

Ottawa's first backpacker's map made by locals

HOW THE LOCALS LIVE

First off, welcome to Ottawa! The people here are friendly and casual, the traffic's pretty good, and if dressed accordingly, you can enjoy the outdoors all year round. This city's flow is highly weather-dependent; feeling slow and quiet during the winter but lively and fun during the summer. They say there's just under a million people in Ottawa, although that's counting a large area of suburbs and nearby towns. It's really a big city with a small town feel.

HISTORY
Ottawa has a relatively short history of just over 200 years, birthed when the British built the Rideau Canal for ship passage from Montreal to Kingston. In 1857 after much deliberation, Queen Victoria made Ottawa the capital for two geographical reasons: it was in between four important cities, Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Quebec, and it was safer from an American attack than Kingston. Streets, parks, and major buildings are named after great Canadian prime ministers, heroes, and historic figures. The Byward Market Building displays pictures of how the market looked 150 years ago.

WEATHER
Ottawa drops far (faaaaaa) below freezing in the winter and becomes hot and humid in the summer. In the cold season, people waddle (what penguins do) down the snowy street, unrecognizable in all the winter gear. Nobody cares about fashion during the winter in Ottawa. Hat hair is understood by all and people wearing shoes other than boots are laughed at. In the summer, everyone comes out of hibernation; people line the streets and crowd the parks from sunrise to sunset soaking in as much warmth and sun as they possibly can.

PEOPLE
Most people found downtown during a weekday are government workers. They work the average 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. desk job. They have little fashion sense, and are casual and friendly. After 6 p.m. the downtown core empties out and all these people go home to the suburbs. Only on warm, sunny days, will restaurants and bars be packed with the after-work crowd. And only in Ottawa will you hear a lot of "Frenglish" - a combined language of Quebecois French and English.

AVOIDING JAIL
This section will save you from spending the night in jail (it would probably just be a monetary fine but you never know). Drinking isn't allowed in public. That means you can drink in bars, on their

patios, in people's houses, on their outside property but not on public property. There's no smoking inside buildings (duh) but you also can't smoke in public parks, playgrounds, beaches and sports fields - that's pretty strict. Though Canada is fairly liberal with the marijuana, it is not yet legal, only decriminalized, just to be clear.

DRINKS
Again, Ottawa is a casual place. You will look out of place in your super high heels and miniskirts - save it for Toronto. Clean, dark jeans will get you anywhere (pubs, clubs, theatres and restaurants). You'll notice a lot of Irish pubs, which goes hand-in-hand with Ottawa's love for beer. The Heart and Crown in the Byward Market is always fun. Smaller pubs usually have local beers on tap, including the well-known Beau's beer which you can also get in 600ml bottles.

A NIGHT OUT
The Byward Market has a handful of pop music dance clubs. This is the closest place you'll get to high heels and short skirts if you're lucky. For different music but still a club atmosphere try Zaphod's or head to Bank Street for Babylon or Barnymore's Music Hall. Cover costs about \$5 to \$10 and remember to tip! Top everyone about \$10 to \$2 each. So you've found your spot, danced your face off, and drank a little too much. To end your night in Ottawa you must have a shawarma, that's a garlicy, meat-filled, veggie-filled, middle-eastern pita wrap. Ottawa has the very best shawarma in Canada with late-night, fast-food places open all over downtown. Ask one of your new bar buddies where they're heading.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS
Ottawa locals love their outdoor activities all year round. In the winter (equipment can easily be rented but be sure to bundle up): go for a skate on the Rideau Canal and remember to buy a Beavertail (it's a form of doughnut, we promise); ski or snowboard on multiple hills less than an hour away; cross-country ski on one of the many forest paths; snowshoe just about anywhere, there's no lack of snow; toboggan down a dedicated toboggan hill or simply in a park. In the summer: bike, rollerblade, run or walk the many paths throughout the city; enjoy a day at the beach; hike or mountain-bike in Gatineau Park; swim in a nearby lake; throw a ball or Frisbee in a park; kayak or canoe at Mooney's Bay; feed the ducks at Dows Lake; check out the many summer festivals and events; try a noon yoga class at Parliament Hill or City Hall.

That should start you off nicely.



1 A FRENCH FOCUS
THE FRENCH BAKER and **BENNY'S BISTRO** has a display table full of croissant, pain-au-chocolat, pain-au-raisin, and brioche just as you walk in. What you might miss is the long, narrow hallway to the right that leads to Benny's Bistro. With about 15 little tables, the colourful walls and black-and-white tiled floor invites you to sample their tiny, seasonal menu. Saturday and Sunday brunch is the way to go, but arrive early or late otherwise there's always a line. A cappuccino and stuffed French toast (like berries and brie or apples and cheddar) will set you back about \$16. (Mon-Fri 07.00-18.30. Sat-Sun 07.00-17.30). 119 Murray St, K1N 5M5

