are held. It was built between 1473 and 1481. The rear wall of the chapel is occupied by the painting of the Last Judgment by Michelangelo. The Cappella Paolina, which serves as the parish church of the Vatican, is separated from the Sistine Chapel only by the Sala Regia. Vatican City is a landlocked sovereign city-state whose territory consists of a walled enclave within the city of Rome. At approximately 108 acres, and with a population of around 900, it is the smallest state in the world by both population and area.

Some of the other chapels include:

**The Chapel of Nicholas V** lies on the second floor in the immediate vicinity of the Stanze and Loggia of Raphael. Built by Nicholas V, the chapel was adorned (1450-55) by Fra Angelico with frescoes, chiefly depicting scenes from the lives of Sts. Laurence and Stephen.

**The Pope's Private Chapel** In the reception rooms of the Pope, between the Sala degli Arazzi and the Sala del Trono, lies a smaller room from which a door leads to the private chapel of the Pope, where the Blessed Sacrament is always reserved. Here, the Pope usually celebrates his Mass, and hither are invited those accorded the privilege of receiving communion from his hand.

**The Cappella della Sala Matilde** is a simple but tastefully decorated chapel that Pius X had erected in the Sala Matilde on the second floor in the middle building.

**The Chapel of the Swiss Guards** lies at the foot of the papal residence in the immediate vicinity of the Portone di Bronzo and the quarters of the Swiss Guards, and in it the services for the Guards are celebrated by their special chaplain.

**The Chapel of Sts. Martin and Sebastian** dates from the 16th century and is also used by the Swiss Guards.

**Wesley's Chapel** is located in the heart of London, and serves as the mother church of Methodism. The church was founded in 1778 and right next door is the house where John Wesley lived from 1779 until 1791.

The Museum of Methodism is downstairs, and tells the story of Methodism from the 18th to 20th centuries. The tomb of John Wesley is in the churchyard. Charles Wesley's organ is in the Foundry Chapel and the original pulpit that John Wesley preached from is in the museum that is next door. The staff even allowed me to stand at this pulpit and imagine the sermons that were preached here.

The Methodist movement traces its origin to the evangelistic teaching of John Wesley. It originated in 18th-century Britain and, through vigorous missionary activity, spread throughout the British Empire, the United States and beyond. The early Methodists reacted against perceived apathy in the Church of England, became open-air preachers and established Methodist societies wherever they went. Originally these appealed to agricultural workers and former slaves.

**Unity Church Universal** is the world's first Unity Church, located near downtown Kansas City, MI. This church was once part of a complex that included a Unity publishing plant and a vegetarian restaurant, along with headquarters offices. I had the opportunity to do a behind-the-scenes tour since a friend was their publications manager and had a key to the building. We were able to explore upstairs, where there is a vacant meeting room, along with an area that was Myrtle Fillmore's office. During one visit to Unity Village, I had the opportunity to meet Rosemary Fillmore Rhea, granddaughter of Charles and Myrtle, and the narrator of several television programs during the 1960s.

Unity, known officially as Unity School of Christianity, is the largest of the "New Thought" denominations and focuses on what it calls "positive, practical Christianity." The Bible is Unity's basic textbook, but its ministerial coursework and sermons also explore the common mystical themes of the six great religions that have shaped major civilizations: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. There are more than 900 churches, and Unity claims to have over two million followers in 15 countries. Unity was founded by Charles Fillmore (1854-1948) and Myrtle Fillmore (1845-1931) in 1889 in Kansas City, Missouri. It is headquartered in its own town of Unity Village, Missouri, and its original mother church is located at 913 Tracy Street, near downtown Kansas City.

**Friends House** The Quaker's mother church, located in the heart of London, is an interesting building with several meeting houses, a café, bookstore and gardens. This Christian denomination was founded in England in the 17th century and rejects formal sacraments, ministry and creed, and is committed to pacifism. At meetings, members are encouraged to speak when they feel moved to do so. George Fox started the group in 17th-century England.

