

Welcome to the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site

For millennia, *Kjipuktuk* (the Great Harbour) has been home to the Mi'kmaq people, a gathering place and a place to hunt and fish. Beginning in the late 15th century, Europeans came here to fish and trade, and shelter from the harsh North Atlantic. In 1749, Britain chose the location to construct a strategic naval base to counter the threat that Louisbourg, the French port on Cape Breton Island, posed to New England.

Four versions of the Citadel have protected that naval base and the town of Halifax. The early forts were built of earth and logs, the first serving through the Seven Years War, the second during the American Revolution, and the third during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812. After 1815, British authorities decided that the old wooden forts defending Canada's strategic strong points, including the Citadel, should be replaced by more powerful and permanent works of stone. Construction of a fourth Citadel began in 1828 and continued until 1856.

In addition to its military role in the defence of the port, the Citadel was home for thousands of soldiers and their families, many who chose to settle here.

In 1867, British North America became the Dominion of Canada, but the continuing importance of Halifax as a port for the Royal Navy saw British troops remain here until 1906. After that the Citadel was occupied by the Canadian military and remained active through two World Wars until 1952, when it was transferred from the Department of National Defence to Parks Canada.

Please visit our many exhibits to learn more.



Who We Are

Parks Canada manages one of the largest national park systems in the world. This system includes national parks, historic sites, heritage canals and marine conservation areas. Parks Canada strives to present these resources in a manner that fosters understanding of their value to all Canadians while protecting them for future generations.

Our Partners

The Army Museum first opened at the Halifax Citadel in 1953. A non-profit institution, it was created to preserve the memory of Atlantic Canada's soldiers.

Tel: 902-422-5979
armymuseumhalifax.ca | facebook.com/TheArmyMuseum

The Halifax Citadel Society or HCS is a charitable, non-profit organization created in 1993 whose purpose is to raise awareness and understanding of the rich history associated with the Halifax Citadel and its related sites. On behalf of Parks Canada, the Society administers the living history, fee collection and visitor orientation programs at the Citadel. To learn more about other programs run by the HCS, visit:

Tel: 902-426-1990 | info@halifaxcitadel.ca
halifaxcitadel.ca | facebook.com/HalifaxCitadel

Contact Us

Halifax Defence Complex,
PO Box 9080, Station A,
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M7
Tel: 902-426-5080
Email: halifax@pc.gc.ca
parcs.canada.ca/halifaxcitadel

Explore More of the Halifax Defence Complex



Visit Georges Island National Historic Site in the heart of Halifax Harbour, the place the Mi'kmaq called *Kjipuktuk* or "The Great Harbour," and enjoy scenic views from a new perspective! Discover the island's key role in our history, from the internment of Acadians in the 18th century to the defence of Canada during the 19th and 20th centuries. To find out more, go to: **parcs.canada.ca/georges**



Free WiFi for all site visitors! Inquire at the ticket kiosks or Information Centre for details.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.



Halifax Citadel
National Historic Site



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada

Activities and Experiences

Step through the gate of the Halifax Citadel and back in time! Discover what life was like for British troops who lived here in **the year 1869**, when Queen Victoria reigned and the new nation of Canada was just two years old.

You will also encounter other time periods, for the Citadel was an active military installation for over **two hundred years**, first for the British Army and then the Canadian Army.

Explore the site

Explore the ramparts and tunnels and visit our historic spaces to experience what life was like in a bygone era.

Follow the list of numbered exhibits and attractions on the site map, or choose what to see based on the type of attraction that best suits you (*see the map and "Exhibits and Attractions by Type" inside*).



Living history

Our living history program brings to life various elements of the Citadel's garrison, including the famous 78th Highlanders and the 3rd Brigade, Royal Artillery, 1869 to 1871.

Sentry changes Every hour, the sentry at the main gate is changed in a formal ceremony.

The Noon Gun Noon in Halifax is announced by the firing of the Noon Gun, a tradition that has continued every day since at least 1856.

Drill Demonstrations Inspections, troop reviews, squad drills and larger maneuvers occur on the Citadel's parade square.