COFFEE FROM THE WORLD
BLUE BIRD COFFEE is a favorite hipster hangout. Its micro roasted house coffee is die for, and the seemingly unintentional touch of African culture really rounds out the atmosphere. The fantastic, original house music transports you to a different continent as soon as you walk in. Even though it is a little walk away from the Byward Market, it more than warrants a special trip. (Mon-Sun 07.00-21.00). 261 Dalhousie St, K1N 7E3

3 DID WE MENTION THE BURGERS?
Canadians love burgers as much as Americans do, and the capital is no different. This pub might not look like much on the surface, but **CHEZ LUCIEN** has outstanding hamburgers that are made out of locally farmed organic beef. It is usually packed, so it might not be the best idea if you are looking for a quick meal. Like many of Ottawa's better pubs, there is a great section of local craft beers to choose from. But seriously... try the burgers. (Burgers are \$10, and pints of beer are \$7 each). (Mon-Sun 11.00-02.00). 137 Murray St, K1N 5M7

FREE WHERE THE FAMOUS PEOPLE LIVE
Rockcliffe is where many country ambassador houses are located (it is also great for picnics in Summer). There are no shops in the area and no sidewalks either. Wander around and take in all the different styles of houses. You can normally tell which house belongs to which ambassador by the flag outside. If you are lucky you'll even stumble upon Cowpland mansion (Michael Cowpland is a famous Canadian entrepreneur) which looks like it is made of gold. Take the #1 bus towards Rockcliffe.

4 THE MEXICAN HEART OF THE MARKET
If you want to eat and drink in an authentic Mexican atmosphere, **AHORA** is the place to go. Dive into this character filled basement restaurant right in the heart of Byward Market - it has ceiling windows for natural light. Concrete tile booths in a myriad of vibrant colours complete the experience while you fill up your belly with Corona, rice and beans! (they have great vegetarian options). Did I mention the Latin tunes and how cheap it is? (Mon-Sun 11.30-22.00). 307 Dalhousie St, K1N 7E8

SPECIAL SUSHI
At **WONTONMAMA** you'll find great sushi, a relaxed vibe, and decent drink deals (but you won't find wontons). The fish is fresh, the calamari great and they even have a happy hour menu which applies all day. Offers include 3 sushi rolls for \$15 - well worth it because the sushi rolls are great, and a cut above regular sushi joints. (Mon 17.00-02.00. Tues-Wed 11.30-22.00. Thu-Sat 11.30-02.00. Sun 11.30-22.00). 109 Clarence Street, K1N 5P5

6 SPEND THE WEEKEND WITH LOCALS
The **HEART AND CROWN** bar is one of the most popular spots in Ottawa on a Friday or Saturday night, meaning it will still be busy in the summer when all the students have left. Basic-

5
ALEX
long weekend Sunday nights and holds up to 600 people. They constantly hold events and usually have a drink special for under 4 bucks. The DJ plays a mix - some mainstream, some house and some throwback tunes. Pretty much anything goes - you'll even see girls dancing on the bar at certain times of the night! You can sign up to the electronic guest list on their website to get in for free. (Fri-Sat 21.00-02.00). 130 York St, K1N 5T5

8 OTTAWA'S VERY OWN PING PONG BAR
SPIN BIN is Ottawa's very first and only ping-pong bar. There are four tables so the place can get a bit sweaty, just hold your nose when you first walk in. It is a great place to come on a Wednesday as the drinks are super cheap (\$3 spirit and mixer). They also have a popular Country night on a Thursday when Spin Bin combines with the club upstairs, Cab-in. Country clothes are not required. Both are great as the party doesn't really begin in Ottawa until Friday. (Tues-Fri 17.00-02.00. Sat 20.00-02.00). 310 Dalhousie Street, K1N 5T2

ROCKING VIBES
ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX is a fantastic alternative to the host of generic clubs littering Byward Market. It prides itself as the city's only 'rock club', and the usual playlist is a mix of punk rock, funk, and pop-punk, and occasionally, electronic music. It's a great place to head with some friends for a night out, order the "Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster" to prepare yourself for an epic evening. Many big name acts have played at Zaphods before they were famous, and they will frequently stop by after their shows in the city. It just has a 'cool vibe' that is hard to shake. The Rolling Stones recently played a show here in 2005. (Mon-Sun 16.00-02.00). 27 York St, K1N 5S7

BEAUTIFUL WATER
On a nice day, take a stroll to the Rideau. Rideau means curtain and many places in Ottawa are called Rideau after a French man famously called the falls a 'beautiful curtain of water'. Most of the falls freeze in Winter and the ice must be cut up by special ice saws in Spring to prevent flooding once the ice starts to melt. Walk along King Edward towards Gatineau. Approximately 15 min walk from Rideau and King Edward.

