

Welcome to Montréal & Québec City

A captivating blend of old and new, with stone-walled taverns, candlelit drinking dens, wild festivals and a cutting-edge arts scene.

Cuisine Capital

Blessed with one of the most exciting food scenes in North America, Montréal brims with temples dedicated to Kamouraska lamb, Arctic char and, of course, poutine (fries smothered in cheese curds and gravy). You'll find irresistible patisseries, English pubs, 87-year-old Jewish delis and magnificent food markets reminiscent of Paris. There are hipster bars with tiny bowling alleys and innumerable cafes in which to while away a lazy afternoon. And there are late-night eateries where you can linger over wondrous combinations of food and drink that you'll find nowhere else on earth.

Festivals Galore

Toronto may be Canada's economic capital, but Montréal remains the country's cultural juggernaut, with some 250 theater and dance companies, more than 90 festivals and a fascinating medley of neighborhoods where artists, writers and musicians have helped cement the city's reputation as a great arts center. The Festival International de Jazz de Montréal is the headline event, followed by parties dedicated to world cinema, comedy and gay pride. Québec City also dazzles, with its grand Winter Carnival, music-filled summer fests and colorful fireworks over the river.

Cities of Design

Montréal is a slice of old Europe in a pie of contemporary design. A day's wander might take in the photogenic 18th-century facades of Old Montréal before a cycling tour of the lovely Canal de Lachine, or a wander through the glittering shops and restaurants of downtown before ending at the inviting terraced cafes of Plateau Mont-Royal. The architectural sweep of the city takes in a wealth of heritage churches such as the breathtaking Basilique Notre-Dame, as well as 20th-century icons like the Stade Olympique and Habitat 67. Not to be outshone, Québec City is a stunning jewel of old-world design, with cobblestone streets, 17th- and 18th-century stone houses and slender church spires, set on the cliffs above the St Lawrence.

Winter Wonderland

Montréal and Québec City do get some long, cold winters. But the natives have learned to make the best of them, cheering on local hockey legends Les Canadiens de Montréal, tobogganing down snowy slopes, ice skating beside the St Lawrence River and skiing at many fine resorts nearby. If you can't bear the chill, just wander through Montréal's underground city and surface at the nearest pub.



Why I Love Montréal

By Regis St Louis, Author

I'm always struck by the unbridled creativity of this city. You see it in the magnificent inventions being stirred up in restaurant kitchens, in the barroom and on stage, and you even see it walking down the street with incredible urban art lurking in unexpected places. The dual French-English mix adds dynamism to the city as does its unique mash-up of European and North American culture. Most captivating of all are the people themselves. Montréalers embody *joie de vivre*. They eat well, throw great parties and are happy to share their city.

For more about our authors, see p288.