Performances of the Pipes and Drums of the 78th Highlanders take place at various times during the day.

Rifle and Cannon Firing Demonstrations Individual rifle firing demonstrations are carried out several times each day, with larger demonstrations of rifle, musket, and cannon firings between mid-June and August 31.



Special Programs

Enhance your visit by taking part in one or more of our special programs. Inquire at the Information Centre.

Take the Citadel Adventure! With your interactive comic book and spy kit, search the Citadel to find the clues that will help you complete your secret mission. Ages 6-13.

Ready, Aim, Fire! Fire an original Snider-Enfield rifle! Inquire for program availability. (16 and older, fee applies).



On Site Services

Coffee Shop Stop in for refreshments or a light meal in the "Coffee Bar" adjacent to the historic Soldiers' Library.

Regimental Shop Located on the ground floor of the Cavalier Building, the Regimental Shop provides a unique shopping experience for visitors. shop.halifaxcitadel.ca

Accessibility Services

Wheelchairs and walkers are available in the Visitor Information Centre.

The grounds, main floor of the **Cavalier Building**, the **Army Museum**, most of the exhibits and the washrooms are all wheelchair accessible.

Elevator There is a self-service in Map Location 25 (*see map inside*) that gives wheelchair access to the upper level of the walls. The Army Museum can be accessed with Information Centre staff assistance by the lift located next to the Information Centre.

A Harbour Worth Defending (Film) has open captioning.

Service Animals Pets on a leash are permitted on the grounds; identified service animals are permitted inside the buildings. We ask pet owners to pick up after their pets and not leave them unattended.

Facility Rentals

The Halifax Citadel offers a unique setting for meetings, weddings, dinners and receptions for groups large and small. We offer on-site catering and can add colour to your event with private tours, bagpipers and cannon firings.

Indoor events: **902-426-7665** or events@halifaxcitadel.ca
Outdoor events: **902-426-5080** or halifax@pc.gc.ca

Halifax Citadel National Historic Site



Exhibits and Attractions

Self-guided Tour

- 1 Information Centre
 - 2 The Army Museum
 - 3 A Harbour Worth Defending (Film)
 - 4 Barracks
 - 5 North Viewing Platform
 - 6 Warden of the North (Exhibit)
 - 7 Seven-inch Rifled Guns
 - 8 Guard Room & Main Gate
 - 9 Engineer Store
 - 10 Orderly Room
 - 11 Tailor Shop
 - 12 Noon Gun
 - 13 Sally Port No 1 (Entry/Exit to Dry Ditch)
 - 14 Musketry Gallery
 - 15 South Ravelin
 - 16 Sally Port No 2 (Entry/Exit to Dry Ditch)
 - 17 Shaping the Hill (Exhibit)
 - 18 Signal Post
 - 19 South Viewing Platform
 - 20 Expense Magazine
 - 21 Defence Casemates and Garrison Cells (North and South)
 - 22 32-pounder Gun Battery
 - 23 South Magazine
 - 24 School Room
 - 25 Fortress Halifax: A City Shaped by Conflict (Entrance)
 - 26 Dry Ditch / Special Exhibits
 - 27 Path to Garrison Grounds & Additional Parking
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Regimental Shop | Parking |
| Coffee Shop | Accessible Parking |
| Entrance/Exit | First Aid/Security |
| Washrooms | WiFi Hotspot |
| Elevator | |



Cavalier Building *Detail*



For Your Safety

The Halifax Citadel is a 19th-century fortification with steep masonry walls surrounded by a ditch up to 9 metres (40 feet) deep.

To have a safe visit, please observe the following:

Please use North and South viewing platforms to enjoy the site's most impressive views. The top of all earthen walls, stone inner walls, and gun openings are "do not enter" spaces based on the high level of falling risk they present, especially when wet.

Watch out for low doorways, steep stairways, water gutters, and uneven ground and floors.

Site requires all young children to be under close adult supervision at all times.

Exhibits and Attractions By Type

Information & Wayfinding

1 Information Centre

Begin your visit here for an overview of site activities and programs. Tours begin here throughout the day. Hosted tours last from 45 to 60 minutes and provide an overview of the site's vibrant history and its many attractions.