10 LEAVE ROOM FOR DESSERT
OH SO GOOD'S name says it all. Rich and delicious desserts of all kinds that will make you sigh as you get lost in the taste. If you're on your own then prepare yourself for lots of couple watching during the week. Make sure to check out the interesting artwork displayed on the walls - it's all local talent. (Mon-Thu 14.00-23.00. Fri 14.00-00.30. Sat 12.00-00.30. Sun 12.00-23.00). 25 York St, K1N 9J6

FIGHTING MUSIC...AND ALLIGATORS
Experience what Ottawa has to offer when it comes to New Orleans food and festivities at **FAT TUESDAYS**. The name alone screams debauchery, and who doesn't like that once in a while? You can even try alligator if you've never had it before. Best part about this place is definitely the dueling pianos on Friday

and Saturday nights. (Sun-Wed 11.30-01.00. Thu-Sat 11.30-02.00). 62 York Street, K1N 5T1

OTTAWA'S OLDEST BAR
Also known as the Chateau Laffayette, **THE LAFF** is Ottawa's oldest standing bar. Drinks aren't expensive, and as for food I'm not even sure they sell any. This is an old-school pub, it is what it is with no pretences. Stop in, have a pint in the heart of the city, and if you can, check out Lucky Ron's show on Saturdays at 16.00. He's been playing there for over a decade and he always draws a crowd. (Mon-Sun 11.00-02.00). 42 York Street, K1N 5S6

FREE A NEW COMMUNITY
New Edinburgh is a small community built by Thomas McKay. Originally from Scotland, McKay was a businessman who was one of the founders of Ottawa. Most of the streets here are named after people including McKay himself and his 19 children. Look under the street name to see why it is important. Walk along King Edward towards Gatineau. Approximately 20 min walk from Rideau and King Edward.

CITY STROLLING
A more traditional walk with a beer at the end! If you don't make any stops then this walk takes approximately 40 minutes.
1. Start at Byward Market and York Street. Looking down York Street you can see that the roads are very wide - this was to fit the carriages which carried goods from the Rideau Canal to their next destination.
2. If you wander around the Byward Market you'll find Moulin de Provence, where Barack Obama famously bought a cookie for his daughter on a visit to Ottawa (do your wallet a favour and don't bother buying one, they're not that tasty!).
3. Leave the Byward Market, and go up York Street towards Sussex Drive. Cross the road and climb the steps towards Major Hill. Stand at the fence in front of the Rideau Canal. From here you get a fantastic view of the Parliament, the Canadian Museum of History and the National Gallery of Canada (especially at night when everything is lit up).
4. Take the path next to the statue of Lieutenant-Colonel John By (who oversaw the building of the canal and created Bytown) and follow it to the left. Look towards the canal and you'll see the tiny Bytown Museum, the oldest building in Ottawa.
5. You'll soon see some steps which take you up to the start of Wellington Street. On the left is the Chateau Laurier, a very grand building which has been named a National Historic site and now houses a collection of photography by the world famous, Ottawa born, Yousuf Karsh. Turn right over the bridge and walk towards Parliament on your right.
6. As you enter the gates to the Parliament make sure to stop at the Eternal Flame - this was a piece of temporary art work which locals fell in love with and it was never allowed to leave. You can take a free tour of the Parliament but we advise going directly up the Peace Tower (also free) where you can get a great view of the city. Hopefully they have cleaned the windows for once though!
7. Go round to the back of the Parliament building and admire the Library (the big Octagonal building). This was the only part of the Parliament which was left standing after a fire in 1916. The fire started in the main building and the librarian cleverly thought to close the large metal door connecting the two buildings to stop the fire from spreading. There were some casualties including two women who escaped from the fire but went back into the burning building to get their fur coats due to cold weather outside!
8. Leave the Parliament and continue to walk up Wellington Street. We're not going to tell you exactly where but if you do a bit of research you will find something special around here... (www.geocaching.com)
9. The next stop of interest is the Library & Archives. You'll notice a bench outside with two lovers. This is another piece of 'temporary' artwork. It was placed outside the building by a local artist but those who worked in the building assumed it had been placed there by Government officials. It was only when officials from another Government agency complained that they had no artwork, that people discovered it had not been officially commissioned! If you look at the bench closely you'll see writing on it by local school children about the benefits of reading.
10. Carry on walking up Wellington Street and turn right at Portage Bridge. Take the first right after the bridge (a small path) and then take the next right again to go through the underpass. Ahead of you there will be a large building which says Mill Street Brewery. It's time to reward yourself with a locally brewed beer. Mill Street is a Toronto based brewery but the beer they serve in this establishment is brewed on the premises. Don't say we're not good to you!

13 COFFEE POLITICS
In the heart of downtown Ottawa, down a little pathway, the privately owned **PLANET COFFEE** caters to politicians, government workers and everyone nearby. If you're there in the morning try one of their muffins from the baking tray. The quality of the ingredients shines through, leading you to conclude that this may be the best muffin you've ever had. If you're a political junkie you may even recognize someone. The coffee's great, too, and a perfect supplement to your muffin. (Mon-Fri 07.00-22.00. Sat 07.30-22.00. Sun 09.00-19.00). 24 York St, K1N 1K2

THE SMALLEST THEATRE
The **OTTAWA LITTLE THEATRE** company was founded in 1913 and they still know how to put on a great show. It's close to the Byward Market so it can be combined with a restaurant for a low-key night out. The performances are seasonal so be sure to check their schedule before you go. Students get a discount, be sure to bring your Student ID if you have one. There's also a great foyer where local artwork is displayed, it's perfect to check out during intermission. (Seasonal). 400 King Edward Ave, K1N 7M7

SUBCULTURE
Ottawa is massive for music but it's full of cliques - stay here for a while and you'll notice. The punk scene is very insular here and it's all live shows that rotate between places like Babylon, pressed, mugshots. You can check out www.punkottawa.com/shows/index.shtml for the best shows.