Nearby is Bunhill Fields, a historic Quaker burial ground where George Fox is buried, along with 10,000 others. The Quakers lend out their spaces to other groups. On one of my visits, I was surprised to find the House on the Rock, an African Pentecostal group, worshipping in the large meeting hall at Friends House. Ω

*Rick Sheridan is assistant professor of communications at Wilberforce University in Ohio. Wilberforce is the oldest private African-American university in the U.S.*



SHARON HITMAN

## Hot properties

### Christian Science mother church

210 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115  
Tel. 617-450-2000.

Website: [www.christianscience.com](http://www.christianscience.com)

### Mormon (LDS), Salt Lake Temple

50 West North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0701. Tel. 801-240-2640.

Website: [www.ldschurchtemples.com](http://www.ldschurchtemples.com)

### African Methodist Episcopal (AME) mother church

Mother Bethel, 419 South 6th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147-1498. Tel. 215-925-0616.

Website: [www.MotherBethel.com](http://www.MotherBethel.com)

### Bahá'í World Centre, Haifa, Israel

Website: [www.bahai.org/dir/bwc](http://www.bahai.org/dir/bwc)

### Seventh-day Adventist mother church

Seventh-day Adventist Church, 153 King St., Washington, NH 03280. Tel. 603-585-9110.

Website: [www.washington.netadvent.org](http://www.washington.netadvent.org)

- opposite: **Canterbury Cathedral in England**
- top left: **Vatican Church**
- top right: **Bahá'í temple and gardens in Haifa**



## IF YOU GO

Canterbury Cathedral, Cathedral House, 11 The Precincts, Canterbury CT1 2EH, U.K. Tel. 01227 762 862.

Website: [www.canterbury-cathedral.org](http://www.canterbury-cathedral.org)

Wesley's Chapel and House, Museum of Methodism and Wesley's Tomb, 49 City Rd., London EC1Y 1AU. Tel. 020 7253 2262. Fax 020 7608 3825.

Website: [www.wesleyschapel.org.uk](http://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk)

Papal Basilica of Saint Peter, Vatican. Tel. 39 06 698 83712.

Website: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

Unity Church Universal, 913 Tracy Ave., Kansas City, MI. Tel. 816-421-6446. Website: [www.913tracy.com](http://www.913tracy.com)

Friends House, 173 Euston Rd., London NW1 2BJ.

Tel. 020 7663 1000. Website: [www.friendshouse.co.uk](http://www.friendshouse.co.uk)



KENNETH V. PILON

# Jewel in the crown

**Old Québec is as vibrant and full of *joie de vivre* as it was 400 years ago**

by JOHN ARKELIAN



S. ELIOT'S "time present and time past" coexist in the vibrant place called Old Québec. Its cobble streets are lined with stone buildings that date back 400 years, but they're as full of life today as ever they were, positively coursing with the tides of present-day commerce

and culture.

I make the trip by train, a mode of transport I haven't tried for many years. It takes nine hours from the outskirts of Toronto. The meals and legroom remind me of what flying *used* to be like. My choice of inns, the cozy Auberge du Trésor, couldn't be better situated. Only a small green park, the Place d'Armes, stands between my windows and the storied façade of the Château Frontenac.

Upper Town lies at hand, and the aptly named

Breakneck Stairs (l'Escalier Casse-Cou) to Lower Town are just a half-block away. So, too, is the long promenade atop the escarpment that overlooks the St. Lawrence and offers breathtaking vistas of the port and the river, and the Appalachian Mountains to the south.

I devote the evening to a ramble through the atmospheric streets of Upper Town. It's a historic labyrinth: pick a direction, *any* direction, bounded by Old Québec's 4.6 km of walls and you can't go far wrong. I'm lost in a reverie as I stroll streetscapes out of a colonial past, a past that has endured here as a palpable, living thing. This is the closest one can come to experiencing Europe without leaving the New World.

