

A Visit to Fort Niagara

Whether you're a history buff or don't have a clue what the French and Indian War was about, there's a destination in upstate New York that's fun to visit for the whole family . . .

[Fort Niagara.](#)



My husband and I made the trek to this living history site last summer. I had no idea what to expect, other than what was advertised as a “[reenactment camp](#).” For those who don't know, this is when volunteers who adore history come together to present a particular event, such as a battle. These people usually choose a real person from the era upon whom they fashion their modern day persona. They dress, speak, eat and live as that person might have. Here I am with some of my new friends:



Generally around the 4th of July, the 1759 [Battle of Fort Niagara](#) is recreated in a 3-day extravaganza of soldiers, muskets, canons and an entire market place to peruse selling period-related items.

Some of the things that surprised me about stepping back into the mid-eighteenth century were:

- How much smoke muskets kick out
- Once the battle begins, it's hard to see who is your enemy or ally
- Canons are *really* loud
- Everything wasn't as black and white as it seems in pictures—gowns and uniforms were very colorful



What makes this event so spectacular is that they take the entire 20 day siege and condense it into 3 days. If you visit every day, you'll see and experience exactly what happened. You'll be there to see the British, Colonial regulars and Iroquois allies sneak out of the tree line to shoot at some French soldiers who were pigeon hunting just outside the fort. You'll hear the war whoops and barrage of angry French epithets roaring on the air. You'll even get a chance to taste some of their food as you wander around inside the French Encampment set up inside the fort walls.

To experience a bit of the danger, sights and sounds of what Mercy and Elias lived through in [*The Captured Bride*](#), Fort Niagara really is a fantastic place to visit.