FREE WESTBORO
West of downtown, part of Richmond Road and Wellington Street West are lined with cute, little, shops and restaurants. On a nice summer or spring day, the sidewalks will be packed with pedestrians wandering around and enjoying the sunshine. At one end is Parkdale where the Parkdale Farmers Market opens every Saturday morning in the summer.

OTTAWA'S SPOOKIER SIDE
If those 'Ghost Adventure' shows are one of your guilty pleasures, you will love **THE HAUNTED WALK OF OTTAWA**. These lantern-lit tours are done by a cloak wearing guide who will take you around the city at night learning some history about the city's darker history. These are stories that you wouldn't normally find in a guidebook or on Wikipedia. I definitely recommend the "Ghosts and the Gallows tour" that takes you through the old city jail which is said to be 'haunted', but you know that already because you secretly watch those previously mentioned ghost adventure shows. (approximately \$15 for a 90 minute tour)

PUB CRAWL
What better way to get to know a city than mingling with the locals in a pub? How about trying a few different pubs to make sure you're meeting a variety of locals? We thought you might say yes to that.

1. Start the night off with some food in your stomach. There are a couple of places you can try in Chinatown before heading to the first pub - go to Saigon Boy Noodle House (648 Somerset St W) for the best pho in town or if it's after 20.00 grab some dim sum at Oriental Chu Sing Restaurant (691 Somerset St W).
2. Next stop is Pour Boy (495 Somerset Street W) for a selection of cheap domestic pints. Walking down Somerset Street W towards Elgin Street you'll see some pretty cool, vibrant street art outside THE DAILY GRIND. There is a similar mural outside Pour Boy. There are about 8 beers on tap here for \$5, all of which are extremely drinkable. Have some fun in this semi-hipster bar by counting how many of the (male) customers do not have facial hair - we think you'll get 2 at most! Don't try the Trivia Nights on a Tuesday - you'll be up against teams of locals who are regulars and already have a handicap at the start of the quiz!
3. Union 613 (315 Somerset St W) is just past Somerset Street W and Bank Street. There are two reasons why you should visit Union 613. One is their excellent vegan food. And the other is their speakeasy - this instantly transports you back in time with the interior decked out as it would have been during the prohibition. Good issue is finding the entrance as there is no sign. Good luck after a couple of drinks.
4. By now you should be ready to dance. At the weekend go to **BABYLON** on Bank Street to get your boogie on. You'll find all the cool kids wearing their favourite plaid shirts here on a Sunday. And if your feet get tired then you can grab a seat on one of their many pieces of eclectic furniture at the back. The rest of the week isn't massive in Ottawa so head to a late night pub. Try **THE LIEUTENANT'S PUMP** as it's normally pretty packed with locals and they do have some strong beer on offer for relatively cheap prices.
5. No night is complete without food. If it's still quite early then head to Boushey's Fruit Market (348 Elgin Street) for an outstanding and ridiculously cheap samosa (approximately \$1.25 for a baked or fried samosa made in store). That, or wait in line to be served at the taco window of EL CAMINO (until 02.00).

OFF THE MAP ACTIVITIES
08.00-17.00. 08.30-16.00). 250 City Centre Ave. Unit 112, K1R 1C7

BUILD YOUR OWN BURGER
You may have seen THE WORKS in other Canadian cities but Ottawa is the birthplace of this famous custom burger joint. The construction-themed restaurants serve drinks from measuring cups and their beautiful burger creations come in metal trays. Their intimidating yet amazing menu includes over 50 burger combinations to choose from. The crazier burgers include peanut butter and banana (Hunka Hunka), or pineapple, cream cheese and hot peppers (Sexy Burger) but more conventional ones are available as well, like the Ho Hum Burger #2 (classic cheese and bacon combination). If you're feeling brave start with a Tower-O-Rings (crispy onion rings) and your choice of dipping sauces. (Mon-Sun 11.00-22.00). 363 St Laurent Blvd, K1K 2Z7

DRIVE TO THE BLUES
A 30-minute drive from Ottawa to the small town of Wakefield, Quebec will bring you to **THE BLACK-SHEEP INN**. This iconic, dive-bar is known for its live jazz and blues music. 2014 marks its 20th year as a music venue though the place was a tavern and roadhouse back in 1928. Shows typically run Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 20.30. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes since it tends to be standing room only. Tickets range from \$10 to \$20. (Mon-Sun 14.00-close). 753 Chemin Riverside Drive, J0X 3G0

CULTURE IN THE CAPITAL

Ottawa, Canada's Capital, is known for its countless festivals and truly Canadian events. The city is located at the border of Ontario and Quebec, so the combination of both English and French heritage is what makes the Ottawa culture special - everything is in both official languages. The city is also located in an extreme-weather region, so locals truly take advantage of both cold and hot temperatures. To find out all the up-to-date activities check out www.atp613.ca.