The next morning, I'm off for a guided tour with Caroline Lafrance. She's a walking font of information. As a child, her father told her that "there's not enough room in Old Québec to wag a dog's tail." It's true:



there's something to see or do at every turn. We pass Battlefield Park, where the pivotal clash between two European empires settled the fate of Canada. In a unique coming-to-terms with the past, the battle's adversaries—Generals Louis-Joseph de Montcalm and James Wolfe—are both commemorated on the same monument.

There's the grand Château Frontenac poised atop the cliffs like a manse transported from France's Loire valley. The hotel took over 30 years (1893-1925) to erect and has been under renovation ever since. There's the Séminaire du Québec, where Laval University was born and where, today, a group of schoolboys practise football in its gleaming white courtyard, their shouts demonstrating its noted acoustics.

Perhaps saving best for last, we end up in Lower Town, where Petit Champlain and Sous-le-Fort streets are among the oldest in the New World. They're chockablock with stone and brick buildings, with brightly coloured dormers and roofs; and they're home to an irresistible array of boutiques and restaurants with fanciful names like "Le Lapin Sauté" ("The Rabbit Who Jumped") and "Dingue de Toi" ("Crazy about You"), and equally idiosyncratic exterior decorations, like dozens of lime green and orange shoes beating a path along a wall high off the ground.

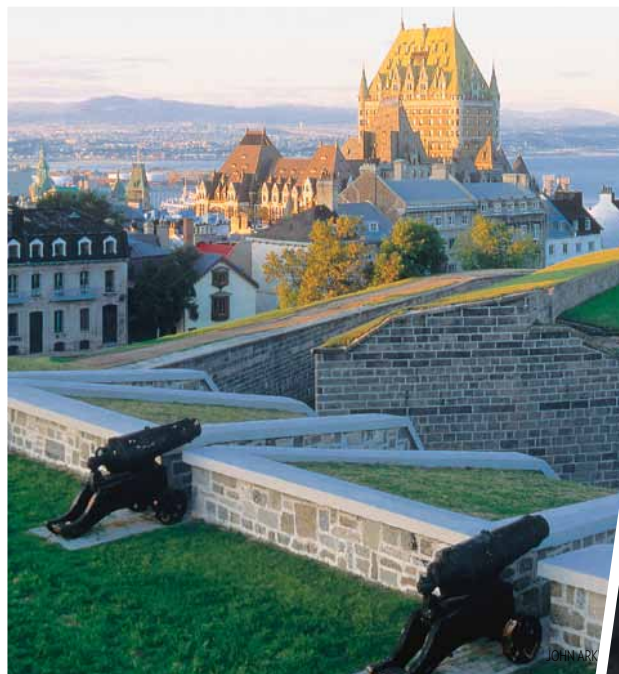
In the fall, the district's overflowing flowerpots are joined by seasonal fare, like pumpkins carved with the face on top so the stem can serve as a nose. A three-storey high mural gives a visual history of the port, with everyday folk going about their business (like a woman pulling her husband out of a tavern by the ear); and an even taller *trompe l'oeil* montage light-heartedly combines historical figures and modern-day sightseers. If the 498 steps back up the towering rocky cliff-face are too daunting after a long day, a glass-walled funicular elevator provides less onerous egress.

A fire across the lane forces a temporary evacuation of my inn, which obliges me to visit the classy Grand Théâtre de Québec in mufti that evening. Somehow, the touring garb of the day doesn't suit this elegant setting, and I belatedly realize that the surtitles projected above Opera de Québec's presentation of Verdi's *Aida* are *en français*.

I find that I can follow the dialogue, however, and I wouldn't have missed the gorgeous sets and costumes, whatever my linguistic and sartorial limitations.

Day three is devoted to a closer exploration of Upper Town and a short jaunt by a tiny (and free) electric "écolobus" to the Musée des Beaux Arts. That evening, serendipity brings me to the Palais Montcalm for the infectious blend of intensely impassioned music and dance known as *Paco Peña*, after its chief musician. Lithe, sinuous, sculpted bodies are aswirl in a kaleidoscope of motion and colour. This flamenco troupe from Spain is mesmerizing and fiercely passionate; they are positively ablaze, rousing the packed house to ovation after standing ovation.

