SPRING MUST-DO’S

Ottawans welcome spring with wide-opens arms (and patios)! The capital literally blooms with festivals, tours, biking, and more. If that doesn’t make you attached to the city, our maple syrup will!

Sugar Rush
Spring is a very special season in Canada — maple syrup season — and Ottawa is lucky to be so close to many maple syrup producers in both Quebec and Ontario. For example, just outside the city you’ll find Fulton’s Pancake House & Sugar Bush where guests can enjoy a guided tour, horse-drawn ride, and even a maple meal!

Branch Out
Maple trees are a national treasure, but you can branch out and discover thousands of species of trees from around the world at The Arboretum — one of the first places in the city to be awash with spring colours. Wander amongst its perfumed pink-and-white crabapple tree blossoms to the ridge in the centre of the park for a great view of the Rideau Canal and the city. Keep your eyes peeled for one of several marked paths and explore less tamed beauty in the Butterfly Meadow or Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Adjoining this urban oasis is the Central Experimental Farm, which is anchored by the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum — where horses, sheep, pigs, and other livestock are enjoyed by a regular flow of city-dwellers seeking to reconnect with nature. For indoor natural wonders, head back downtown to the Canadian Museum of Nature.

Biking in Bloom
Ottawa’s festivals really begin to bloom in May with the Canadian Tulip Festival, where tulips are just the beginning! This celebration goes back to the Second World War when Ottawa provided refuge for Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, and to thank us, she sent 100,000 bulbs in gratitude! From these roots has grown a huge festival, including live music performances, children’s activities, fireworks and more in locations like Lansdowne and Commissioners Park. Take in the tulips by foot, or rent a bike and enjoy the path between festival sites along the Rideau Canal — just don’t forget to stop and smell the flowers!

The Capital Pathway Network doesn’t stop there! Rent a bike from RentABike, and explore more of this 600-km network. Take a tour with Escape Bicycle Tours and Rentals. Hop off the bike entirely and hop on Gray Line Ottawa’s “Hop-on, Hop-off” city tours aboard a double-decker bus. These tours let you discover the city at your own pace, with 1 to 3 day passes, it’s basically a tour guide and chauffeur when you want them!

Pumped For Patios
For locals, spring equals patio season (finally)! No matter your transportation, take a break on a patio in the ByWard Market district. For something secluded and charming, the cobblestoned Clarendon Court (at the corner of George and Sussex) has four patios to choose from or try Heart & Crown for suds and sun. Patios also line the pedestrian portion of William Street. Choose from The Highlander Pub for great people watching; The Grand for a romantic meal; and Pourhouse for a bird’s-eye view of the bustle.