

*French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota*

# ARTICLE DU MOIS

# ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

July 2021



*The Frazier Family - Canada Day on Parliament Hill - Ottawa, Canada*

*Photo: Caroline Meilleur*



Mission Statement: To preserve and promote the French-American heritage in Minnesota through education and community events.

Website: [fahfminn.org](http://fahfminn.org). YouTube: FAHF Minn.



*July 1st Is*



# CANADA DAY



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Growing up in rural Quebec, I had never really celebrated Canada Day. In school, we had learned about our country's history and that on July 1, 1867, was the signing of the Constitution Act creating the Canadian confederation uniting the colonies of Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick under the British Empire. However, celebration wise, for the Quebecois(es), the emphasis was always more on the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day rather than our country's day.

That is why I had my first Canada Day experience when I was 24 years old. That year, I moved to the former city of Hull (now a section of the bigger city of Gatineau) in the Outaouais region for a new job. Hull is a border city located right on the eastern shore of the Ottawa River which naturally separates the province of Ontario with the nation's capital, Ottawa, on one side, from Quebec, on the other side. Little did I know that the 1st of July would mark an unforgettable experience for the young French-Canadian in me.

One of my good Montreal friend's father lived in Ottawa and each year they would come to celebrate Canada in the capital. They would plan and anticipate this day with great excitement. That year, knowing that I was a recent transplant in the nearby town, my friend Candace invited me to tag along for the festivities which I accepted with pleasure, more happy to spend a day with my friend than anything else.

If you ever go on the "Hill" on July 1st for Canada Day celebrations, you should wear comfortable shoes, your Canadian colors, a hat, and sunscreen; and bring a water bottle and lots of energy, because you will be in for a long day of festivities.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) puts together the biggest party in the country. The festivities are usually located at these three locations: Parliament Hill, Major's Hill

Park and also the Jacques-Cartier Park on the Gatineau side. The activities are free of charge for all visitors and goes from morning until late night with the fireworks show.

We wanted to experience the entire day, that is why we woke up early, ate a copious breakfast, put on our red and white colors and walked towards Parliament Hill just before 9 a.m. It is much better to walk than drive as most downtown streets are blocked for pedestrians and vendors. Because we were early, we were standing up front in the crowd. Nice! At 9 a.m. the ceremony started with a carillon concert from the Peace Tower with its 53 bells. The Peace Tower is the central part of the Parliament buildings. It is a campanile with a clock and measures 302 ft 6 in. An interesting fact is that the tower has about 370 gargoyles and the style is Victorian High Gothic. It is made out of sandstone found in nearby Nepean, and it has a copper roof.<sup>1</sup>

Then we saw the ceremony of the raising of the Canadian flag at 9:30 a.m. It was very



Peace Tower Under Construction in 1921

By Inconue - La Chambre des communes du Canada, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11029503>



Raising of the Canadian Flag  
Canada Day 2001  
Photo: Caroline Meilleur

emotional to sing our National anthem while looking at our flag going up the mast. This event was followed by the Changing of the Guard. This is a great ceremony that everyone can enjoy during the summer season in Ottawa, between late June and late August, and not just on Canada Day. Visit: <https://changing-guard.com/changing-guard-worldwide/ottawa-canada.html> for more information.

Afterwards, we saw a performance by a Canadian icon, the RCMP's Musical Ride. How wonderful and precise this event was. For those who are unfamiliar with the Musical Ride, the Royal

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia.



Musical Ride Ceremony on Parliament Hill - Canada Day - 2001

Photo: Caroline Meilleur

Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride has been a part of the entity since 1873 when it was called the North-West Mounted Police. The policemen performed their duties in the Canadian Prairies on horses and therefore, were very good riders. Early on, they started to do skilled tricks and exercises while on their horses. This all started in Fort Macleod, Alberta. Nowadays, the Musical Ride has 32 riders and they perform choreographed drills on their horses. A couple of years later, I had the pleasure of visiting the RCMP stables in Ottawa. Those stables are spotlessly clean and the horses are so well cared for. If you visit Ottawa in June, you can assist with the Canadian Sunset Ceremonies. You can learn more here: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/musical-ride>.

My Canada Day experience then continued with various music shows by Canadian artists from coast to coast at various parks. At noon, there was a fly-by of the Royal Canadian Air Force jets.

That day, I met only happy people from all over the world. Everybody was in a celebratory mood, talking to each other, helping everyone, etc. There were hundreds of volunteers helping the crowd. They sure made that day a success! We walked a bit everywhere in between the two cities (Ottawa and Hull), crossing the bridges on the Outaouais river. We ate poutine (of course!) and Queues de Castor. The famous poutine is a Quebecois dish made of French fries, cheese curds and gravy. The Queue de Castor or Beaver Tail is a Canadian pastry. I will share a recipe with you at the end of this article.

As if this wonderful day wasn't enough, the more than half an hour fireworks show at the end of the day was a WOW experience.



My friend Candace and me with two Mounties on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada.

Photo: Caroline Meilleur

When I remember this unforgettable day, it made me realize that I was a citizen of a great country where everyone has their place. I went to bed that night with my hand on my heart. I.AM.CANADIAN.

I would like to thank the Frazier family for letting me use their names and pictures.

July 2021

By Caroline Meilleur

A few years later, in 2011, I returned for the Canada Day celebration. However, this time it was to see with my own eyes the royal carriage with the newlyweds the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Princess Catherine, passing on Sussex Drive. See a picture below of the carriage with the United States Embassy in the background.



Duke and Duchess of Cambridge  
Photo: Caroline Meilleur



## *Article Extra - Recipe*

### *Beaver Tails*

If you ever skated on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa during wintertime, then you have tried a famous Canadian pastry: the Beaver Tail. It's a fried pastry dough made in a shape of the "beaver tail." You can put different delicious toppings on it, such as: nutty spread, jam, bananas or other fruits, honey, cinnamon and sugar, powdered sugar, whipped cream and so much more!

According to the online blog: [foodbloggersofcanada.com](http://foodbloggersofcanada.com), the idea is to cook this whole wheat dough in this iconic shape which was inspired by the Native people. Before Europeans arrived on the new continent, the Native people would cook the animal tail over a fire to be able to retrieve the meat inside. Pretty cool idea!

Here is a translation of the recipe by famous Soeur Angèle available on <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/mordu/recettes/230/queues-castor>.

#### **Ingredients - dough**

- ½ cup of warm water
- ¼ cup of sugar
- ½ teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons of yeast
- ⅓ cup of vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 3 cups of all-purpose flour

#### **Ingredients - garnish (classic)**

- ½ cup of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon

### **Preparation**

1. Combine sugar and cinnamon together. Pour the warm water into a big mixing bowl. Pour in the sugar mixture and yeast. Leave it aside for 5 minutes.
2. In another small bowl, mix together the oil, egg and salt. Pour this second mixture into the first one.
3. Add half the flour into the mixture and mix for 5 to 6 minutes. Add more flour until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl.
4. Drizzle a separate large bowl with oil and use a pastry brush to brush up the sides of it. Place the dough in it and let it rise twice its size in a warm place.
5. Hand roll the dough into a beaver tail shape and poke 3 little holes in the middle of the dough.
6. Fry the beaver tail in oil at 360 °F and fry on both sides until the tail is golden in color.
7. Lastly, roll the tail into the garnish preparation (sugar and cinnamon).
8. Eat it warm and enjoy!