Day four brings an unseasonably early snow and sleet storm. Indoor attractions, like "Québec Experience's"



LUC-ANTOINE COUTURIER FOR QUEBEC CITY TOURISM



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- opposite: The cobblestone streets of Old Québec
- above: Château Frontenac and the fortifications
- top right: Sidewalk café in Quartier Petit-Champlain at night
- bottom right: Traditional stone houses

3-D audio-visual retelling of the city's history, and "Musée du Fort's" 400-square-foot narrated scale model of the city circa 1759, are ways to avoid the inclement weather.

So, too, is a visit to Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral, with its pews made from imported English oak. I join in a morning communion service and make the acquaintance of congregants from Ontario, Vermont, Britain and Germany—people who visited Quebec and, like me, fell in love with the place. They *stayed*—and I'd like to!

I have supper with a friend that night at a popular Italian restaurant called Portofino, the highlight of which is sorbet packed into a coconut half-shell. Then, it's off to St. Roch Church, in a trendy district "outside the walls," for a performance, bathed in purple light, of Bach's *Mass in B-Minor*—the opening concert of the Québec Festival of Sacred Music.

Later, reluctant to call it a night, I brave the now frozen snow to walk the Terrace Dufferin along the escarpment's edge one last time, reflecting on this magical place that's teeming with...*what?* With the creativity, energy and sheer astonishing diversity of things to see and do that make this place a jewel in Canada's national crown. Ω

*John Arkelian is a journalist and author based near Toronto. Copyright © 2011 by John Arkelian.*

*I'm lost in a reverie as I stroll  
streetscapes out of a colonial past,  
a past that has endured here as a  
palpable, living thing. This is the closest  
one can come to experiencing Europe  
without leaving the New World.*



GARY BLAKELEY



## IF YOU GO

The Quebec Tourism website at [www.quebecregion.com](http://www.quebecregion.com) will steer you in the right direction for a glorious time in Old Québec.



ANIBAL TREJO

# Town and country

**In Romania, it's all about the beautiful countryside, Black Sea beaches and bustling Bucharest**

by **KEITH KNIGHT**



ROMANIA. THERE isn't a more tranquil, rural country on the European continent. Its rolling hills are populated with herds of sheep attended by shepherds sporting the requisite staff. The Carpathian Mountains extend more than 1,000 kilometers in a sweeping arch that features a variety of landscapes. The Black Sea beaches provide a summer playground.

Romanians are by nature content and friendly. More than 45 per cent of the population lives in one of the 13,500 villages or 3,000 communes. The roads are narrow, the houses made of brick or stone, and horse-

drawn wagons transport everything from straw to families.

Bucharest, the nation's capital, is by far the largest city with a population of two million. Just seven other cities boast populations of more than 300,000.

Two main airports and transportation hubs service Romania: Bucharest, located in the country's southeast, provides quick access to the Black Sea district. From Budapest, Hungary, bus transportation will take you into the towns and cities of western Romania.

Perhaps the best known province is Transylvania, a picturesque place with a name that conjures up images of Dracula. Located in western Romania, Transylvania



MIHAI CRISTIAN ZAHARIA



MIHAI BLANARU

lies adjacent to Hungary and is filled with rolling hills, quaint villages and, yes, castles.

The nation's tranquility betrays a turbulent history. After Romania sided with the Soviet Union against Germany in 1944, it became part of the Soviet Union. Romania's post-World War II history as a communist bloc nation is more widely known, primarily due to the excesses of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The Romanian Revolution of 1989, which led to the fall of Ceausescu and communism, is celebrated in western Romania, especially in the town of Timisoara where it all began. On Dec. 16 of that year, a protest broke out in the village in response to an attempt by the government to evict Hungarian Reformed pastor Laszlo Tokes. Then 37, Tokes had made critical comments against the communist regime. His parishioners gathered around his home to protect him from government harassment and eviction. Riots and protests spread across the country for the next week. On Dec. 25 a military tribunal delivered the death sentence to Ceausescu and his wife, and they were promptly shot. Ask any resident of Timisoara and they will point out Tokes' home where the revolution began. The revolution defines Romanian resilience.

