

# explore EDMONTON

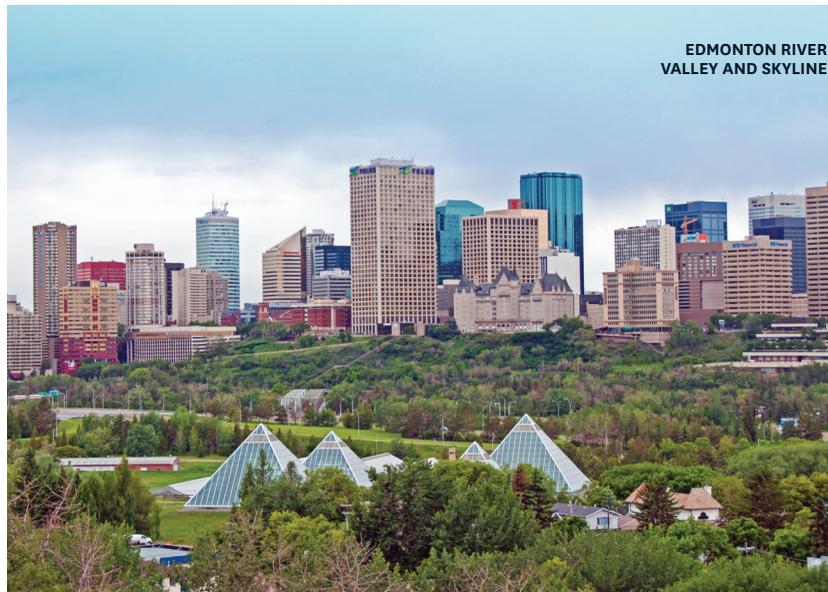
It's the northernmost Canadian city, with a population of just under one million. By night, you'll find some of the best stargazing and aurora viewing in the country, and by day, sunshine – the city boasts 325 days of sunshine each year. More than 100 languages are spoken in the vibrant provincial capital of Alberta, with French, Tagalog, Chinese and Punjabi being the most prevalent after English.

by JODY ROBBINS



## BEST GREEN SPACE

Bison were brought back from the brink of extinction at Elk Island National Park, just outside the city. Here, you'll find one of the highest densities of hoofed mammals in the world, with bison, elk, moose and deer roaming free. Cooler months are ideal for wildlife safaris, especially when striking out on foot via snowshoes or cross-country skis.



Never seen the northern lights dance? This dark sky preserve is one of the best in Canada for aurora borealis viewing.



## BEST HOTEL

Perched over the North Saskatchewan River, you'll feel like a princess when bedding down at Fairmont Hotel Macdonald. Not only does the historic downtown property look like a castle, but you'll also be treated like royalty. The newly renovated fitness centre is kitted out with all the exercise equipment you could ask for, but way more fun is burning calories with Smudge, the Canine Ambassador. Take this well-trained lab out for a brisk stroll through the river valley and you'll have earned your royal tea.



## BEST TREAT

Modelled after a Parisian patisserie, the atmosphere at Duchess Bake Shop is elegant yet welcoming, with mismatched antique tables and pale golden sunlight streaming in from floor-to-ceiling windows. You'll swoon over classic French pastries, but stay for a light lunch of quiche or chicken liver pâté smeared on

housemade crackers. When it comes to dessert, there are no bad choices – only regrets if you don't snag a few macarons to go.



## BEST SHOPPING

The heart of Old Strathcona, Whyte Avenue has been a hub of creativity for decades. Housed inside quaint period buildings, the shops are situated between a myriad of cafés, theatres and clubs. The edit at Bamboo Ballroom is spot-on, with everything from clothing and jewellery to vintage glassware and furniture made by local artisans. Shop the globe at local favourites like Noul and Avenue Clothing.



## BEST COCKTAIL

Is mid-century modern Mexicana thing? It is at Rostizado, a funky downtown hot spot where DJs spin old-school vinyl and the dishes are inspired by street food. There are many innovative cocktails worthy of sipping, but you'd be remiss without sampling El Emperador. Laced with basil, vanilla and Manzanilla tea syrup, it's one of those tequila tipples you won't soon forget – unless you throw back several of them, of course. *bt*

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