Country Register Article #5

Road Trips

The Joy of the Journey

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There's something timeless about a summer road trip. The open highway, coffee in hand, favourite music playing, and the anticipation of discovering something wonderful just around the next bend. For quilters and textile lovers, road trips offer something even more special — the opportunity to explore creativity one quilt shop, museum, and fabric-filled destination at a time.

Across Canada, quilting road trips have become a beloved tradition. Whether it's a carefully planned "shop hop" through Alberta, a scenic textile trail across British Columbia, or discovering hidden gems while travelling through the Maritimes, these journeys combine adventure with inspiration.

Many quilters also plan their travels around spring and summer quilt shows, guild exhibits, or a quilting retreat, turning a weekend event into a memorable creative getaway. Quilt shows and retreats are wonderful places to gather ideas, admire beautiful workmanship, attend demonstrations, and reconnect with fellow makers who share the same passion for creativity.

Quilt shops each have their own personality and charm. Some specialize in modern fabrics and vibrant colour palettes. Others feel like stepping back in time, filled with reproduction prints, cozy samples, and stories shared over the cutting table.

What I love most about these road trips is that they slow us down enough to notice the details. We begin to see colour combinations in prairie sunsets, quilting patterns in old grain elevators, and texture in weathered barn wood or coastal rock formations. Creativity has a remarkable way of appearing when we allow ourselves to wander and observe.

> "The best inspiration often comes from the road — and the fabric of new experiences."

Road trips also connect us with people. Quilters are storytellers by nature, and quilt shops often become gathering places where travellers exchange ideas, favourite patterns, and local recommendations. Some of the best travel memories begin with someone saying, "If you're heading that direction, you must stop at this little shop..."

Of course, the spirit of the quilting road trip doesn't stop at provincial borders. Some of the most inspiring journeys happen farther afield, where textiles are merged with another culture and way of life.

That's one of the reasons I love leading Quilt & Textile Tours internationally. Travel opens our eyes not only to beautiful landscapes and historic places, but also to the traditions, artistry, and creativity that connect makers around the world.

Ireland, in particular, has a magical way of capturing the hearts of travellers. As we prepare for our Ireland 2027 Quilt & Textile Tour, I find myself already dreaming about the slower pace, winding country roads, natural patchwork landscape, charming villages, historic castles, woolen mills, textile experiences, and the warmth of Irish hospitality. There's something deeply inspiring about standing in a centuries-old landscape while surrounded by rich textile traditions that continue to influence makers today. It's this inspiration that keeps me going back time after time.

And just like a Canadian quilting road trip, the memories often come from the unexpected moments — laughter shared on the coach, finding the perfect piece of fabric tucked into a small village shop, or seeing colours and textures that suddenly spark a brand-new creative idea.

Whether your summer plans involve exploring your own province, venturing across Canada, or dreaming about a future textile adventure abroad, road trips remind us that creativity thrives in movement, curiosity, and discovery.

Because sometimes the destination is only part of the story. For quilters and makers, inspiration often happens along the way.

"We travel because distance and difference
are the secret tonic of creativity.
When we get home, home is still the same.
But something inside our minds has changed,
and that changes everything."