When the warmer months come around, the capital is ready for a city-wide display of colorful flowers as the world famous Tulip Festival begins with major fireworks displays throughout its 3 weeks in May. The summer months are packed with great festivals: the Dragon Boat Festival and the HOPE Volleyball Summerfest take place at Mooney's Bay, a beautiful park with a breathtaking beach, and they combine live musical entertainment and athletic competitions. The biggest event in the city is probably Bluesfest, a 10-day outdoor music festival with world-class artists that truly rock the downtown core!

The first of July is Canada Day and Ottawa celebrates it the best. The city puts on an amazing day show at Parliament Hill, and the streets overflow with people wearing red, white, and all sort of Canadian inspired outfits! The day finishes off with an epic firework show right behind Parliament. Once the stage is cleared out during the following days, the night-

ly Mosaika show debuts and runs through the beginning of September: a 30 minute sound and light performance that uses the Parliament Buildings as a screen and takes you through the history of Canada with eye-catching displays.

Ottawa has loads of museums and they are all free every Thursday, mainly from 17.00 to 22.00. The Canadian Museum of History is a must-see as it takes you through Canada's timeline by walking into sets of how everything looked back then: from the native ways to the current days. The Canadian Museum of Nature is also worth mentioning as it's set inside a beautiful castle. The museum also turns into a night club once a month, so wouldn't it be great to dance right next to dinosaurs or under a big whale? If you are looking for a night out, the Byward Market is the place to be with over 150 restaurants, pubs and bars. Locals never forget to eat after a night out drinking and dancing; choose either a Poutine (a true Canadian plate consisting of fries with cheese curds and gravy) or a Shawarma (Arabic meat meal).

Ottawa locals are truly proud of their city and you can really tell when it comes to the Ottawa Senators, the city's hockey team. Attending a hockey game and supporting the Sens is a tradition and commitment of every true local. Ottawa is a great town and there is no way not to dive into its culture when you are visiting as there is always something happening and locals won't want to miss it!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

GETTING AROUND OTTAWA

CITY BUS

The best way to purchase fares is by buying bus tickets, which are sold at most convenience stores. For directions and which bus you need use Google maps (we do) and ask somebody at the bus stop which direction you need to take. The main bus stops are on Rideau Street outside McDonalds or Mackenzie King (by the Rideau Centre).

TAXI

Taxis are the quickest way to get around in the city, and there are several companies operating fleets. They are definitely more popular in the winter when the subzero temperatures roll around. However, they can be quite expensive fairly quickly, so riding them short distances is probably best.

GETTING TO/FROM OTTAWA

Unfortunately public transit within Canada is light-years behind Europe and the rest of the developed world. Since the country is so large; traveling from one city to another takes a long time, and is quite expensive. Check out Porter and Westjet for flight deals and VIA rail for train tickets. Ottawa is about 4 hours from Toronto and Montreal by train. It's 5 hours to Toronto and 2.5 hours to Montreal if you're traveling by bus. The bus is normally cheaper than the train but check both before traveling.



There is no real 'set schedule' for riding Greyhound buses, meaning that a ticket for the 12.00 bus will still work later that same day, as seating is done on a 'first come first serve' basis.

OTTAWA MACDONALD-CARTIER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The "97 - Airport" bus makes a stop at the Rideau Center downtown. This bus runs 24/7 (but infrequently in the evening), and takes about 45 minutes to reach downtown. The fastest way to the airport is by taxi, but since the airport is so far out of the city, it will cost about \$35 per trip.

VIA RAIL TRAIN STATION

The train station is probably best reached by city bus. Catching either the '94/95/96 bus east from downtown (Rideau Center) will take about 10 minutes to reach the train station.

GREYHOUND BUS STATION

Taxi is probably the best way to get to/from the coach terminal. It is around a \$10 cab ride from downtown. If your bags are light and you prefer to walk, the bus station is approximately 50 minutes from most hostels in town.

Our sponsor

We are proud to be sponsored by OnlyHostels.com, who provided the donation required to print the first 1,500 maps. This hostel booking website was developed by a team of hostel owners, hostel workers, and travelers to improve the sustainability of the hostel industry and to provide you, the backpacker, with the best hostel booking experience. You can find out more and book the accommodation for your next backpacking adventure at www.OnlyHostels.com

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to all of the people who have helped make this project what it is. Thank you to the local businesses featured for making Ottawa such a great place, thanks to the hostels for allowing backpackers to stay in the city and the biggest thanks ever to the project team for making such an awesome map!

