

The new look of travel this summer – nature getaways, with reliable WiFi

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SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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Borders across the globe remain only partially open, so many Canadians may choose to vacation in a Muskoka cottage, like this one, pictured on the shore of Lake Muskoka on Saturday, August 1, 2015.

J.P. MOCZULSKI/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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For anyone lucky enough to be able to travel this summer, there's a high likelihood that this year's vacation will look very different from vacations past. Borders across the globe remain only partially open (while some, such as the one that separates Canada from our neighbours in the United States, are closed to all but essential operations). The difficulty of getting from place to place makes last year's trend of micro-vacationing – quick, days-long jaunts that don't cut too much into our allotted paid time off – seem all but obsolete. Instead, say travel experts, Canadians looking to get away this summer will be taking longer breaks and staying put in a single destination, which could be a boon for the local travel industry.

“We want our Canadian travel suppliers to do well,” says Wendy Davis, owner of Zebrano Travel, a concierge travel company based in Toronto. “So we're trying to be part of the recovery. And I think that's a big part of how things will get back on track – it's got to get back on track in Canada first.”

Hidden Canada: The 2020 travel guide to the country's undiscovered gems and experiences

Because of the pandemic, the definition of what it means to vacation is shifting, at least temporarily. One of the upsides of this shift is the fact that for many people, the work-from-home mandate is still in place, meaning that when we travel, work can, too.

“The one thing people have in abundance now is time. When your work and your home can intersect and be one, you can really take your work with you anywhere you want to go, which means you don't have those time constraints of having to get back to the office after a week.” says Misty Belles, managing director of global PR for Virtuoso, a luxury and experiential travel network.

Belles is seeing travellers seek out and book extended stays, bringing their work with them in pursuit of a more even work/life balance. “Unless you're used to working from home, people are starting to struggle,” she explains, referencing the lack of clear boundaries between work from home “office” life and personal life. Perhaps a simple change of scenery can succeed in luring us away from our screens.

With travel parameters under such tight constraints, however, how do you make a trip that may not even take you outside your own province feel like a true vacation? Belles says her clients are asking for destinations that allow them to spend more time outdoors, in “places that are not in the city centre, that have land around them, that have fresh air, and the ability

to reconnect with nature. That's a big piece of this," she says, "reconnecting with nature. Because we all know the toll that this has taken on physical and mental health."

Davis says her clients are looking to commit to a destination that has everything they want and sticking with it. "They're not interested in moving around from place to place. Logistically, it's difficult to plan that type of trip right now. So we're really advising clients, 'Let's keep things simple.'"

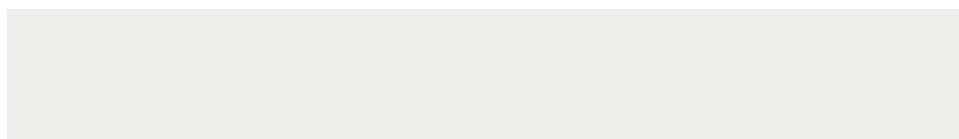
But simple doesn't mean foregoing special. Indulgences of vacations past (think: masseuses, personal chefs, one-on-one yoga instructors) are being swapped for other requests. Both Davis and Belles are seeing an uptick in requests for single-family cottages or villa-type accommodations that come with a different category of extras – ones that are exclusive, private, and unlikely to be found in densely populated cityscapes. "They want their own pool," says Davis, "they want bikes, they want some toys. If it's on a lake, they're going to want jet skis and boats." Chiefly, however, people want a sense of privacy, which right now we equate with safety, and reliable WiFi.

