

CULTURE

COME FROM AWAY INSPIRES AMERICANS TO TRAVEL TO NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, CANADA

EXPLORE THE SETTING OF A HEARTWARMING STORY OF HOSPITALITY DURING 9/11

BY **LAURA POWERS** ON 4/11/19 AT 1:58 PM EDT



Pop culture is increasingly dictating where Americans choose to travel. In 2014, travel to Norway increased 20-40% in large part due to the popularity of Frozen. The popular television series, Game of Thrones has been so effective in attracting tourists to Dubrovnik, Croatia, that the government has been forced to cap the number of visitors. After the release of Star Wars: The Last Jedi, tourists flocked to the island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Ireland to walk in the same steps of Luke Skywalker. But travel inspiration is now coming from a surprising source: Broadway.

Come from Away opened to previews in February 2017, and to great acclaim. The show garnered seven Tony Nominations and one win. The success of the show has called attention to a heartwarming story set in the eastern most province of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador. The show tells the story of 7,000 passengers whose planes were grounded in the small town of Gander on September 11, 2001. The passengers nearly outnumbered the inhabitants of the town, but the people of Gander and the surrounding towns opened their homes for five days to welcome the stranded passengers.

Even while Come from Away was in previews, there was a marked uptick in Americans and particularly New Yorkers flocking to the small town of Gander to enjoy the hospitality and culture associated with the province. According to Jill Curran, President of Maxxim Vacations in St Johns, New Yorkers now account for 25% of their US customers. Prior to the opening of Come from Away, the majority of those visiting Newfoundland and Labrador were Canadian tourists looking to explore the culture and scenery of Canada's youngest province (they joined Canada in 1949).

Newfoundland and Labrador has long been celebrated for its local music, hospitable locals and beautiful scenery. But since the opening of the show, travelers have become interested in visiting the landmarks specific to the story. Though it was no great stretch for the region to accommodate new visitors, some capitalized on the interest in the show by creating tours and experiences catering to fans of the show.

***Come from Away* themed attractions**



DERM AND DIANNE FLYNN

For those interested in visiting the setting of *Come from Away*, there are plenty of options to have a Gander experience. To hear the first hand story, you can meet Derm and Dianne Flynn, who are featured characters from the show. Sit and drink with tea with them, or visit the Appleton Peace Monument and Park with them to see a piece of steel from the World Trade Center.

Any *Come from Away* fan will be interested in the North Atlantic Aviation Museum. Even before 9/11, Gander Airport was an important stopover as a refueling station for trans-atlantic flights, and even played an integral role in ferrying aircrafts from North America to Britain during World War II. The museum also offers a specific *Come from Away* tour (called the Beyond Words tour) which includes visits to the Gander airport and townhall.

Also the title of a song from *Come from Away*, the Dover Fault is a romantic and geographically significant spot to visit. Not only does it boast a beautiful view of the sea, it is also the site of a continental collision millions of years ago. The fault divides rocks that were once part of North Africa and/or Europe with those that created the Appalachian Mountains.



MEGAN MCLELLAN AND TOURISM NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

For those who want a more guided experience, there are multiple options for guided tours that hit all the *Come from Away* highlights. Maxxim Vacations offers a six night tour including a rental car, so you can explore all that Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer. The package includes visits to the North Atlantic Aviation Museum, a tour of Gander, a boat ride and stays at local bed and breakfasts. Fogo Island Inn also offers a package with a half day tour of Gander with a local, and a two night stay at the inn.

Tourism to the province didn't begin with the show, and there is plenty to see outside of the Gander area. The show highlights the unique and deep cultural connection to music for Newfoundlanders, and visitors don't have to look far to find it. In St. Johns, the capital city of Newfoundland and Labrador, bars featuring live music abound. George Street is two blocks of only bars, pubs and restaurants offering live music most nights of the week.



TOURISM NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Venturing outside of the city is a huge draw of Newfoundland and Labrador, which boasts beautiful wilderness and unique wildlife. Whale watching is unparalleled, as the largest population of humpback whales travel through the region every year. You can also spot sperm whales, orcas, dolphins and the largest mammal on earth, the blue whale. As the official provincial bird, puffin colonies are plentiful and a must see as well. Boat tours are a great option to enjoy whale watching, iceberg exploration and visiting the island homes of puffins.

Canadians have long been aware of the beautiful scenery, famous hospitality and musical culture of Newfoundland and Labrador, but thanks to *Come from Away*, now Americans are in on the secret as well. Whether you want to learn more about the inspiring story of a small community opening their homes to strangers during a trying time, or just enjoy a beautiful part of the world, Newfoundland and Labrador has it all. But make sure you see *Come from Away* before you go!

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