When tourists flock to Romania, they often visit Bucharest and then head down to the beaches of the Black Sea. Visitors who want to truly capture the heart of Romania will spend time walking the streets of historic towns and villages, visiting churches, museums and cultural centres. The best way to explore the countryside is by taking day trips from accommodation found in larger towns and cities.

Bucharest is the financial, industrial and cultural

centre of Romania. It lies on the banks of the Dambovita River and the city is dotted with several lakes and parks, making it an ideal tourist destination. Cismigiu Gardens has a rich history, frequented by famous writers and poets.

Bucharest's extensive public transport system is one of the largest in Europe. It is made up of the Bucharest Metro as well as a surface transportation system that consists of buses, trams, trolleybuses and light rail. The railway system connects the city to major cities throughout Eastern Europe.

The most prominent landmark building is the Palace of the Parliament, built in the 1980s during the reign of Ceausescu.

It is the largest building

in Europe and the second largest in the world.

In terms of religion, 96 per cent of the city's population is Romanian Orthodox, one per cent is Roman Catholic and less than one per cent Muslim. Despite this, only 18 per cent of Bucharest's population attends a place of worship. These numbers provide stark contrast to the country's villages and communes, where faith and worship play a much larger part in the lives of Romanians.

Oradea is a city of 200,000 located just 12 kilometers from the Hungarian border. Since the region once belonged to the Hungarian Empire, more than one-quarter of the city's population still speaks Hungarian, and the Hungarian Reformed Church maintains a strong Protestant presence in the city.

Oradea is best known for its thermal springs and for the Crisul Repede River, which runs through the heart of the city. It is also home to Emanuel University, the largest accredited Christian university in Eastern

*There isn't a more tranquil,  
rural country on the  
European continent.*

- opposite: **View of the Carpathian Mountains**
- above left: **View in Bucharest over Dambovita River**
- above right: **Romanians' friendliness is evident.**

Europe. Emanuel Baptist Church was established in 1995 and worships in a huge sanctuary that can accommodate all of its 2,500 members. It is the largest Protestant church in Eastern Europe. The church has given birth to elementary and secondary schools, the university and the Christian Agency for Social Action and Emanuel Hospice.

Romanians are hospitable and friendly. When travelling across the country, balance the 21st-century cultural experience in Bucharest with the rich, centuries-old culture found in towns and villages. It is a worthwhile experience. Ω

*Keith Knight is executive director of the Canadian Christian Business Federation and former editor of the Anglican Journal.*



## IF YOU GO

Romania Tourism has an excellent website designed to help you plan a visit or just learn more about the country. It includes history, photos, an accommodation guide, travel advisory, information on entry requirements, transportation, maps and suggested itineraries.

Website: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)



VLADITTO

## Moscow sparkles with architectural gems and more

by KEITH KNIGHT



MOSCOW IS a city rich with culture and alive with architectural marvels, both above street level and below.

This is a huge, sprawling city of 10.5 million people and covers more than 1,000 square kilometers. The city is safe and clean, despite the constant state of traffic gridlock and the crowded but efficient Moscow Metro subway system.

Moscow is undoubtedly best known for the Kremlin, Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre. This city is more than 860 years old and its skyline sparkles with ornate Russian Orthodox churches and other architectural gems.

A visitor to Moscow is encouraged to avoid using the car: a three-lane highway tries to accommodate five lanes of traffic that generally moves at a crawl. Be

prepared to spend a considerable amount of time in traffic if you drive.

A wonderful alternative to travel throughout the city is its impressive and massive subway and rail system. When Moscow Metro subway first opened in 1935, the system had just two lines. Today it contains 12 lines, mostly underground, with a total of 182 stations. It is also one of the deepest subway systems in the world. The Park Pobedy station, completed in 2003, at 84 meters (276 feet or 27 storeys down), has the longest escalators in Europe. The system is also one of the world's busiest metro systems, serving more than nine million passengers daily. The subway system is clean, safe and incredibly efficient. The huge three-storey Metro tunnels are lined with exquisitely chiselled statues, especially in the area of Red Square.