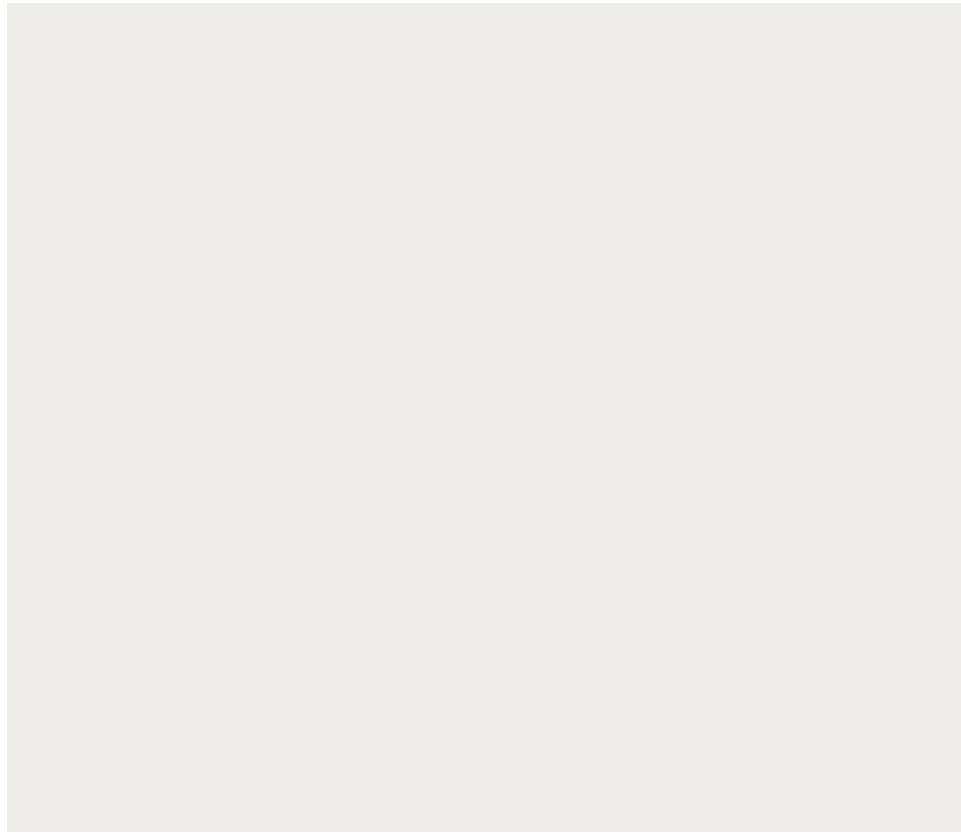
"We're seeing a trend towards physical distancing, but not so remote that they can't get to what they need," says Belles, alluding to another emerging trend in summer 2020 travel: While vacationers decamp to less populated areas, those who live there full-time are hoping that the visitors will be considerate enough to bring most of their own supplies – and not bring COVID-19 with them. Lacking cohesive federal government intervention or guidance, some renters are asking guests to sign health declaration forms that they've cobbled together themselves with the help of online brokers such as Airbnb or VRBO. While travellers were once focused on strategizing the best possible routes and itineraries, they're now being asked to think carefully about packing, physical distancing and keeping themselves and others safe when they venture out into their vacation communities.

A new list of travel essentials

Summer vacations have a different look and feel this year, and your packing list is no exception. These items will come in handy wherever you're headed

