

Waterloo: A Land of Contrasts

In a region of Canada that defies simple characterization, Waterloo's rich cultural, technological and social offerings—from Old Order Mennonites to Silicon Valley North—provide a look into the past and future.



Waterloo, un lugar de contrastes

En una región que desafía la simple caracterización, la riqueza cultural, tecnológica y social de Waterloo —desde la Orden Menonita hasta Silicon Valley North— ofrece un vistazo al pasado y al futuro desde su espléndido presente.

By | Por Jennifer Merrick



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“Let me change into a clean apron. The quilts are like my babies,” says Alice, an Old Order Mennonite who sells hand-stitched quilts from her country home near St. Jacobs, Ontario. Mennonites, much like the Amish, follow a Christian faith that resists technology in favor of traditional community values.

Alice returns and leads us through a modest kitchen to a small back room with a bed in the middle. On it lies one of her babies, an intricately patterned, beautifully designed work of art. After we admire it, Alice pulls it back to reveal another quilt, just as detailed, but brighter, with orange, coppers and the colors of fall dancing on the fabric.

“There’s about 30 under here,” she says and laughs. Each quilt takes her about six weeks to make during her “spare time,” which amounts to approximately eight hours a day. The \$1,200 price tag suddenly seems a bargain.

In the countryside surrounding Waterloo, in southwestern Ontario, approximately 4,000 Old Order Mennonites make their home. A few sell furniture, some sell eggs and many offer seasonal produce from their farms. Flowers are often left by the roadside with a container beside them and people are trusted to pay. That’s only one of the vestiges of a different time that combine with some very futuristic characteristics to make Waterloo a paradox unto itself.

To learn more about the reserved, industrious

“Voy a ponerme un delantal limpio. Estas colchas son mis bebés”, dice Alice, miembro de la comunidad Old Order Mennonite, que vende colchas cosidas a mano en su casa, cerca de St. Jacobs, Ontario. Los menonitas, muy parecidos a los amish, siguen una fe cristiana que rechaza la tecnología en favor de valores tradicionales comunitarios.

Alice regresa y nos lleva a través de su modesta cocina hacia una pequeña habitación en la parte trasera que tiene una cama en medio. Sobre ella descansa uno de sus “bebés”, una obra de arte en retazos de tela. Después de admirarla, Alice la guarda y saca otra, con el mismo nivel de detalle pero con colores más brillantes: naranja, cobre y todos los colores del otoño bailando sobre la tela.

“Aquí abajo hay más de 30”, dice, y se echa a reír. Para hacerlas, a cada una le dedica seis semanas de su “tiempo libre”, es decir, casi ocho horas al día. De repente, los \$1.200 de la etiqueta parecen una ganga.

En los campos que rodean Waterloo, al sudoeste de Ontario, viven unos 4.000 miembros de la antigua orden de los menonitas. Algunos venden muebles, otros venden huevos y muchos venden los productos de temporada que cultivan en sus granjas. Las flores las dejan dentro de un cubo, a un lado de la carretera, confiando que la gente pagará por ellas. Ese es apenas uno de los vestigios de un tiempo diferente, que se combina con características altamente futurísticas para convertir a Waterloo en una paradoja en sí misma.

Si se quiere saber más sobre esta gente reservada y trabajadora a las que llaman *Die Stillen im Lande* (los silenciosos de la tierra) hay que ver la exposición *The Mennonite Story* en el centro de visitantes de St. Jacobs Village, donde mediante un video y una



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Where to Stay

You can find most major hotel chains, including Best Western, within walking distance of the St. Jacobs Market. Or for a homier experience, choose from one of the region’s many bed-and-breakfasts.

Queen’s Landing Guest House, 187 Queen Street North, Kitchener. This Art Deco property has reasonable rates and charming hosts, and is within walking distance of downtown. Be sure to request Wilma’s delicious oatmeal pancakes for breakfast. queenslandingguesthouse.com

Benjamin’s Restaurant & Inn, 1430 King Street, St. Jacobs. Originally built in 1852, this historic property is situated in the heart of the Village of St. Jacobs. Breakfast is served on an old-fashioned veranda overlooking the main street. stjacobs.com/country-inns

Langdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa, 1 Langdon Drive, Cambridge.