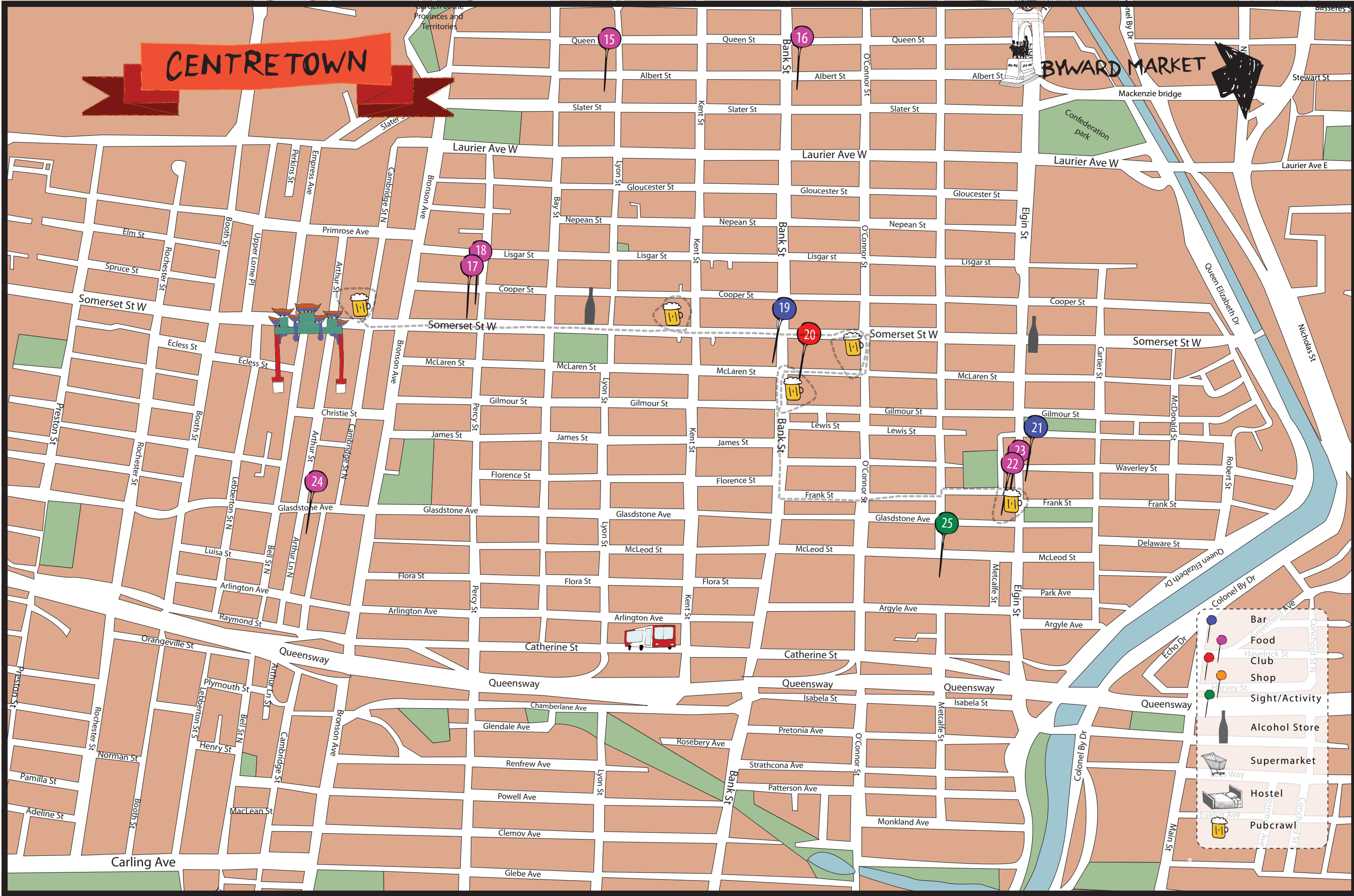
Like us on Facebook
We'll be providing information on the progress of THE ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL GUIDE - OTTAWA project as well as up-to-date tourist information for the city. You can also give us your feedback this way www.facebook.com/AlternativeTravelGuide

Follow and talk to us on Twitter

You'll receive updates on the growth of THE ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL GUIDE as it develops in other cities. We'd also love to hear your thoughts on our organisation @Altraveltguide

THE WORLD'S TOP HOSTELS... AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

ONLY HOSTELS



GET THEM BEFORE THEY'RE SCONE

THE SCONE WITCH is a bakery-style restaurant focusing on scones. Open for breakfast, lunch and brunch, there are about six savoury and six sweet flaky, scrumptious scone choices on offer. One of their sconewiches (think scone-sandwich) stuffed with fresh ingredients is guaranteed to make your day and won't hurt your wallet at about \$10. Alternatively, have one straight from the oven with options like lemon curd, jam or cream to choose from - about \$3 and worth every penny. During the week you'll find both locations swarming with office types from the surrounding high rise buildings. Try to avoid the lunch hour rush from 11:30 to 13:00 (Mon-Fri 07:00-16:30. Sat-Sun 08:00-16:00). 388 Albert Street, K1R 5B2

OTTAWA'S LOCAL COFFEE CHAIN

You'll see **BRIDGEHEAD** all over the city but it's exclusively in Ottawa. This local chain stands for fair trade, organic, and shade-grown coffee from small-scale farmers. It serves a medium strong roast of drip coffee (the most common form of coffee in Canada). Don't even think of comparing it to Tim Hortons. Bridgehead recently opened a Roastery in Little Italy, a direct result of its success with locals. There are scheduled Saturday tours but the staff will

BRING A BIKE

Ottawa has a network of bicycle paths separated from road traffic. You won't find bike paths quite like this in any other Canadian city. These paths take you through forests, farms, beaches, rivers, streams and neighbourhoods. Once you're on a path you have lots of options, just follow the signs and maps posted along the way. Rent a bike for a day, pack a picnic, plan a simple route to a beach or park, and spend the day getting there on your own time, you'll be happy you did. Britannia Park on the Ottawa river, or the Arboretum by Dow's Lake are absolutely beautiful spots during the summer.