Travel-friendly compact pillows

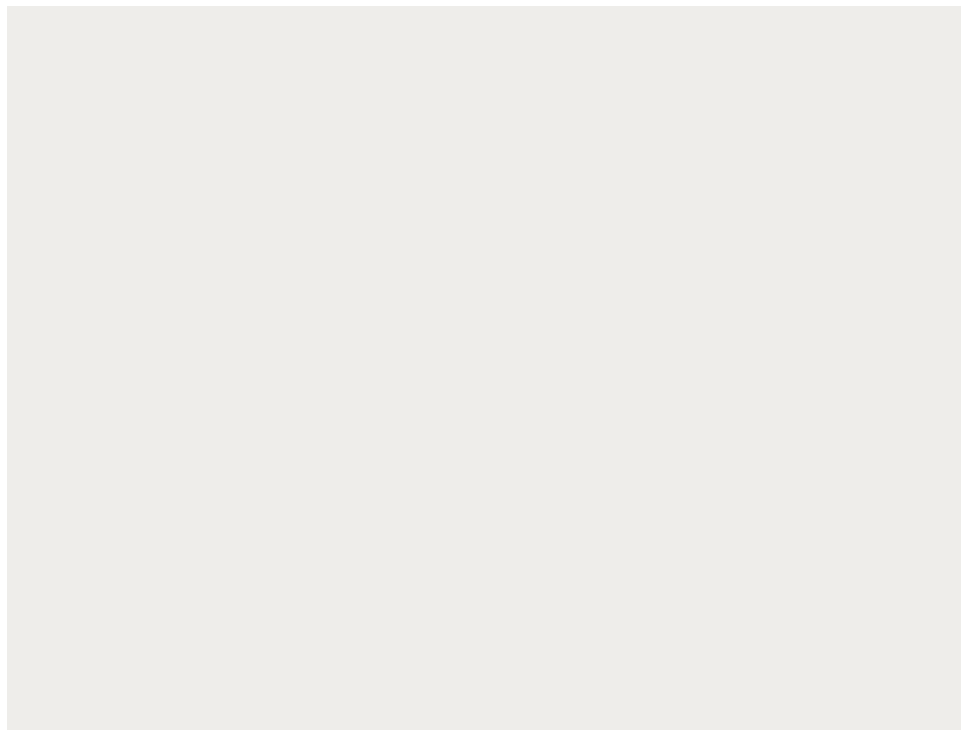


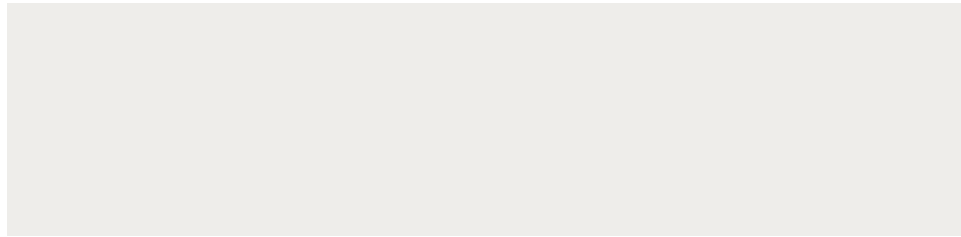


HANDOUT

A communal pillow is an unappealing prospect at the best of times, but as we're forced to factor the coronavirus into our travel plans, BYOP becomes a must. *Therm-a-Rest compressible pillow*, \$39.95 at Mountain Equipment Coop (mec.ca).

