

Lanark County Driving Tour

Tay Valley

Get Ready

DESCRIPTION

Following the War of 1812, a group of Scottish emigrants took advantage of government incentives to leave the impoverished lowlands and start a new life in the British military settlements of Upper Canada. These settlers maintained links to the old by naming communities and landmarks after familiar places back home, and by using their skills to build substantial mills, fine homes and tidy farms. Tay Valley became the cradle for much of this Scottish – and Irish – industriousness, much of it lovingly preserved under the careful stewardship of subsequent generations.



Tour starts and finishes in Perth; approximately 120 km.

Points of interest: Downtown Perth, Perth Museum, Stewart Park, village of Balderson, Mississippi River, heritage architecture, Silver Lake Provincial Park, maple sugar bushes, Maberly, Tay River, heritage architecture, Christie Lake, winery.



Start Here

AFTER EXPLORING PERTH, TAKE HWY 7 WEST, THEN TURN RIGHT ONTO HWY 511 AND CONTINUE TO BALDERSON.

Now a bustling crossroads of shops and cafés, this was once home of the Balderson Cheese Factory, one of 12 local cheese factories involved in creating the Mammoth Cheese. The 22,000-pound cheddar (a replica of which is on display in Perth) was exhibited at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair on behalf of the Canadian dairy industry. The hamlet was named for John Balderson, a soldier in the Duke of Wellington's army, who settled here in 1816.



TURN LEFT ONTO FALLBROOK ROAD, THEN TURN RIGHT TO STAY ON IT.

You will travel through the milling community of Fallbrook on the Fall River. Continue through the picturesque hamlet to Playfairville, once the site of several mills on the Mississippi River and now marked only by a former Methodist/United Church chapel.



TURN LEFT ONTO COUNTY ROAD 12 TOWARD MCDONALD'S CORNERS. TURN LEFT ONTO CONCESSION ROAD 9A, THEN TURN RIGHT ONTO HIGHLAND LINE.

If you have a sweet tooth, watch for any one of the many maple syrup producers who tap the lush maple forests each spring and sell their products at the farm gate. The rugged terrain provides both challenge and beauty.

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Drive On

TURN RIGHT ONTO CONCESSION RD 2. TURN LEFT ONTO COUNTY RD 12.

County Road 12 will take you directly to Elphin. Although tiny and remote, it has become a vibrant community of artists, artisans and other independent spirits who maintain the self-reliant spirit of the early settlers.



TURN RIGHT ON ELPHIN-MABERLY ROAD (COUNTY ROAD 36).

While winters are beautiful in this area, the former station for the Kingston & Pembroke Railway was in fact named for the surveyor of Palmerston Township. Note the unusual rock formations.

TURN LEFT ONTO ROAD 509. TURN LEFT ONTO GULLEY RD. TURN RIGHT ONTO SHINER RD. TURN LEFT ONTO ROBERTSVILLE RD.

Turn right onto Elphin-Maberly Road (County Road 36), toward the charming village of Maberly on the Fall River. Cross Hwy. 7 and continue south on County Road 36 to Bolingbroke on the Tay River. Just before Bolingbroke, be sure to stop in at River House Vineyard & Winery to enjoy the scenery from the patio. The road then crosses a narrow strip of land separating Bob's Lake, headwaters of the Tay River, and Farren Lake, also part of the Tay Watershed.



TURN LEFT ONTO ALTHORPE RD.

You will pass Althorpe United Church, which is the only remaining vestige of that village. While not visible, the road runs parallel to Christie Lake, which empties into the Tay at the crossing where County Road 6 becomes the Christie Lake Road.



TURN RIGHT AT GLEN TAY RD.

Glen Tay was once known as Adamsville after its founder, Captain Joshua Adams. This veteran of the War of 1812 was among the first to draw a lot in the Perth Military Settlement and establish a business, a tavern later known as The Red House, when the visiting Duke of Richmond recommended that the structure be painted red. He later gave up the tavern to erect one of the first saw and grist mills at what is now Glen Tay. By the end of the century, a substantial milling complex had been built, along with a village around it. Unlike other mills on the Tay, the Glen Tay mill has been preserved, albeit as a private residence.



End Here

TURN LEFT ONTO THE SCOTCH LINE (COUNTY ROAD 10).

Scotch Line was named in honour of the original Scottish settlers. The names on many of the mailboxes still reflect this heritage, as do the fine stone farmhouses that line the road into Perth and the conclusion of your tour.

