

# TRAVEL

**H**AD it all been an elaborate dream? I woke up the morning after Canada Day in Ottawa to a pristine city. There was no remnant of the throngs of people who had come together in adoration of royal couple Prince William and Princess Catherine, the spectacular evening firework display or the whole media circus.

## LUCY DALTROFF enjoys a right royal welcome in Ottawa

Even the sea of red and white outfits patriotically worn by everybody, was a mere memory.

Instead the streets were orderly and shining. Canada's love for royalty, pageantry and cleanliness had shown itself all within 24 hours.

I had arrived two days earlier and was immediately taken with this, the second largest city in Ontario after Toronto.

Firstly, the people are kind and really helpful, secondly it is situated on the Ottawa River with spectacular views.

I also need to dispel the myth of Canada being cold. The temperature was warm — really warm — and the locals were enjoying every minute of it.

The Rideau Canal, which runs through the centre, was busy with boats coming and going and all the restaurants had set-up outside tables.

Ottawa has been a capital since December 31, 1857, chosen by Queen Victoria, and the first Jewish settler, Moses Bilsky, came at about that time too.

It was Colonel By who oversaw the building of the important canal and By Town as the settlement was originally known, became famous for its market — and its Jewish merchants.

Walking through the

busy streets I saw a large plaque commemorating the life of Jacob Freedman, who settled in Ottawa from the Ukraine in 1891 and became an international trader setting up Canada's first cash and carry business.

Irving Rivers' corner shop (he famously used to boast that he "cornered the market") is also a legend and even now is known for its varied and slightly haphazard merchandise!

As for the Rideau Canal — the reason for the prosperity of the whole town — it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its 47 locks, all hand operated. In winter it turns into the world's largest skating rink.

One of the 'must sees' for visitors is the impressive National Gallery of Canada designed by Moshe Safdie.

The famous Haifa-born architect has created an award-winning spacious glass building, which is a work of art in itself and draws much praise from visitors for its luminous Great Hall, spacious galleries, interior gardens and courtyards and is fun to be inside.

Our guide explained that every Tuesday evening there is a special time for people with little or no vision, who are allowed to touch the exhibits. Moshe's work on the gallery is somewhat

different from one of his earlier projects, in 1967, when he was commissioned to refurbish old Jerusalem.

The impressive Parliament, situated on the city's main hill, is based on the one in London, and was rebuilt after a calamitous fire in 1916.

Inside it is intriguing to see in the chamber of the Commons a hydraulic speaker's chair... a past lady occupant was rather short.

The library is the oldest part of the building, as its sturdy metal doors meant it escaped the flames, and is a smaller replica of the one at the British Museum.

The many books include volumes of *Birds of America*, sketched by Audubon in the early 19th century, and now worth about 14 million Canadian Dollars.

The library's magnificent gold and blue decorated tower dominates the city skyline and it's possible to go up in an elevator for a fantastic panorama.

From here there is a good view across the river to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, technically in the province of Quebec, but still in Greater Ottawa.

Here, the Grand Hall houses an exhibition of six Pacific Coast Indian house facades connected by a shoreline and boardwalk, and the largest collection of indoor totem poles in the world.

Less than a 15-minute walk from the Parliament Buildings, Congregation Beth Shalom is the main downtown shul and one of 12 in the greater Ottawa Area.



I met up with Rabbi Scott Rosenberg and some of his friendly congregation who showed me around their building, opened in 1956.

Majestic in size and beautifully designed, it provides a great setting for prayer.

Rockport, just outside Ottawa, is one of the ports of embarkation

for the famous 1,000 Island Cruise, known both for its salad dressing and the ultimate mother-in-law joke:

One of the 1,000 is home to a hideous castle, built by George Boldt, general manager of the Waldorf-Astoria, and just out of reach, a tiny island nicknamed "just room

enough" has the capacity for only one house, and was allegedly built for his wife's mother.

On the same boat trip I also saw the smallest international bridge, which spans from an island in Canadian waters to another in

America, yet the whole structure is only a few feet long!

So it's obvious that it is easy to leave Canada... but that was not something I was in a great hurry to do.



LEGENDARY: Irving Rivers' shop and, right, Rabbi Scott Rosenberg



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