

# TOP TEN PICNIC DESTINATIONS

By Becky Bridger

One of the best ways to get out of the house this summer is by taking a packed lunch and eating it outdoors. Even the most basic of picnic baskets will be enjoyed at one of our top ten picnic destinations in our region.



## 10 THE 1000 ISLANDS WATERFRONT TRAIL

Brockville - Gananoque

Running alongside the 1000 Islands Parkway between Brockville and Gananoque, one can find The Waterfront Trail. This paved section is removed from the highway in most spots, and features numerous car lookouts along the way. Either pack your bike and hit the trail, or stop along the waterfront at one of the many lookouts throughout.

## 9 THE BATTLE OF WINDMILL

Prescott

Set back from HWY 2, just east of Prescott, one can find the quiet Battle of Windmill site. Although the structure is not always open to the public, there are a number of benches and a large grassy area that is perfect for a picnic. Enjoy watching the busy St. Lawrence River below at this historical site from the War of 1812.

## 8 THE SPENCERVILLE MILL

Spencerville

The Spencerville Mill is one of the last remaining grist mills on the South Nation River. Here you will find a lovely park and gazebo that is open for public use throughout the summer. Picnic tables are available, and there is a great ledge that runs along the river's edge. Keep an eye out for the resident Emden Geese (who may want to share your lunch) and Herons that frequent the mill waterway.

## 7 FORT WELLINGTON WATERFRONT

Prescott

Located in front of the historic Fort Wellington is the waterfront trail of Prescott. With plenty of parking, it is easy to enjoy a hot summers day along the St. Lawrence River here. There is a covered picnic area and a number of benches along the trail where many enjoy strolling along the paved walkway.

## 6 LYNDHURST BRIDGE

Lyndhurst

In the small town of Lyndhurst, one can find the oldest bridge still standing in Ontario. The three span bridge features a lovely grassy area by the river's edge. Under the shade of the old trees, enjoy a lazy afternoon picnic on the grass or on one of the benches along the water. Don't forget to stop in town for some ice cream before heading home.

## 5 THE GALOP CANAL

Iroquois

The Galop Canal is a beautiful waterfront, first constructed in 1844 to bypass rapids on the river. It stretches 7.5 miles between Iroquois and Cardinal. Along with a paved pathway, the area provides lovely views of the St. Lawrence waterway and the many different ships that use it. If you are lucky, you will also see some local waterfowl located along the banks.

## 4 HARDY PARK

Brockville

This park in Brockville features a stunning view of the waterfront from a groomed path with large trees and a garden. It also has a huge green space for games, a volleyball court, washrooms, and a fun playground for the little ones (or the young at heart). There is plenty of parking close by, and if you live in the city, it is an easy walk from most neighbourhoods.

## 3 JOEL STONE BEACH

Gananoque

The Joel Stone Beach ranks in the top three picnic places as it provides tables, a public washroom, and easy entertainment. Everyone can cool off with a dip in the St. Lawrence River or a run in the Splash Pad. The whole family is sure to enjoy an afternoon at this beach, where sandcastles and sculptures can be made and destroyed to your heart's content. Confident swimmers will delight in a deep water dock to jump off of.

## 2 THE MERRICKVILLE LOCKS

Merrickville

Enjoy watching the locks operate throughout the summer while you sit along the bank of the river at the Merrickville Locks. The locks operate much in the same way they did when they first opened in 1832, and provide a great glimpse into our local history. There are washrooms and tables available, and the quaint town of Merrickville is full of various shops and galleries for a post lunch stroll.

## 1 MAC JOHNSON WILDLIFE AREA

Brockville

The top place to picnic in our list is the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville, as it offers an amazing glimpse at the many different ecosystems found in our part of Ontario. There is a large picnic area located on the north side of the area, as well as a smaller one on the south. If you are really adventurous, I recommend taking your lunch on one of the many trails and enjoying it somewhere along the way. Keep your eyes open for various birds and animals that inhabit Mac Johnson, but it is best to keep your food to yourself.