

Daytrip: Blueberries and beloved heritage buildings near Cumberland



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The Cumberland Farmers Market features about 30 vendors most Saturday mornings. *JANICE KENNEDY*

Where, near Ottawa, can you satisfy the food lover,

the history buff and the nature lover? **Janice Kennedy** finds it all in Cumberland — and a ferry to a flea market to boot.

Q What did you do?

A I spent a relaxing summer day communing with my Inner Foodie, my Inner History Buff and my Inner Nature Lover.

Q Sounds like quite the feat. How and where did you pull that off?

A It was simple, really. I headed out to Cumberland, the tiny village on the Ottawa River just east of Orléans that has been settled for more than 200 years. It boasts some beautiful homes overlooking the sweep of the river, and the village itself is quiet, green and almost bucolic. Both the village and the pleasant riverside drive out there along the 174 did wonders for my Inner Nature Lover. Strangely, though, many people in Ottawa know Cumberland only as one end of a popular ferry route linking Ontario and Quebec.

Q And yet you weren't there for the ferry, were you?

A No, although you could certainly add to a Cumberland daytrip by tacking on a pleasant river crossing — especially if you're a fan of flea markets. More about that later. I actually went out for two main reasons: to visit one of the area's lovingly assembled outdoor history museums, and to stock up on fresh, local food.

Q First things first. What's this about food?

A The Cumberland Farmers' Market. It's on every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., mid-June to mid-October, and it features farmers and other food producers, as well as artisans selling everything from leather goods to afghans to painted wine glasses. The organizers say they have a membership of about 60 vendors, with 30 or so on site each week. You can buy fresh-picked produce, bacon and sausages, lamb, honey, cheeses, chocolates, baked goods, even prepared Indian or Sri Lankan dishes. And if you're interested in wood furniture, nature photography,

jewelry or knitted goods, you'll find those there, too.

Q So what did you end up with?

A Mmm. The freshest of the fresh. I bought some tomatoes that were so umami-laden they seemed like an entirely different species from their supermarket counterparts. They formed the heart of that evening's simple, perfect salad. I also loaded up on blueberries picked that morning, young carrots exploding with flavour, local maple syrup, corn — lots of wonderful things. Oh, and some dynamite Russian Red garlic. I do love my garlic.

Q And yet you didn't get any lamb chops?

A I know! My mistake. It was a hot day, and, since I wasn't going right home, I didn't want to leave any perishables in the car. Next time, I'm bringing an ice pack and the insulated, zippered bag I have for exactly such shopping expeditions. And next time, besides the fresh lamb, I'll be bringing home the bacon.

Q Of course. But what if you don't want to wait till you get home? Is there any place on site to eat?

A Yes, if you don't mind modest and if ambiance is not too important to you. In the indoor portion of the market, there's a small café serving simple food. As well, on the Saturday I was there, one of the vendors inside was dishing out prepared Indian food to enthusiastic customers. And of course, you can always bring along a picnic lunch — and maybe supplement it with some of the produce and goodies found at the market — to eat outdoors at one of the nearby tables.

Q OK, I think it's time to get to your Inner History Buff.

A Absolutely, and my IHB was well served. When you leave the market and get back on the village's main road, which is Old Montreal Road, a short drive east takes you to the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. It's a lovely place, an outdoor collection of carefully restored buildings you can explore — homes, church, school, farm buildings and so on — that tell the

tale of settlement and pioneer determination in this part of the province. I loved it for the way it stays true to its motto, “Honour Your Ancestor.” But kids seem to have fun there, too. There’s a kind of village green on which they can play games, and then there are the farm animals — the piglet, horse and one particularly lovable Highland steer they’ve named Fergie, a shaggy bull who loves eating feed out of youngsters’ hands.

Q Sounds like a fine way to spend a Saturday. But what’s this about ferries and flea markets?

A There is direct and easy access from Cumberland to the gigantic Encan Larose in Masson-Angers, just across the river. After the five-minute river crossing (the ferry is at the bottom of Cameron Street, which crosses both Old Montreal Road and the 174), it’s an easy drive up to 110 Georges in Masson. The flea market is open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Q And where are the other spots?

A You can get to Cumberland by taking either the 174 or Old Montreal Road, which is what St-Joseph in Orléans becomes. The farmers’ market is at 1115 Dunning Rd., just up from Old Montreal Road. And the Heritage Museum is at 2940 Old Montreal Rd., about five minutes beyond Dunning. All told, those are the addresses to a lovely, leisurely — and tasty — getaway.

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