

HISTORIC CANAL AND RIDEAU RIVER TOUR – *Burritt's Rapids Continued*



Stop #11: Portage, Lock 17 Lock Station & Eastern Tip of Island

Towards the lock station you'll find the portage area. While on land, consider pausing and exploring the beautiful lock station with its well-manicured gardens, picnic and camping areas, and rest spots for overnight boaters. Cross over the

locks and you will find more information on the canal and local area on a series of Parks Canada panels. Boats from all over North America come here! The eastern tip of the island can also be reached on land or viewed by water.

When you are ready to complete your portage go to the north side of the lock station to the designated dock and prepare to head westward. If you have gone through the locks, head around the eastern tip and go westward once again.

Stop #12: Horse Farms

There are quite a number of horse farms in this area of North Grenville and the Rideau Township part of Ottawa. Directly across from the portage area, every once and a while you may see a polo match taking place on the flat area. Earlier in the tour you may have spotted some other horse farms on the canal side.

Stop #13: Willows

Further west, notice a trio of beautiful willow trees on the north shore. Despite their beauty and ornamental value, willows famously require a lot of water and sun to thrive, but their root systems can be invasive and harmful if too close to wells and septic systems. When they are in bloom, admire their nectar-rich flowers that provide a key source of food for bees and butterflies. Willows have been used to make twine, line and baskets, and have been used for many remedies in folk medicine.

Stop #14: Henry Street Beach

Pull up near the postage stamp sized beach on the south shore, exercising caution if there are bathers present, and take a look at one of the world's smallest beaches. This beach was famously overrun during the Covid pandemic when it was advertised as one of the only beaches open in the Ottawa area.



During the summer, it is a life line for the island's residents to keep cool.

Stop #15: Modern Bridge and Mill Area

Head further west and approach the modern Burritt's Rapids bridge, built in 1983.

In times past, this area was home to the economic heart of the village with a mill on all four corners of the bridge, a woollen mill (northeast), a grist mill (southeast), as shingle mill (northwest) and lumber mill (southwest). On the west side of the bridge there is evidence of times past in the form of the stonework rubble in the water, which is a North Grenville historic site.

Beyond this area it will be difficult for motorized craft or easy paddling. For the adventurous, carry on, and for the casual paddle you may wish to return to the portaging area near the lock station.

Stop #16: Brassil's Creek

Brassil's Creek is a stream located within the City of Ottawa and Montague Township. It is part of the Lower Rideau sub-watershed and drains approximately 68 square kilometres of land. It flows through a range of land cover including woodland, wetland and agricultural land. It is known for its warm/cool water baitfish and recreational fishery and supports 27 fish species recorded.



At this location there is a significant wetland, that aids in retaining flood waters in the spring.

Stop #17: The Famous Rapids

Several hundred meters west of here, towards the Burritt's Rapids dam, are the famed rapids and fast flowing water that was key to the development of the village.

The Burritts' saw the potential of the waterpower in the area when they landed here in 1793. In this area, also watch for the larger species of birds that inhabit this "quieter side" of Burritt's Rapids, e.g. blue herons, swans, turkey vultures.

Congratulations, you have reached the end of the tour!

Head back down river and re-portage at the lock station to get back to the boat launch where this tour began.



Written and created by the Burritt's Rapids Community Association. Brought to you in collaboration with the Municipality of North Grenville.



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HISTORIC CANAL AND RIDEAU RIVER TOUR

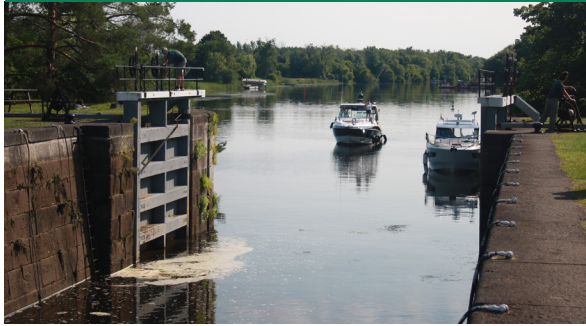
Burritt's Rapids



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Welcome to the Historic Canal and Rideau River Tour

HISTORIC CANAL AND RIDEAU RIVER TOUR – *Burritt's Rapids*



This 1.5 to 2 hour tour is intended to be taken by watercraft and involves mostly light work if paddling, plus some portaging. In places, there is some challenging paddling if you choose it, which is highlighted in the tour text. Because of the presence of the Parks Canada dam, the island cannot be circumnavigated on water so parts of the tour will involve backtracking the same stretch of water on both the canal side and the river side. Take advantage and see both shores of the canal and river sides! Please be sure to follow all safety instructions, particularly around the dam and at the lock station. Also, please be careful to not land on private property.

Stops 1a & 1b are on foot and intended to give a perspective view on the 2km long island that you will be boating.

Optional Stop #1a (on foot): Rideau River from Modern Bridge

The Rideau River, or Pasapkedijinawong in Ojibwe, is a 146 km river that flows north from Upper Rideau Lake and empties into the Ottawa River at the Rideau Falls in Ottawa, Ontario. The Rideau Canal diverts from the river in places that were not navigable in the past, with the result that the entire river system from Ottawa to Kingston became navigable. This system includes the canal at Burritt's Rapids which you will experience later on this tour.

