NIAGARA'S
Welland Canal

niagarawellandcanal.com
**The Greater Niagara Circle Route Trail System**

The Greater Niagara Circle Route is over 140 kilometres of paved trails, suitable for walking, cycling and rollerblading. Bordered by Lake Ontario to the north, the Niagara River to the east, Lake Erie to the south and the Welland Canal to the west, you are seldom far from water. The tour links the following 12 trails to create a circular route through the heart of Niagara.

**The Welland Canal Trail**

This trail stretches along the Welland Canal from St. Catharines to Port Colborne, a distance of 43 km. Along the route you may see massive 26,000 tonne ships up to 226 metres in length as they glide smoothly past goosy banks on their way to climb or descend the Niagara Escarpment at a series of canal locks. The trail provides access to several viewing areas to watch the locks in action.

**The Friendship Trail**

This old rail line has been converted to a multi-use recreational path connecting Port Colborne with Fort Erie. The 24 km path is straight and easy with virtually no elevation change. Along the Friendship Trail there is easy access to many golden sand beaches on the shores of Lake Erie. The route parallels the lakefront as it passes through farmlands, villages, and quiet residential areas. With stunning views of the Buffalo skyline and a nature trail within easy biking distance, the Friendship Trail offers options for enthusiasts of all sorts.

**Niagara River Recreational Trail**

Completed in 1996, the 56 km Niagara River Recreation Trail is a cyclist's dream. Following the scenic Niagara River, the trail extends from Historic Fort Erie through Niagara Falls, ending at Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Along the way, you’ll welcome to stop for popular attractions, historic sites, dining opportunities, Niagara Gorge walking trails and breathtaking views of the mighty Niagara Falls, making this trail one of the most exciting in the world.

**The Waterfront Trail**

The Waterfront Trail begins in Niagara-on-the-Lake at Butler’s Park and stretches 655 km to the Quebec border, with 905 km of signed trail (visit www.waterfronttrail.org for more details). The 28 km portion between St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake, including George Nicholson Trail, is the link that completes the Greater Niagara Circle Route.

---

**History of the Welland Canal**

Construction began on the Canal in 1825 at Buffalo, which gave access to Lake Erie and the profitable markets of the Northwest. Local farmers and workers constructed a toll road from the Watkins line to the Welland Canal. Construction began on the Canal, dug by hand with only the assistance of local farmers, and a toll road was built from the Watkins line to the Welland Canal.

Passageway for the World

The Welland Canal connects the largest and most far-reaching inland waterway in the world.

From the Atlantic Ocean, ships can travel 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) inland to the edge of the Great Plains.

The Welland Canal allows ships to bypass Niagara Falls and cut the Northern Escarpment in order to continue to the Great Lakes System.

It takes ships about 15 hours to sail from Duluth, Minnesota to the Atlantic Ocean, including 17 hours of toil time throughout the Welland Canal and other St. Lawrence Seaway locks.

**Ships and Cargo**

Ships are raised 110 meters (366 feet) by seven locks within 11 kilometres (7 miles). They carry 3,272 ships – mainly tankers, sailboats, barges and – navigated the Welland Canal in 2024.

Ships carry over 1,850,000 metric tonnes of cargo in 2014. Common cargos are grain, iron ore, coal, salt, stone, iron and steel.

Tolls for passage vary from $10,000 to $38,000 for a loaded cargo ship of 250,000 metric tonnes, and cargo is as much as $8,500 for a small passenger ship.

Passage is allowed for $500 or one way through all locks.

**Bridges and Tunnels**

There are four “swing lift” bridges crossing the Canal – at Lakeshore Road, and Carlton Street at St. Catharines Locks Point A, and Main Street and Melbury Road in Port Colborne (Locks B – E). Swing lift bridges are lifted by a huge counterbalance that swings the bridge out of the way of passing ships. These are the “vertical lift” bridges crossing the Canal – at Grand River at St. Catharines, highway 20 at Allanburg and at Clarence Street in Port Colborne.

Vertical lift bridges involve vehicular access at either end, allowing you to cross the entire bridge. 8.6 metres (28 feet), 300 km.

Three tunnels pass under the Welland Canal – the Thorold Tunnel and the Main Street and Townships Tunnels in Welland.
The St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre at Lock 3 is the most popular place to view ships! Marvel at massive freighters as they manoeuvre through the locks. Explore the St. Catharines Museum and Ontario’s Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Lock 3 is a perfect place to host birthday parties, special events, meetings, conferences and enjoy group tours. One of the best ship watching locations in Port Colborne is at Lock 8 Gateway Park that provides a beautiful landscaped viewing stand and fountain.

Also, visit Lock 7 Viewing Centre and Museum for a picturesque view of Flight Locks 4, 5, 6, and Lock 7. Either by bicycle, car, or motor coach, you can coordinate your stop at our Lock 7 Viewing Centre & Museum with the Seaway Schedule so you can catch a vessel as it passes through the viewing platform.

For more information, or to make a booking, contact us at:
museuminfo@stcatharines.ca or call 1.800.305.5134

Open daily year round. For hours visit:
/stcatharinesmuseum /@StCMuseum

Call daily for ship schedules (Apr. - Dec.)

St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre at Lock 3
1932 Welland Canals Parkway
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7K6
905.984.8880
1.800.305.5134

Lock 7 Viewing Complex
50 Chapel St. South
Thorold, ON L2V 2C6
905.680.9477
1.888.680.9477

Contact: Karen Doyle
Tourism Marketing Officer
email: kdoyle@stcatharines.ca
phone: 905.688.5601 x1733

Start your Niagara Canada trip planning at visitniagaracanada.com