Canine floatation device

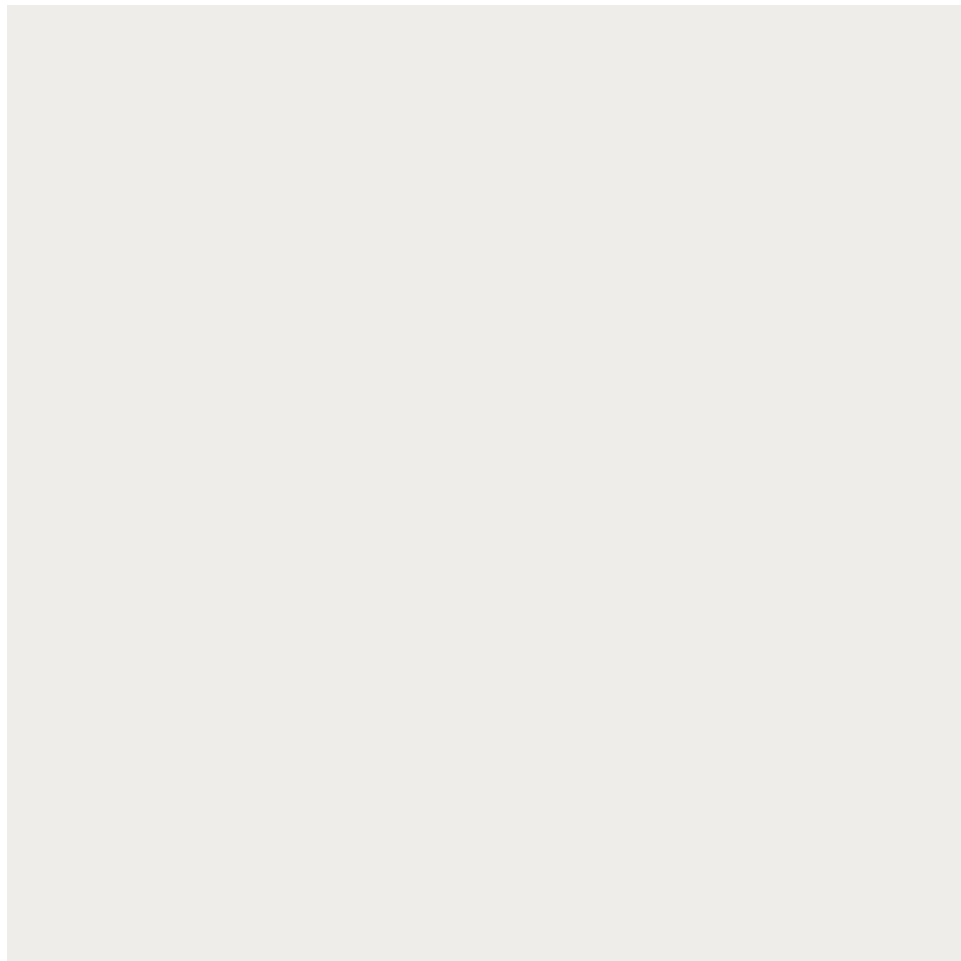




HANDOUT

You love lake swimming and canoe rides, so does your best friend. Keep the four-legged members of your family afloat and separation anxiety at bay with a life vest that lets them join in the fun out on the water. [Arcadia Trail flotation dog coat](#), from \$21.99 at PetSmart ([petsmart.ca](#)).

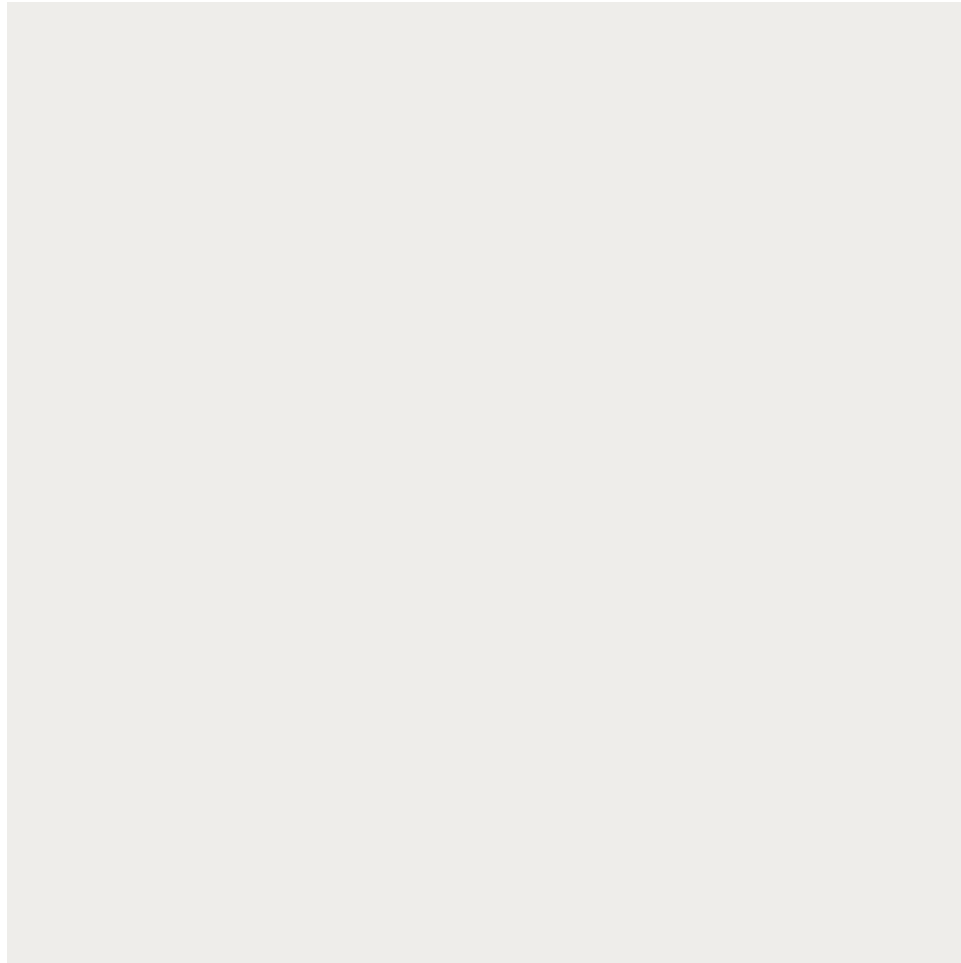
Hammock



HANDOUT

This two-person afternoon nap essential comes with a built-in stuff sack for maximum portability. Pro tip: Stash your sunscreen, e-reader, or a beer in there once the hammock is set up. [Double Hammock with tree straps](#), \$99.95 at Mountain Equipment Coop ([mec.ca](#)).

