

Vacationland Canada becomes

There is no other place in the world like Canada. It is a country of wide-open spaces, majestic mountains and tranquil lakes. But it is also a country of modern cities, sophisticated nightlife and a unique culture.

What's more, it is readily accessible from the UK.

This year, fares between the UK and Canada have been cut by as much as 50 per cent – the result of a new UK-Canada air agreement. Ground costs, too have been substantially reduced – at least for visitors from Britain – because of the recent strength of sterling relative to the Canadian dollar.

In 1987, about half a million Britons visited Canada – an increase of 16 per cent over 1986 (which, in turn, saw an increase of 27 per cent over 1985.) In 1988, the number is certain to increase again. If you have ever thought about a visit to Canada, then this could be the year to make it happen.

Flights to Canada from regional airports

One inconvenience that tends to put pleasure seekers off long-haul flights is the business of having to travel to London to catch a plane. As far as Canada is concerned, this problem has been overcome, since a number of Canadian carriers have extended their network to include several of Britain's regional airports.

Globespan, for instance, offers direct flights from Cardiff, Birmingham, Newcastle and Edinburgh as well as Gatwick, Manchester, Prestwick and Stansted, with connecting coach services from several Scottish cities and Bristol. Wardair has added Leeds/Bradford airport to its extensive list of departure points. And, Air Canada has expanded its range of charter flights to include Belfast in addition to its scheduled services from Manchester and Prestwick.

Of the 'gateway' airports into Canada, Toronto is by far the most popular. However, Air Canada can also fly you direct to Halifax, Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, while Globespan and Wardair offer direct flights to Ottawa as well as most of the provincial capitals.

Competition among the trans-Atlantic carriers means there are plenty of bargain fares to be had. This summer, it will be possible to travel by Globespan charter from Prestwick or Gatwick to Toronto for less than £200 return plus tax. Wardair's fares are around £250, while Air Canada's Maple Leaf fares which are bookable seven days in advance, start at £298. Nationair services from Gatwick to Hamilton are being marketed by Unijet Viking with introductory offers as low as £149 round trip.

Plenty of scope for the independent traveller

When you get to Canada, you will again be surprised to find how inexpensive it is to travel around, particularly if you make use of money-saving special offers. One of these is Air Canada's Flexipass, offering unlimited travel to and from 29 Canadian cities as well as seven in the United



States. Alternatively, if you want to see Canada from ground level, Via Rail's Canrail Pass gives you the freedom of the rail network for one, two, three or four weeks, while Greyhound's Ameripass gives you the run of its cross-country coach routes.

Prices vary according to the season and geographical area. But if you want to travel by rail across the country from Montreal to Vancouver, the current fare is around £120. Bear in mind, however, that the journey, without stops, takes 3½ days, and there is a supplementary charge for a sleeper.

Greyhound's prices are even lower. To travel from Toronto to Western Canada by coach costs just £50 single and £100 return.

You may prefer the freedom to seek out places that are off the beaten track, in which case car hire may be your best bet. Rates work out at between £100 and £200 for a week, depending on the model.

If you want to avoid the cost of hotel accommodation, you could hire a mobile home (or motor home) for which there are plenty of well-equipped sites. You would need to budget for a minimum of £250 per week in the high season, to cover basic rental and mileage.

However, finding accommodation in Canada, could not be simpler – especially since a number of hotel chains (including Best Western, Sandman,