Take a look on both the east and west sides of the Burritt's Rapids modern bridge.

Optional Stop #1b (on foot): Rideau Canal from Swing Bridge

The Rideau Canal, a World Heritage Site since June 27, 2007, is a 202 kilometre long canal that links the Ottawa River at Ottawa by the Cataraqui River and Lake Ontario at Kingston. Beginning in Ottawa, its 46 locks raise boats from the Ottawa River 83 metres upstream along the Rideau River to the Rideau Lakes west of Burritt's Rapids.

From there, the elevation drops 50 metres downstream along the Cataraqui River to Kingston. The Burritt's Rapids lock station is number 17 of 46. Take a look on both the east and west sides of Burritt's Rapids Swing Bridge.

Stop #2: Burritt's Rapids Boat Launch

It is recommended to start the tour on the canal side, on the south side of the village of Burritt's Rapids, at the convenient boat launch which is maintained by Parks Canada and typically contains adequate parking even on busy days. There are other tours covering the village, which is historic in its own right, having been founded in 1793 by Stephen Burritt.



Stop #3: Historic Swing Bridge

Head west, upstream, and approach the swing bridge. The excavation of the canal channel in the 1820s made it necessary to build a bridge to accommodate both villagers and boats.

Several bridges have been built here since 1826. The present steel truss swing bridge was installed in 1897 (and renovated in 2018) and allows taller boats to pass.

The bridge is opened by turning a crank in the pivot at the north end of the bridge. Counterweights and a set of roller wheels mounted on a circular track underneath allow the bridge to be swung open with little effort. It is operated by staff from Lock 17 and is a fixture in Burritt's Rapids life when the canal is open for traffic and is a unique experience to watch. Check out the original stonework and the structure of the bridge. In a small craft you can easily pass under.

Stop #4: Local Birds

Take a listen. Can you hear the birds chirping, calling and singing?

On a late spring or early summer's day you can expect to hear and see many different species. Aside from common variations of species such as robins, sparrows, warblers, grackles, waxwings, geese and doves, you may also encounter Northern Cardinals, Baltimore Orioles, Eastern Wood-Pewees, American Redstarts, Eastern Kingbirds, Belted Kingfishers, Brown Thrashers, and even American Bald Eagles. Hawks, osprey, herons, and loons can be spotted when quietly boating first thing in the morning.

Stop #5: Buoy oh Buoy: Red, Green and Black Boat Markers

Heading west, you will begin to encounter the first of a series of boat markers or buoys. Boaters often need navigational help through the canal with red and green buoys which mark the channel all the way from Ottawa to Kingston. Each buoy is numbered and so identified on the navigation charts.

Colours can sometimes be hard to identify so to help, red buoys are pointed and green buoys are square. The resulting difference in silhouette helps identify hazards on the right of red buoys and on the left sides of the green buoys, so it is important to keep between the red and green buoys. Black buoys are also often used to indicate the left side of a channel and are often paired with a red buoy.

Stop #6: Wetlands

Further west, you will start to see wetlands, where red-winged blackbirds are easiest to spot perched on the rushes. Wetlands are important as they provide habitat for many plants and animals. During periods of high water levels, wetlands act like giant sponges, holding water and helping to prevent flooding. They also filter out pollutants and sediments from the water.



Stop #7: Western Tip of Island

Notice how the land rises as you edge closer to the island's tip. This ascent was a result of the addition of soil from the digging of the canal which began in this area and continued a couple of kilometers downstream to the lock station, which you will see later on.

Looking past the tip you will see the river start to bend south and west. For further boating adventures in that direction, you are on your own. If you have time, and wish to explore some more wetland area, you are encouraged to explore the bay to the northwest of the western tip. If not, head around the tip of the island and head eastward on to the river side of the island.

Stop #8: Burritt's Rapids Dam

Follow the roaring noise as you head towards the floating buoys protecting the dam, but not beyond. Most of the water for the Rideau Canal comes from a number of reservoir lakes. The flow of water from these lakes and along the canal is controlled by a series of waste weirs and dams such as the one you can see.



Like Colonel By in the late 1820s, Parks Canada uses dams such as this one to raise or lower water levels. Water levels are regulated to meet a wide variety of needs, from navigation and natural habitat conservation, to hydro-electric and municipal water supplies. In summer when there is less water flow and it is desired to have the canal high, specially shaped logs are added to raise water levels and in spring when there is more water flowing, logs are removed to maximize water flow.

Head back from this area to the canal side retracing your journey back around the western island tip to the canal side again, but this time heading eastward.

Stop #9: Tree Species

On your return down the canal, take note of the various tree species that populate the shore line from pines, maples, spruce and beech. Imagine their challenge to survive on the edge of the canal with the rising and falling of the water level on a regular basis. Imagine their competition with other vegetation for resources, and try to spot where they provide shelter for birds and a playground for squirrels and chipmunks. Walking the Tip-To-Tip Trail will provide a closer view of life on land beside the canal.

Stop #10: Butterfly Way Station to Lily Pads



As you pass back under the swing bridge, take note on the north side of the butterfly way station, the former lock master's house and other properties along side the canal.

In summer, a large area of lily pads emerges, which bear a stunning volume of lotus flowers. If you are still in a tree viewing mode, you'll be able to note the increasing frequency of cedars, lilacs, and the rare Eastern Butternut along the coast.