5 North Viewing Platform

A clear view of the naval dockyard which the Citadel was built to protect. Ground zero for the 1917 Halifax Explosion is also visible, marked by the farthest suspension bridge.

13 and 16 Sally Port No 1 and No 2 (Entry/Exit to Dry Ditch)

There are six tunnels, known as sally ports, that allow access to the Citadel's dry ditch. Venture through one or both of these long tunnels and explore the ditch, which served as an obstacle for potential attackers.

19 South Viewing Platform



Take in the spectacular view of the harbour mouth and of McNab's Island, location of Fort McNab National Historic Site, and the smaller Georges Island, location of Fort Charlotte, both key harbour defences.

27 Path to Garrison Grounds & Additional Parking

Permanent Exhibits

2 The Army Museum



Nova Scotia's military past is presented through exhibits of artifacts, photographs and documents dating from the First World War to the present. *The Road to Vimy and Beyond* - exhibit commemorates the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the *Trail of the Canadian Army 1939-1945* tells the story of Nova Scotia's contribution to Canada's war effort during the Second World War.

3 A Harbour Worth Defending (Film)

A 15 minute film telling the story of Halifax as a key British and Canadian naval base.

6 Warden of the North

This award winning exhibit tells the story of the Halifax defences and their influence on surrounding community, region, and the Canadian landscape.

17 Shaping the Hill

Examine detailed and interactive exhibits and scale models that explain the nature of fortifications and how the design and construction of the Four Citadels influenced the landscape.

25 Fortress Halifax: A City Shaped by Conflict

Explore the history of Halifax, from pre-establishment to today, and the role it played on the world stage through the lens of the four forts that have stood on Citadel Hill.

Period Rooms

4 Barracks



This was home for the Citadel's soldiers. See where they ate and slept, and discover what they owned and carried. Try out a barrack cot and heft a full knapsack.

8 Guard Room & Main Gate

Take a turn in the lock-up cells in what was once the main entrance and security office for the Citadel.

9 Engineer Store

Find out what the Royal Engineers kept on hand to ensure the Citadel was maintained in good repair.

10 Orderly Room



Try your hand at using a dip pen with India ink as you "enlist" in the British Army here in the garrison's administrative office.

11 Tailor Shop

Assist the regimental tailor in this shop where uniforms were made and repaired. Try on a uniform coat and have your picture taken.

20 Expense Magazine

Explore this tiny dark "bomb proof" room where cartridges for the artillery were stored.

21 Defence Casemates and Garrison Cells (North and South)

Descend the steps to these dank rooms that were designed to allow cannon to fire into the Citadel's north and south defensive ditch. The rooms were also used to house military prisoners.

23 South Magazine

Count the barrels in this reinforced structure where the Citadel's gunpowder was stored.

24 School Room



Soldiers and their children alike were educated by the Regimental School Master. Stop here to take a lesson and see a "Magic Lantern" show.

Artillery & Fortifications

7 Seven-inch Rifled Guns

In the 1870s, the Citadel re-armed with these massive rifled muzzle-loading guns, which had a range of over a mile and were capable of sinking the ironclad warships of their day.

12 Noon Gun



This reproduction 1809 12 pounder gun is used as the Citadel's traditional daily "noon gun," and also for firing artillery salutes at other times.

14 Musketry Gallery

Explore this dark tunnel that was built to allow soldiers to fire into the dry ditch while under cover.

15 South Ravelin

This triangular outlying fort, one of three, protected the Citadel's walls from artillery fire and was another potential obstacle for an attacking army.

18 Signal Post



Find out how the Citadel's tall masts were used for sending coded signals to both the citizens of Halifax and to the other forts that protected the harbour.

22 32-pounder Gun Battery

More than thirty of these large smoothbore guns comprised the Citadel's primary armament from the 1830s to the early 1870s.

26 Dry Ditch / Special Exhibits

This defensive ditch completely surrounds the Citadel, but in time of peace was used for recreational activities. Check this space for special temporary exhibits, including historic military encampments.