

ONTARIO

End-of-summer getaways for families



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End-of-summer family fun in Ontario

IMAGE: 1 OF 10



A missive in my e-mail box the other day warned: "Summer's not half over ... it's just warming up!" The note from Clevelands House -- a family friendly resort on Muskoka's Lake Rosseau -- got me thinking: Why not savour the end of summer by listing a mash-up of all things fun still in the offing for families? (Shutterstock)

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Clevalands House

As part of its "Just Warming Up" campaign, "Cleves" is offering 15% off family stays through the end of summer. Activities for kids include a day camp, four heated pools, three meals per day and tennis galore. See clevelandshouse.com.

Skywalk Niagara

Skywalker Jay Cochrane -- known as Canada's Prince of the Air -- is performing daily building-to-building highwire walks in Niagara Falls through the remainder of the summer. Every night at 7 p.m., weather permitting, Cochrane crosses from the top of the Niagara Fallsview Hilton Hotel North Tower to the top of the Skylon Tower, a distance of 400 metres some 177 metres above the ground. See visitniagaracanada.com.

Resorts of Ontario

This association website lists daily bargains on summer stays at Ontario resorts, including cottages, lodges and country inns outside Toronto, Ottawa and Niagara. Recent deals include five-night Time Out For Families cottage rentals (\$899) at Scotsman Point near Lakefield, and a kids-stay-free, end-of-summer deal at Severn Lodge in the Georgian Bay/Muskoka corridor. See resortsofontario.com.

Blue Mountain

In its most aggressive summer expansion yet, Collingwood's Blue Mountain has introduced four new 2012 summer attractions: The Timber Challenge High Ropes, Woodlot Low Ropes, Cascade Putting Course and Mountaintop Segway Tours. The Resort has also partnered with Earth Rangers, bringing wild animal ambassadors to Blue Mountain every weekend through August. Blue also has mountainside slide ride called the Ridge Runner Mountain Coaster, a mountain bike park, and an open-air gondola. See bluemountain.ca.

Thunderbird Twin Zip

Also in the Collingwood area, Scenic Caves Nature adventures has just launched a new Thunderbird Twin Zip Line, a 100-metre double zipline that careens down the Niagara Escarpment at speeds of 65 km/h -- the longest of its kind in Canada. See sceniccaves.com.

Geology tours

In eastern Ontario, Bonnechere Caves near Eganville is guiding adventures into 500-million-year-old caves that were once at the bottom of a tropical sea. Its Recreational Geology tours take families deep into a cave system filled with stalactites (rock icicles), and where limestone walls encase ancient coral and sea creatures. See ontarioshighlands.ca/things-to-do/geology.

Hike Haliburton

The 10th-annual High Haliburton Festival is scheduled for the very end of summer, Sept. 20-23. Families are encouraged to pre-register for free guided hikes along Haliburton's public trails. Hikes range in length from 1-15 km. See haliburtonholidays.com/fall/hikehaliburton.asp.

Nature lessons

Through the end of summer, Ontario Parks are running Natural Heritage Education (NHE) programs for kids. Led by trained outdoor educators, kids play in safe park settings, hang out on park beaches, swim in northern lakes, map out constellations in the night sky, and embark on wolf howls and owl prowls. The price for kids participating in an NHE program is included in the cost of a day or overnight Ontario Parks permit. For a list of provincial parks that offer Natural Heritage Education, use the locator tool on the Ontario Parks website at parkreports.com/locator/search_results.php.

Labour Day Weekend

The Aug. 31 to Sept. 3 long weekend looms as the finale to the kids' summer holidays. There are several Labour Day weekend festivals scheduled to get their minds off returning to school. Among them: Niagara Falls Busker Festival in Niagara Falls, Shelter Valley Folk Festival in Grafton, Canada's Largest Ribfest in Burlington, Bayfest at Port Rowan and Long Point, and the Paris Fall Fair in Paris, Ont.

More ideas

Go to ontariotravel.net/family for more travel ideas and a calendar of events updated regularly by Ontario Tourism.

loriknowles.com

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