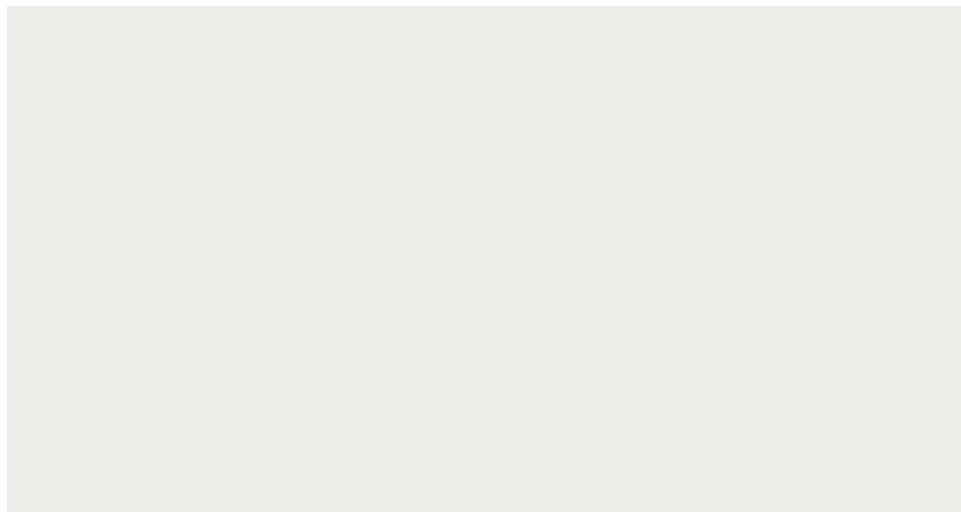
Anti-bug tech

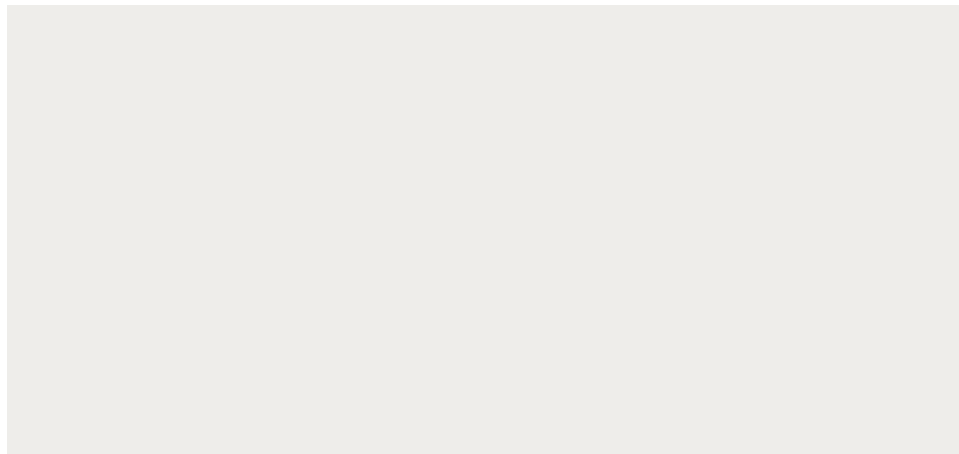


HANDOUT

Rechargeable and refillable, this travel-friendly device uses heat to diffuse a scent-free mosquito repellent saving vacationers hours of post-trip scratching. *Thermacell radius mosquito repeller*, \$69.99 at Canadian Tire (canadiantire.ca).

Easy-pack towels for indoors and out





HANDOUT

Many cottage communities ask that visitors arrive with everything they need, leaving packing and trunk space at a premium. Stock up on these slim and sleek towels to make space for other essentials. *PackTowel personal towel*, From \$10.95 at Mountain Equipment Coop (mec.ca).

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