If you can read Russian, or you are accompanied



LEBEDEFF



SHCHIPKOVA ELENA

- opposite: Disney-esque St. Basil's Cathedral sits at one end of Red ("beautiful") Square
- above left: View of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow
- above right: Night view of the Moskva River, bridge and the Kremlin

by someone who does, the Metro is an efficient way to see the city. Its streets are also quite walkable. The language may very well be one of the biggest obstacles to having a delightful time. It is even difficult to find English-speaking staff in the city's major hotels. Unlike travel to other parts of the world where it is often possible to figure out words in Spanish, French or Portuguese, the Russian language makes communication difficult.

There are several must-see sites in this urban metropolis. The Moskva River meanders through the city and there are wonderful views of the Kremlin along the river. The Kremlin is an ancient fortress, once home of Stalin and Lenin, and today the residence of the Russian president and the executive branch of the Government of Russia. The Kremlin's red wall marks one side of Red Square. (The "Red" in Red Square does not refer to communism. "Red" in Russian means "beautiful.") A sprawling three-storey market marks the opposite side of Red Square, with almost Disney-esque St. Basil's Cathedral on one end and the red-stoned Moscow State Historical Museum at the end.

Moscow is also the heart of Russian performing arts. There are 93 theatres, 132 cinemas and 24 concert halls. The Bolshoi Theatre, with its soaring pillars and fine architecture, is among its best known. Moscow International Performance Arts Centre opened in 2003 and houses the largest organ in Russia.

There is a noticeable sense of sadness on the faces of citizens. It is evident at the airport, in the hotels and

on the streets. It is even evident on the faces of the few Christians who live and worship in Moscow.

Prior to 1917, Moscow was called "the city of 1,600 churches." In 1918, Russia became a secular, communist state, and religion lost its significant place in society. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, many of the destroyed churches have been restored. The Russian government recognizes four religions: Orthodox, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism.

The Russian Orthodox Church dominates the nation's religious scene and is recognized as the state church. It also wields considerable political influence. Protestant denominations are tolerated by the government but generally given a difficult time. The Bible League's director of ministries in Russia,

Vladimir Shvets, hints at the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church. It took the Bible League four years to receive permission to build an addition onto their administrative building. It took a nearby Russian Orthodox church a few weeks to receive similar permission.

Bible distribution across Russia is a painfully slow process. It is a vast country, spanning seven time zones. Shvets says that .05 per cent of Russians are Protestant Christians. His goal is to increase that to 5 per cent.

Central Baptist Church is a vibrant, 2,000-member congregation with a large staff and passion for ministry. Rev. Dr. Billy Graham preached there a generation ago. The church has a strong social

outreach ministry, providing food and clothing to those living on the streets as well as a ministry of compassion to those institutionalized in the city's large psychiatric hospital. About 20 years ago, the church created the Sisters of Mercy, a group of more than 150 women from the congregation who regularly volunteer to visit psychiatric patients at Kashenko Hospital.

Kashenko Hospital is located on a 40-acre campus, boasts 20 brick buildings and houses more than 2,000 patients. The state-run hospital is where you go if you have psychiatric issues, or if you suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's. It is where the government sent Soviet dissident writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn for a time to contemplate his life. The Sisters of Mercy provide considerable support to both patients and nursing staff, and the hospital's administration has recognized the value of Christian compassion.

