

# HEALTH & FITNESS

## Hiking is the perfect activity to enjoy Canada's colourful fall

There is no better way to take in the fall colours this autumn than going for a hike.

There are numerous places to hike in Ontario. A relatively inexpensive sport (the only real costs is a good pair of hiking boots), more people are turning to this sport to get in shape, to spend more time with the family and as a way to enjoy the great outdoors.

The following information is from Hike Ontario.

### WHERE TO HIKE?

- Begin close to home. More and more urban centres are developing footpaths which link its pockets of green. Then look for conservation areas or provincial parks a little further away.

- Most will have a series of trails arranged in loops, thereby leading you back to your car without having to retrace your steps.

- As you become more interested in hiking, find out more about trail clubs in your immediate area. These are volunteer groups which build and manage hiking trails.

- Finally you can head to more distant corners of land where Parks



STAFF PHOTO/LISA CARTWRIGHT

There are numerous places in Ontario to hike and lots of things to see while doing it.

Canada has established National Parks to preserve our most striking areas of natural beauty.

### EQUIPMENT

- If you are just beginning, do not spend your hard-earned cash until you decide that you want to continue.

- However, if you decide to purchase hiking gear, remember that costly items can be a good investment.

- Quality gear will work well, prove durable and be a pleasure to use. A cheaper item will fail under stress.

- On easy trails, a good pair of walking shoes will suffice. In more remote areas on strenuous trails, a pair of hiking boots is recommended.

- On a full day hike you will want a lightweight day pack, preferably with padded straps. In hot weather a belt pack or fanny pack can be more comfortable because it allows your back to breathe and also avoids the problem of stiff neck and sore shoulders.

- Each item you carry should be light and small as possible. Carry a small first aid kit in a plastic pouch, a small flashlight with long-life batteries, a swiss army knife, spare boot laces, a whistle and waterproof matches.

- Additional recommended items include a hat, sunblock, a change of socks, gloves and your guidebook.

- Wool is good material for cool and wet weather.

- Follow a trail using a map at the park office or follow blazes if the trail is managed by a trail club.

### PLACES TO HIKE IN ONTARIO

- In 1990, the United Nations proclaimed the Niagara Escarpment a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. It joined such reserves as the Everglades, the Serengeti and the Galapagos Islands.

- The Niagara Escarpment sustains more than 300 species of birds, 53 mammals, 35 reptiles, 90 fish and a richly varied insect population. The sedimentary rocks are a record of the last 440 million years and there are 1,000 km of unique hiking trails.

- For details: Bruce Trail Association, Box 857, Hamilton, ON L8N 3N9, 905-529-6821 or 1-800-665-HIKE.

- White Pine is Ontario's provincial tree and is the largest tree species in eastern North America.

- White Bear Forest, Temagami, is the sixth largest remaining stand of old-growth white pine. In the Temagami area, there are three sets of trails (approximately 40 kilometres). They include the Temagami Island Trails, the White Bear Forest Trails and the Obabika Trails.

- For details: The Friends of the Temagami, Box 398, Temagami, ON P0H 2H0.

- Pukaskwa's terrain is hilly, broken by ridges and cliffs, riddled with rock-rimmed lakes and clothed in shallow soils. In this wilderness live moose, wolf, black bear and woodland caribou.

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