

Research shows that when visiting museums, most visitors expect an experience that can be described as “easiness and fun.” However, there are differences in what these visitors expect based on demographic segments. For example, females with a higher educational level usually expect a museum-visiting experience like most others of easiness and fun; whereas older and married participants with higher incomes often expect historical reminiscences.⁴

“Tourists love museums. In cities like Paris, London, Amsterdam, and New York, museums have long been major draws for out-of-town tourists. Many people will plan entire trips around a must-see exhibition; many more merely find museums a convenient place to spend a rainy afternoon. A single spectacular museum has transformed the Basque city of Bilbao from an industrial backwater into a premier tourist destination” (p. 6).⁵ The number of available museums throughout the world continues to grow. For example, in Europe, for every museum that existed in 1950, there are now more than four. The list of museum types is extensive, but the following list provides some examples of the more common options from which visitors can choose: general, art, history, science and technology, military, and natural history. Whether there are too few or too many museums is the subject of much debate. However, as societies grow and change, museums provide a valuable foundation for studying the past and thinking about what the future may hold.

You may have heard of or even visited Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, or Old Quebec and recognize that they are major historic attractions. These are just two examples of historic sites, yet there are many other places beckoning tourists and dependent on tourism revenues to continue preservation activities. Sites such as Historic Deerfield and others throughout the world are attracting record numbers of visitors, especially international tourists. More and more communities and countries are taking steps to preserve historic treasures and attract visitors through active restoration and interpretive programs. New life and uses are even being found for old industrial sites. “The owners of the Dürnberg salt mine in Hallein, Austria, which has been hosting visitors since at least 1700, decided in 1989 that salt was no longer profitable and closed down the mine. But it still earns money from 220,000 visitors each year, taking them on rides on the steep, long wooden slides that were built to transport miners” (p. 440).⁶ These museums and heritage sites are managed by professional **curators**, and interpretive programs are frequently conducted by **docents** who volunteer their time or work for very little pay.

Zoos and Aquariums

Large collections of animals, which were originally called *menageries*, have served as magnets for visitors since the times of the ancient Chinese, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Aztecs. Modern zoos (sometimes referred to as *zoological parks*) now come in many sizes and can be found throughout the world. The Philadelphia Zoo was the first (1859) location in the United States dedicated to the large-scale collection and display

FYI THE MUSEUMS OF OTTAWA, ONTARIO

- Canadian Museum of Civilization
- Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography
- Canadian Museum of Nature
- Canadian War Museum
- Central Experimental Farm
- Currency Museum
- Fort Henry
- Laurier House
- Mackenzie King Estate
- National Archives of Canada
- National Aviation Museum
- National Library of Canada
- National Museum of Science and Technology
- Royal Canadian Mint
- National Gallery of Canada
- Canada Agriculture Museum

Source: Based on Ottawa, Canada’s Capital Region. Destination Planners’ Guide, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012.