This is the other face of Moscow; the one that does not appear in travel brochures. It is the face that one sees when one pays a visit through organizations such as Eurovangelism, a Mississauga-based organization that supports ministries throughout Eastern Europe. Eurovangelism provides regular funding to the Sisters of Mercy, to the Baptist Union and to other organizations. Ω

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*Moscow is also the heart of Russian performing arts. There are 93 theatres, 132 cinemas and 24 concert halls.*

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**IF YOU GO**  
Get flight, accommodation, sightseeing and other useful information at  
[moscow.world-guides.com](http://moscow.world-guides.com)



# Spa City

**Budapest is rich in history and culture...and has 80 geothermal springs to boot**

by KEITH KNIGHT



UDAPEST IS a city rich in history and culture and much of it has been designated a World Heritage Site. Rising above the Danube River, it is also one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

The capital of Hungary has a metropolitan area consisting of more than three million and has been ranked the most livable Central/Eastern Europe city.

Budapest dates back to the 8th century when the first Celtic settlements were located along the Danube. The Magyars arrived in the 9th century. The town became one of the centres of Renaissance humanist culture in the 15th century. The Turkish occupation (1541-1686) lasted for more than 140 years and under Ottoman rule, almost all Christians left the city and it

became a Muslim town.

The region entered a new age of prosperity in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially when Budapest became a global city in 1873 with unification of Buda and Obuda on the west bank of the Danube with Pest on the east bank. There was a significant shift in the population. Budapest went from about 80 per cent German-speaking in 1848 to about 80 per cent Hungarian-speaking in 1880. Almost one-quarter of the city's population was Jewish. By the time World War I broke out, Budapest was known as the Jewish Mecca.

Budapest has long been the focal point for turmoil, namely the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919; the Hungarian Revolution of 1848; the Battle of Budapest of 1945; and the Revolution of 1956. Toward the end of World War II, the city was partially destroyed



TATIANA VOLGUTOVA



BOJAN PAVLUKOVIC



TATIANA VOLGUTOVA

- opposite: **The Szechenyi Bath in Budapest**
- top right: **Hero's Square**
- above right: **Gellért Hill**

*If your idea of a great holiday is following up all the sightseeing with a hot soak, you'll be happy to know that Budapest is located atop the world's largest thermal water cave system.*

(including all the bridges) during British and American air raids. More than 38,000 civilians lost their lives.

Budapest's many museums as well as Heroes' Square (where you can see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier) capture this history well. Located on Andrassy Avenue, the square is surrounded by the Museum of Fine Arts, the Palace of Arts and Vajdahunyad Castle. Drive or walk along Andrassy Avenue to explore a wide range of shops. Europe's oldest underground railway runs the length of the avenue with most of the rail stations retaining their original splendour. You'll also find the famous Hungarian State Opera House on Andrassy Avenue.

For an absolutely gorgeous view of the city, especially at night, get to the top of Gellért Hill, which rises high above the city on the Buda side. You'll not only be able to see the Danube as it slices through the

city, you'll view its seven impressive bridges. You can also see the Matthias Church, Buda Castle, Szechenyi Chain Bridge and the Parliament buildings.

If your idea of a great holiday is following up all the sightseeing with a hot soak, you'll be happy to know that Budapest is located atop the world's largest thermal water cave system. It was one of the reasons the Romans first colonized the area and built the enormous baths still visible today. Later, during the Turkish period, more baths were constructed to serve both bathing and medicinal purposes. But it wasn't until the 1920s that Budapest really gained its reputation as a city of spas: in 1927 the baths were extended to include a wave pool, and in 1934, an effervescent bath was added. Today, many of the city's hotels are located over the 80 hot springs and most offer spa treatments. Ω



## IF YOU GO

The travel portal of Budapest at [www.budapest.com](http://www.budapest.com) tells you everything you need to know about the country and what you can see and do there. In addition to essential travel information, there's a hotel guide that hooks you up to online reservations, and a city sightseeing guide listing attractions and monuments, cultural programs, pictures and videos on a map of Budapest. There's also an events calendar as well as listings of pubs and bars, restaurants and Budapest nightlife.

# All the help they could give

## A young parishioner's journal details post-Katrina New Orleans

by KATIE deKLERK

**I**n 2010, Rich Clarke from Louisiana visited Church of the Redeemer in Toronto. He suggested our youth group might consider New Orleans for our annual service trip.

