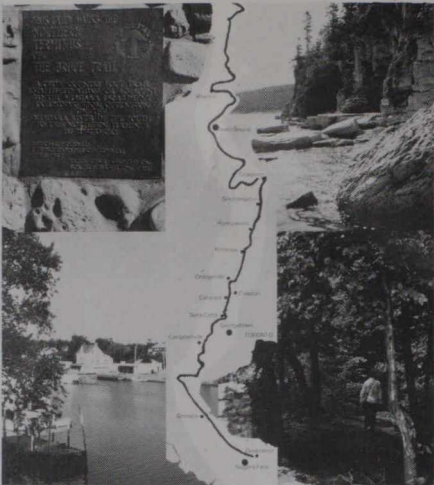


Cover illustration shows a diagrammatic map of the Bruce Trail, with some points of scenic interest.

## Canada Today



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# Hiking along the Bruce Trail

By Robert Turnbull

For British people visiting the United States, the most extraordinary aspect of American life is an apparently universal dislike of going anywhere on foot. An English visitor who broke this tradition against all advice was astonished to find himself being introduced at a party in the following terms: "This is Mr. So-and-so: he WENT FOR A WALK!" Had he visited Canada, his surprise might have leant over in the other direction on discovering that Canadians have mapped and marked out a country walk not less than 430 miles long: leading from just north of Niagara Falls round the edge of Lake Ontario and northwards across country near Toronto until it emerges once more at the edge of Georgian Bay, ending north of Provincial Park at Tobermory. To take on the complete Bruce Trail would require the kind of toughness that sends people hiking from John O'Groats to Land's End; but for the tourist eager to experience some of this beautiful country on foot, there's no problem about parking the car and picking up the trail at strategic points. How to set about this is explained by Robert Turnbull, in an article reprinted from *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, with permission.

For mustard-keen walkers well shod and stout of wind and limb, the Bruce Trail is 430 miles of up-hill-down-dale energetic pleasure amid some of the finest scenery in rural Ontario. Those of more sedentary bent, however, quickly discover this footpath is no boardwalk stroll, following closely as it does the rugged Niagara Escarpment on its geological journey northward to Georgian Bay. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for relatively easy walks which almost anyone can essay. The thing is to find those easier sections.

The Bruce Trail starts beside Brock's Monument at Queenston, on the Niagara River, and ends at Tobermory at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. The path runs beside the edge of precipices, dives into silent woods, skirts flower-spangled meadows, noses in and out of hidden glens with sparkling streams, and marches beside the majestic shoreline of Georgian Bay, where the going is tough even for experienced walkers.

Every mile — well, almost — brings quiet pleasure of some sort, be it only the sight of rich pastures gold-tinged under the late afternoon sun, or the scarlet flash of a tanager's passing, or gentle columbine nodding in a rock crevice. So many things like these; treasures all.

And since walking is deemed to be one

of the best exercises (Thomas Jefferson said so in 1786), well, that's another good reason to take to the Bruce Trail. First, though, the easier paths; later the more strenuous ones when lungs and legs are up to them.

Almost any couple or family (no toddlers, though) can start exploring the Bruce by making excursions by car of half-a-day, a full day, or several days, to access points along the trail, sampling a few miles here, other miles there. Length of time spent, distances covered, can be tailored to suit the occasion, or physical capacity.

Because the Bruce Trail touches or skirts several conservation areas and provincial parks, these offer ideal bases for a few hours of parking, picnicking and trail exploring; or for overnight camping. Often as not the parks provide a bonus in the form of easy-on-the-feet nature trails which link with the rougher Bruce.

### Follow the blazes

It also is easier to find the white-paint blazes of the Bruce Trail from the parks than during the alternative, frequently necessary, of slowly cruising concession roads trying to spy the daubs on trees, hydro poles or boulders.

Essential to exploration is a copy of the Bruce Trail Guide Book. Without it you stand to waste time and temper in fruitless search. The guide is available from the Bruce Trail Association, 33 Hardale Cres., Hamilton, Ontario, and costs non-members \$6.

Now for a look at some of the easier portions of the trail. An arbitrary selection, it is true, but at least an introduction to trail-walking.

**Niagara Region:** Every motorist zipping along the Queen Elizabeth Way sees it: few know its name, or care: even fewer give thought to visiting it. Yet there it looms, tree-crowned and impressive above the superhighway — Grimsby Point Bluff. A good initial test of trail and legs which can be worked into as short as a half-day outing from, say, Toronto.

Starting point is the town of Grimsby. Let's say you come in on No. 8 Highway (slower, but less frantic than the QEW). At the traffic lights just beyond the Forty Mile Creek bridge turn right and drive to the top of the escarpment. Up there, at the first intersecting concession road, turn