



## 9. WINTER IN THE CAPITAL

### Rideau Canal Skateway

Perhaps the most famous winter activity to do in Ottawa is skate on the Rideau Canal. Each winter, the NCC transforms the historic Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site into the world's largest skating rink.

### History of the Skateway

The Rideau Canal Skateway was first opened during the 1970-1971 season. The idea to turn the Rideau Canal into a skateway came from the newly appointed National Capital Commission (NCC) chair Doug Fullerton. In January 1971, a team of NCC employees, armed with brooms and shovels, turned his idea into a reality. They cleared a small section of ice between the Mackenzie King and Laurier bridges near the National Arts Centre.

Today, the Rideau Canal Skateway winds over 7.8 km through the heart of the capital and is a key site for Winterlude celebrations in February.



### Other winter activities in the capital (source)

- **Hiking and walking:** Walking is one of the most accessible winter activities. It's free and doesn't require any special equipment.
- **Cross-country skiing:** Gatineau Park has one of the largest networks of cross-country ski trails in North America. The National Capital Region also offers a growing network of urban winter trails throughout its riverfront parks and more than 150 kilometres of natural trails in the Greenbelt.
- **Snowshoeing:** Snowshoeing is a sport that's easy to learn and requires minimal equipment. Snowshoeing is best after an abundant snowfall. There is nothing as revitalizing as the stillness and hushed silence of a snowy forest.
- **Snowbiking:** With their oversized tires, winter bikes, commonly known as "fat bikes," are a bit like mountain bikes with snowshoes. This increasingly popular sport is practised on hard-packed trails that have been compacted by people on snowshoes.
- **Winterlude:** Held in Ottawa each February on many NCC-sites, this winter festival is a fun way to celebrate Canada's culture and enjoy some winter festivities throughout the National Capital Region. (source)