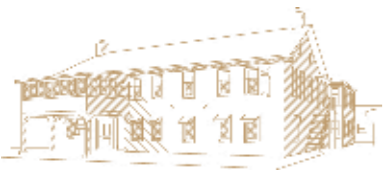
This historic country house offers 52 plush suites and a luxurious spa on 200 acres of woodland for a true getaway experience. The biggest draw is undoubtedly the food. The five-diamond restaurant is internationally recognized as among the best in the world. langdonhall.ca

🏠 Dónde alojarse

Se pueden encontrar las principales cadenas de hoteles, entre ellas un Best Western a pocos pasos de St. Jacobs Market. Para una experiencia con más sabor de hogar, escoja cualquiera de los numerosos *bed and breakfast* de la región.

Queen's Landing Guest House, 187 Queen Street North, Kitchener. Esta casona estilo art deco tiene precios razonables, encantadores anfitriones y está a corta distancia del centro. No olvide pedirle a Wilma sus deliciosos panqueques de avena para el desayuno. queenslandingguesthouse.com

Benjamin's Restaurant & Inn
1430 King Street, St. Jacobs.



Construida en 1852, esta histórica propiedad se encuentra en pleno corazón de Village of St. Jacobs. El desayuno se sirve en una agradable terraza con vista a la calle principal. stjacobs.com/country-inns

Langdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa, 1 Langdon Drive, Cambridge. Esta histórica mansión campestre situada en un terreno de 81 hectáreas de bosques tiene 52 fabulosas suites y un lujoso spa para darse una verdadera escapada natural. Su atracción principal es la comida: su restaurante de cinco diamantes está catalogado entre los mejores del mundo. langdonhall.ca



people described as *Die Stillen im Lande* (the quiet in the land), be sure to check out *The Mennonite Story* exhibition at the Visitor's Center in St. Jacobs Village. Video and multimedia displays provide an overview of their history, faith and culture. Staff can answer any questions, suggest farms to visit if you're looking to buy quilts, furniture or fresh produce, or recommend a route for a country drive.

For a fascinating glimpse into Mennonite life, stop in at Wallenstein General Store, "Where Friendly Neighbours Meet," according to the sign out front. Built in 1860, the shelves are crammed with seeds, bulk food, tools, black shoes and boots, select books for children (all focused on nature and farming), hairpins, bonnets, and even farm fences.

The St. Jacobs Market, open Thursdays and Saturdays, is one of the region's most-loved attractions and another way to see the Old Order Mennonites. They arrive in their buggies to sell farm produce, maple syrup, honey, baking, crafts and preserves. Their presence is one part of the kaleidoscope of sights, sounds and tastes that make this

exposición multimedia se aprende sobre su historia, su fe y su cultura. Los empleados contestan cualquier pregunta, recomiendan granjas a visitar si se quiere comprar colchas de retazos, muebles o productos frescos o rutas para conducir por el campo.

Para echar un vistazo a la singular vida menonita hay que ir a Wallenstein General Store, "Donde se reúnen los vecinos amistosos", según dice un rótulo en la entrada. Construida en 1860, los anaqueles de la tienda están repletos de semillas, comida a granel, herramientas, zapatos y botas negros, libros para niños (todos sobre naturaleza y agricultura), horquillas para el pelo, sombreros y hasta verjas.

El St. Jacobs Market, que abre jueves y sábado, es una de las atracciones favoritas de la región y otra manera de ver a los menonitas, que llegan con sus carretas a vender productos agrícolas, sirope de arce, miel, pastillitos, artesanías y conservas. Su presencia es parte del caleidoscopio de imágenes, sonidos y sabores que hacen tan popular este mercado.



© Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation / Clockwise from bottom left: R. Moreno (2), Pierre

market so popular. Locals and tourists sample and bargain their way through a maze of more than 500-plus vendors indoors and out. With a flea market, kiddie rides, a livestock auction, buskers and horse-drawn trolley tours, it feels like more of an outing than a simple shopping trip.

Rural charm and all of its old-fashioned attractions draw many visitors, but the region of Waterloo has another side that has garnered worldwide attention. Nicknamed Silicon Valley North, Waterloo is known for high-tech innovation. Home to numerous technology firms, including Research in Motion, the makers of the BlackBerry, and two universities, it has been the birthplace of a number of inventions, theoretical concepts and research breakthroughs.

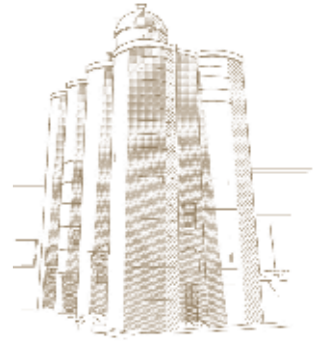
To get a sense of this energy, visit uptown Waterloo, where you'll see three impressive modern structures whose original designs have all won the Governor General's Medal in Architecture. These shining stars are: The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery; the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, an independent research center—designed by Saucier + Perrotte Architects—



Residentes y visitantes recorren este laberinto de más de 500 puestos, dentro y fuera del edificio. Además, con el mercado de pulgas, las atracciones infantiles, las subastas de ganado, los músicos callejeros y los paseos en carreta, más bien parece una salida a pasear que para ir a comprar.

El encanto rural y las atracciones antiguas es lo que sin dudas atrae más visitantes, pero la región de Waterloo tiene otra cara que capta la atención mundial. Llamada Silicon Valley North, Waterloo es famosa por su desarrollo en tecnología e innovación. Sede de numerosas empresas tecnológicas, entre ellas Research in Motion, fabricantes de los BlackBerry, y de dos universidades, ha sido la cuna de un número fenomenalmente alto de inventos, conceptos teóricos y hallazgos investigativos.

Para sentir esa energía hay que visitar uptown Waterloo, donde verá una impresionante cantidad de estructuras modernas, cuyos diseños originales han sido todos galardonados con el Governor



Arts & Crafts at St. Jacobs

The Village of St. Jacobs is an excellent shopping destination for quality artisan goods and other handcrafted items you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere else, like a handmade corn broom, for instance. Hamel Brooms has been operating since 1908, and visitors can watch as owner John Davenport bundles up the dried corn straw material, coaxes it into a recognizable shape on 100-plus-year-old equipment before he passes it on to his partner, who then presses and sews it into a cleaning instrument so perfect it balances on its bristles with no support.

More one-of-a-kind shops and studios can be found at The Mill, a landmark that was once the village's flour mill. A weaver, a potter and a quilter are among the artists that create and sell in the heritage space. Also in the silos and railroad cars that make up The Mill are exhibitions relating to the local history of the region, including the Maple Syrup Museum, Modern Train Exhibit, Home Hardware's Historic Exhibit and Electricity Exhibit.



Artesanías en St. Jacobs

Village of St. Jacobs es un excelente lugar para comprar objetos artesanales y mercancías hechas a mano, como por ejemplo una escoba. Hamel Brooms ha estado funcionando desde 1908, y los visitantes pueden observar a su propietario, John Davenport, dándole forma a espigas de maíz seco en una máquina que tiene más de 100 años antes de pasársela a su socio, que luego la prensa, la cose y la convierte en un instrumento de limpieza perfectamente equilibrado y sin soporte alguno.

En The Mill, que antiguamente fuera el molino de harina del pueblo, también se pueden encontrar peculiares comercios y talleres de tejedores, alfareros y otros artistas. En los antiguos silos y vagones de The Mill hay exposiciones relativas a la historia de la región, entre ellas el Maple Syrup Museum (sirope de arce), Modern Train Exhibition (ferrocarriles), Home Hardware's Historic Exhibit (herramientas) y Electricity Exhibit (electricidad).