COFFEE FOR THE CUSTOMERS

On the surface **UMI CAFE** might not offer anything unique in terms of its coffee and homemade treats. Where it really shines is in its regulars and local culture vulture staff. Whilst you enjoy a coffee and perhaps a gluten free cake, you might be treated

to an impromptu concert by other customers waiting for friends. Regardless, you'll definitely get to see the local 'art' work in the washroom, this alone makes a stop here worth it. There are often free treat samples on the front counter, so sit back, enjoy a coffee and a sample, and watch the crowds flow by on busy Somerset Street. In Winter it can get cold so don't sit next to the window. (Mon-Thu 08:00-22:00. Fri 08:00-00:00. Sat 09:00-22:00. Sun 10:00-20:00). 610 Somerset Street West, K1R 5K4

CHILLED COFFEE

This small space with its mismatched tables and chairs manages to squeeze in bands, DJs, and musicians of all kinds on a regular basis. **THE DAILY GRIND** is known as a place to hang out; pick up some food, grab a drink (alcoholic, caffeinated, or neither) and just sit back. A converted house, there are rooms upstairs where you can play board games, or even muck about on an old school Atari. Catering to the burgeoning trend of Vegan and Gluten-free diets, there is something on the menu for everyone. If you're wandering around Chinatown for a few hours and need to rest your feet, this is your stop. (Mon, Wed-Thu 11:00-23:59. Fri 11:00-02:00. Sat 09:00-02:00. Sun 09:00-21:00). 601 Somerset Street West, K1R 5K1

A MANLY STOP

Don't worry if you can't play pool, no one else here can either. If you're looking for cheap pitchers and a hilarious game or two, then be sure to stop by. The **CUE & CUSH-ION** also has a foosball table and since there are only bar snacks there's a cheap pizza-by-the-slice joint just across the street that will cater to your drunken needs. It is not fancy by any means. What this place lacks in class it makes up in raucous pool games, incredible people watching, and being a busy spot all nights of the week. After midnight it really picks up. (Sun-Thu 14:00-03:00. Fri-Sat 14:00-04:00). 319 Bank St, K2P 1X9

CHANGE IN OTTAWA

If you want to see a true display of our history, make time to see the Changing of the Guard on **PARLIAMENT HILL** during the warmer months - late June through late August. It happens every day at 10:00 AM, but be sure to arrive at Parliament Hill at least 15 minutes early to get the best view of the British-like serious-faced guards with the high hats, the band and the bag pipers! Wellington Street.

DANCING THROUGH THE AGES

BABYLON is a local favorite, famous for Shameless on Saturdays (90's night) and its Mod Club night every Sunday, where you can dance the night away to some Mo-Town classics, The Jackson 5 or The Beatles. If you like dancing this is the place to be, and is one of the only busy clubs consistently open on a Sunday night. There are different events every night, including live bands and DJs from the area. Be sure to check out their website for upcoming events. (Fri-Sun 22:00-02:00). 317 Bank Street, K2P 1X7

THE PUB WITH THE BEST FOOD

'The Pump' is a staple in every local's list of pubs, as it is widely known as 'the pub with the best food in Ottawa'. It is located in a basement, and has a very intimate, warm and cozy atmosphere. Don't be surprised if you find many locals hibernating in **THE LIEUTENANTS PUMP** in the winter. Be sure to catch a Senators game there while enjoying one of the infamous mason jar drinks (The 'Smiling Jerry' is my favourite). Dinner items range from \$12-\$15. (Mon-Fri 11:30-02:00. Sat-Sun 08:30-02:00). 361 Elgin Street, K2P 1M9

WINDOW SHOPPING FOR TACOS

I fell in love with **EL CAMINO TACO** the first time I tried a taco from their little street side takeout window at 1 in the morning, and chances are you will too. In the last decade **OTAWANS** have become obsessed with tacos, and this place is leading the charge. The tacos are small and will cost you \$4 each, but 3 is usually enough for a meal. They are sold late into the night making it a great destination for your 'last stop' before heading home. The fish is fantastic, but you can't go wrong with any of the choices. There is a full dining room in the restaurant, but it's usually busy, and they don't take reservations. (Mon 17:30-02:00. Tues-Fri 12:00-14:30. 17:30-02:00. Sat-Sun 17:30-02:00). 380 Elgin Street, K2P 1N1

If you're vegan or gluten-free in Ottawa then you don't need to go out of your way to find a special restaurant, you'll notice that many cafes in the city offer these options as standard. If you do want to go a bit further afield, you can visit Simply Raw Express (989 Wellington St W) in Hintonburg. This place only serves (you've guessed it) raw, vegan food. Their taco is something to be experienced, made out of Walnut Taco meat, it will leave you feeling inspired!

