

Winter Activities in Ottawa

Although Ottawa can be miserably cold in the winter months, there are lots of winter activities to entice you out of hibernation during these months. Many of these fun winter activities depend on lots of snow and ice. Although [I complain about the cold](#), I do appreciate the fact that it is necessary to create and maintain the conditions of the winter wonderland we live in here.

Skating on the Rideau Canal a Winter Favourite

Ottawa is home to the longest skating rink in the world. First created in 1970, the rink was the brainstorm of the [National Capital Committee](#) (NCC) chairman at the time. Dedicated NCC employees continue to maintain it annually.



Douglas Fullerton, NCC chair in 1970

The unique skating rink winds through the heart of the city,

stretching for 7.8 kilometers or 4.5 miles of the Rideau Canal system. Opening day of the canal for skating has varied over the years from mid December to early February. This year, with the extended cold weather, the entire length of the canal skateway opened at once mid January. This is quite unusual as generally smaller stretches open as conditions change with the weather.

Ice Fishing on Ottawa River

This weekend we tried ice fishing for the first time. My eldest, almost five-year-old grandson has been bugging his parents to go, so his father (my middle son) purchased some equipment, and off they went. He researched a local ice fishing spot; [Shirley's Bay on the Ottawa River](#) was the place to be. Grandma and Grandpa went as spectators to get our daily dose of fresh air, [sunshine](#), and exercise. What a gorgeous spot! Clear, azure blue skies and snow covered, wind-blown, frozen solid water for miles. Not that I've been to the moon, but trudging across the (relatively) flat surface that stretched for miles felt like walking on the moon. The horizon, dotted with buildings in the distance, as well as the sporadic huts and vehicles, brought us down to Earth.















Other Popular Winter Activities

The aforementioned NCC maintains numerous parks and related facilities throughout the Ottawa area. Cross country ski, snowmobile, snowshoe and hiking trails are plentiful and well groomed. Ski hills sporting fresh, powdered snow are just a short drive away within surrounding mountain ranges.

Without the cold weather and lots of snow, these wonderful winter activities would not be possible.

If you love winter sports, Ottawa is the place to be. Just dress warm!