

Canadian travel rivals the world

Dan McCaffery - June 2026

A new study shows Canadians are even more hesitant to travel to the United States than was previously thought. According to an investigation by the University of Toronto, our visits to the U.S. are down by a whopping 42 per cent this year.

If you're included in that group I have good news for you. There's a vacation inside Canada that's as splendid as anything you'll find anywhere in the world.

I'm referring to the Rocky Mountaineer luxury scenic train tour through British Columbia and Alberta. We took that journey this spring, starting and ending in Vancouver. Along the way we made stops in Kamloops, Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper.

To say it was spectacular would be an understatement. I have seen Austria's Eastern Alps, the Himalayas in Nepal (where we flew around Mount Everest in a touring plane), Japan's Mount Fuji and the Southern Alps in New Zealand. When it comes to awe inspiring sights I would put the Canadian Rockies up against them any day of the week.

If you take the Gold Leaf service you will travel in a glass dome coach that includes an outdoor viewing platform, a dining car with great views and gourmet meals that rival anything you'd find in a top European restaurant.

Besides the majestic mountains, glaciers, forests and waterfalls, you're likely to see plenty of wildlife. Along the way we saw four bald eagles, three deer, a dozen big-horned sheep, countless elk and one black bear.

And don't worry, you won't spend all your time on the train. At the end of each day you are taken by bus to a hotel for the night. A couple of times you spend two days in a town, so there's plenty of time outside the train.

It was while on a bus that we got a closeup view of the bear. He was fresh out of hibernation, groggy on the side of the road. When the driver pulled over so we could get a good view, the bear reared his head, yawned, twitched his ears and then lay his head back down. Eventually, he got up and rumbled down the side of the road.

They even took us by bus to a gondola cable car that lifted us to the top of one of the mountains for a breathtaking scenic view.

Until now my favourite rail tour had been the Savannahlander, which took us into the Australian Outback. Another train trip transported us through the mountains on New Zealand's south island. But good as both of them were, they couldn't match the Rocky Mountaineer.

The trip was a reminder that Canada is a vast country that you could explore for years and never see all of it. So don't despair if you aren't comfortable travelling abroad. There's plenty to see and do right here at home.