© Reimar 8 / Alamy (2)

of which renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking is chair; and the Centre for International Governance Innovation, a non-partisan think tank dedicated to research and analysis of global policies.

On the surface, the world that exists within and around these new institutions couldn't be more different than the world of the Old Order Mennonites, who live just 10 minutes away. But exhibits at the impressive Waterloo Region Museum make a convincing case that the worlds aren't as disparate as one might imagine. Displays highlight the immigrants, past and present, who came to the region and their remarkable contributions. It suggests that the same spirit of non-conformity, acceptance of differences and co-operation that allowed the Mennonites to thrive is behind the high-tech boom.

→ How To Get There

American Airlines serves the Kitchener/Waterloo area with daily service from Chicago. Visit aa.com.

Cómo llegar

American Airlines ofrece vuelos diarios a la región de Kitchener/Waterloo desde Chicago. Consulta aa.com para más detalles.

General's Medal in Architecture. Allí están The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, el Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics (un centro de investigaciones independiente diseñado por Saucier + Perrotte Architectes, cuya junta directiva preside el renombrado físico teórico Stephen Hawking) y Center for International Governance Innovation, un think-tank independiente dedicado a la investigación y análisis de políticas globales.

En la superficie, el mundo que existe dentro y alrededor de estas instituciones no podría ser más diferente a la vida de los menonitas, que viven a 10 minutos de allí. Pero las impresionantes exposiciones del Waterloo Region Museum demuestran que ambos no son tan dispares como podría imaginarse. En ellas se destaca sobre todo a los inmigrantes, pasados y presentes, que vinieron a esta región y su magnífica contribución, y sugieren que el mismo espíritu inconformista, tolerante y cooperativo que hizo prosperar a los menonitas es el que alimenta el auge de la alta tecnología.

Family Fun in the REGION OF WATERLOO



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Whines of "I'm bored" meet their Waterloo in this region full of stellar attractions and grand outdoor activities.

By Jennifer Merrick

"Trespassers May be Eaten" may not be the friendliest of welcome signs, but that hasn't deterred visitors from flocking to the African Lion Safari since it opened in 1968. This 750-acre park is home to over 1,000 birds and animals, many of which are endangered or threatened. Visitors drive through reserves in their own vehicles or on a tour bus to view wildlife in this unusual zoo. On the five-mile trail, you'll see giraffes, zebras, Watusi cattle, llamas, rhinos, bison, lemurs, monkeys, elephants and the big cats—cheetahs and lions. The drive takes an average of an hour to go through, but animal shows, boat and train rides, a jungle playground and the popular Misumu Bay water park keep families entertained all day.

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HENRY V

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Photo of Aaron Krohn by Andrew Eccles.

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The Wings of Paradise Butterfly Conservatory is another favored animal attraction for families. Between 2,000-3,000 free-flying butterflies flit among the lush vegetation and waterfall.

Bingemans Big Splash Water Park has thrills galore with their super water slides and wave pools. Their campground, located next to the park, puts vacationing families in the center of fun with a golf course and their indoor three-story playground also nearby.

Tubing on the Grand River is an activity that has been delighting kids, both big and small, for generations. Rent a tube at the Elora Gorge Conservation Area and ride down the designated heritage river that has the largest watershed in Southern Ontario. Canoeing, kayaking and fly-fishing are other popular ways to enjoy The Grand.

A different type of tubing—similar to the winter version, only without the snow—is offered at the 165-acre Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort, along with ziplining, rope courses, climbing walls and an extensive trail system.

Inclement weather won't impede the fun with top-notch indoor attractions. The Waterloo Region Museum, THEMUSEUM and Castle Kilbride all have interactive kids programs that will bring the past to life.

The region also hosts over 500 annual events, including a slew of festivals to enjoy with your family. In addition to the internationally renowned Stratford Shakespeare Festival and Oktoberfest, North America's largest, there's the TD Kitchener Blues Festival, Uptown Waterloo Jazz Festival, Mill Race Folk Festival and the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games.

With so many options, battling boredom won't be a worry on a vacation to the Waterloo Region.