After a dozen fundraisers, our six-member youth group—Ali MacIntosh, Elise St. Germaine, Grace Evers, Ian Hystee, Maddy Ewins and Maria Evers Marina Classen—travelled to New Orleans. We were accompanied by our leaders—Liska Stefko, Jesse Parker and Evan Cooke. We had a fantastic time, made tons of friends, ate amazing food and helped a city that, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, needs all the help it can get.

Here are some highlights from our week in New Orleans, where, through St. Anna's Episcopal Church, we volunteered to help rebuild family homes.

### Sunday • June 27

We arrived Friday, but today felt like we'd really landed. We woke up in plenty of time for the 10:30 service at the first Anglican church I've been to outside of Toronto. The service was familiar.

After church we explored the French Quarter and visited St. Louis Chapel, the French Market and Café du Monde, where we ate *beignets*, an Acadian deep-fried dessert.

This afternoon we experienced our first tropical storm. Within ten minutes, the roads flooded.

### Monday • June 28

We woke up early for our first day of work. We didn't have the key to the house, so we drove to another branch of St. Anna's Church, where we saw a message board. All the murders since Katrina were recorded, along with the date, the victim's name and age and manner of death. For example: Terrell Williams, age 2, shot. Later I learned that, on average, a person is killed every other day in New Orleans.

At chapel this evening, Pete from the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana talked about the effects of Katrina. We've seen the damage firsthand—houses with plants growing out the windows and roofs, waterlines on buildings, a barge that got loose and smashed canal walls—but to understand it on a scientific level is totally different.

New Orleans is one of those cities where, to know *anything*, you have to know *everything*.

### Tuesday • June 29

Today Maddy noticed a tube of mascara outside the window we were working on. Had it been there since Katrina? The house hasn't been lived in since the flood. It belongs to a man named Mr. Thomas, and all we know we've learned from the few belongings left behind—a car seat, a motorcycle helmet, a sound system and now the mascara.

It helped me make personal connections. If something like Katrina were to happen in Toronto, how would I and my neighbours be affected?

### Wednesday • June 30

We worked at St. Anna's arts summer camp today. About a million things were happening, with about a hundred kids, and not nearly enough staff or space. One little girl especially bonded with Maddy, who asked her why she was dressed up. The little girl said she was going to a funeral. Her five-year-old cousin had been shot.

### Thursday • July 1

Mr. Thomas and his son Geoffrey came to the house today to pick out floor tiles and paint colours.

Maddy and I were working on a window in Geoffrey's room. We talked with him and learned that he likes Michael Jackson and math and wants to be in the NBA when he grows up.

At lunchtime we taught Geoffrey to play the clapping game Stella-Ella-Olla. He won, and we asked if we could take his picture. As the camera flashed, his face lit up with a huge grin. He seemed to completely enjoy being the focus of attention. That smile will stay with me forever.

This evening we went to a club, "Rock 'N' Bowl." An elderly man, Ben, offered to teach us the two-step. We got talking and mentioned it was Canada Day, but we hadn't celebrated. Ben said there was a good chance the owner would let us sing "O Canada." The owner agreed—on the condition we also sing in French. Our entire group sang on stage.



LOUIS BOURGEOIS

■ top: St. Louis Cathedral, French Quarter

### Friday • July 2

Today we did odd jobs. Mr. Thomas and Geoffrey dropped by, so we had a chance to hug goodbye. Our parting was no tearful send-off; it occurred to us that Geoffrey may interact with groups like ours fairly regularly.

Tonight, in our reflection period, many of us described meeting Geoffrey as special. Maybe he'll remember us when he looks at the window in his room.

At our evening worship service, Rich Clarke told us that people all over Louisiana in different dioceses were praying for us; everyone was so grateful for our work. Although he'd been the one to suggest we visit, he was blown away by the fact that we'd actually made it to New Orleans.

We couldn't have made it without the amazing generosity of our parish, the spirit of our group, especially our leaders, and without Rich Clarke's infectious love of New Orleans. Ω

*Katie deKlerk is a member of the youth group at Church of the Redeemer (Bloor Street) in Toronto.*