THE BEST VIEW IN OTTAWA

Do you want to take the BEST picture of Ottawa? **NEPEAN POINT** is a little hill right behind the Canadian National Gallery (where the gigantic spider is). The hill is raised high enough that you're overlooking the Alexandra Bridge on the Ottawa River, with the Quebec side right across the water and a breathtaking view of the Parliament Buildings to your left. There is a strip of grass right below the bushes surrounding the statue, and just to the right of the seats if you're racing Parliament. You can lie down in your own private viewing spot with an unobstructed view of the river, Hull, and Parliament. It's open all the time, but in the Winter 'you're not supposed to access it'. 380 Sussex Drive, K1N 9N4

A LONG SKATE

When it comes to the freezing months, the Rideau Canal becomes the largest skateway in the world at 7.8 km. The winter is celebrated every February during Winterlude, a 3-week festival of ice sculpture competitions, the largest snow playground in North America, day and night skating, and a touch of Inuit performances - Canada's native population.

THE HISTORY OF NATURE

The **CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE** was recently renovated, and is located inside a beautiful castle. The contrast of the tall glass tower entrance set against the older stone building is typical of the spirit of the capital. They have fantastic dinosaur fossils here, and a bird specimen gallery that can swallow (get it?) hours of your time. Check out when the next Nature Nocturne is scheduled for the unique experience of partying in a museum. Be sure to have a suit or fancy dress though, as most people take this opportunity to dress up. Admission: General/Student \$12.50/\$10.50 (though Nature Nocturne costs more), free on Thursday nights. (Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun 09:00-17:00. Thu 09:00-20:00). 240 McLeod St, K2P 2R1

GOURMET SANDWICHES, AND LOCAL MUSIC

Arguably one of the most relaxing places to hang out during the unforgiving Ottawa winter - **PRESSED** is a must visit. Priding itself on its eclectic vibe, here you can sip on a latte or eat a gourmet sandwich while watching a punk show, have a beer while listening to bluegrass, or simply spend an afternoon chilling on the couches with a good book. The best nights to come are on a Friday and Saturday, when the usually quiet coffeshop atmosphere is taken over by show goers seeking out great live local music. Be sure to check their website beforehand, because shows can range from poetry to rock-n-roll, female vocalists strumming softly on guitars to crazy improv shows, and from book launches to live DJs. (Mon-Tue 09:00-20:00. Wed-Fri 09:00-22:00. Sat 10:00-22:00. Sun 10:00-19:00). 750 Gladstone Ave, K1R 6X5

CRIMINAL BACKPACKERS

HI hostels are all over Canada but HI **OTTAWA JAIL HOSTEL** is a little different, it used to be a jail! Even the bar there is themed, MUG-SHOTS. If you're there at the right time a local favorite is called Ceremony, with a very intimate dance floor and DJ booth. There you will be served from 'behind the bars'. A great time to come here is when Hip Hop Karaoke is on, just have a few mugs first. Some of the rooms are extremely small though as they were previously cells so be careful if you have lots of luggage. 75 Nicholas St, K1N 7B9

SUBCULTURE

The gay area of Ottawa is at Somerset St W and Bank Street and is called The Village. You'll even notice that the Canadian wide coffee chain Second Cup has more character here! You'll also see rainbow stickers on many shops and cafes in the city. There's a great gay bar called Swizzles (246 Queen Street) which has awesome karaoke at the weekend and is attended by an extremely varied clientele with a range of talent. Hump night on wednesdays at Mercury Lounge (56 Byward Market) is a must visit for gays and dance fiends alike (check out the club on other days too - ultra alternative and conveniently located for most hostels).

ABOUT US

THE ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL GUIDE is a non-profit organisation set up because of a love of backpacking. Without your support, the organisation can not survive. We want to create the best backpacker experiences in a city and to do that we refuse to produce maps with ads in them. These ads take up room that could have been used for genuinely relevant and useful information for you, the backpacker. We also refuse to let the opinions shown in these maps be bought, the places featured are there because they are truly popular with locals and add to your experience in the city. You can find out more about the organisation here: www.thealternativetravelguide.org.

Meet the *Hottawamap* team
Project manager: Katrina Mitchell. Graphic designer: Ellen Withersova. Local editor: Sebastian Charge. Local reviewers: Melissa Weiner, Eric Heikurinen, Alex Sirois and Oscar Rodriguez.

WESTBORO BEACH

If you are in Ottawa during the summer and feel like a splash in the river, Westboro Beach is the closest to the downtown core. The cool thing about this beach is that it is where the locals choose to go as it is small and intimate. It also has a snack bar and there are outdoor movie screenings from time to time! Sir John A. MacDonald Parkway and Island Park Drive