



Québec City

OLD UPPER TOWN | OLD LOWER TOWN | ST-JEAN BAPTISTE | MONTCALM |
COLLINE PARLEMENTAIRE | ST-ROCH | STE-FOY-SILLERY

Québec City Top Five

- 1 Strolling, shopping and admiring the murals, museums and historic buildings in the 17th-century **Quartier Petit-Champlain** (p176).
- 2 Soaking up spectacular views of **Le Château Frontenac** (p170) from the panoramic riverside boardwalk in summer or the hair-raising toboggan run in winter.
- 3 Visualizing the legendary rivalry between French and English on a tour of **La Citadelle** (p169).
- 4 Walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, skating or celebrating **Winter Carnival** (p198) in the city's beautiful and historic Battlefields Park.
- 5 Embracing Québec City's festive summer spirit and long daylight hours at street performances along **Terrasse Dufferin** (p171) and open-air concerts in the city's parks.

Explore

The crown jewel of French Canada, Québec City is one of North America's oldest and most magnificent settlements. Its picturesque Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a living museum of narrow cobblestone streets, 17th- and 18th-century houses and soaring church spires, with the splendid Château Frontenac towering above it all. There's more than a glimmer of Old Europe in its classic bistros, sidewalk cafes and manicured squares.

You can get a taste of the city in a single day, but linger at least a weekend if you can. The city's compact size makes it ideal for walking, and it shines brightest when you slow down.

The main focus of your visit should be the Old Town, split between the Old Upper Town (Haute Ville), perched above the St Lawrence River on the Cap Diamant cliffs, and the Old Lower Town (Basse Ville), where Samuel de Champlain established the first French foothold in 1608. The Old Town is packed with museums, mansard-roofed houses and cobblestone streets just begging to be explored.

Outside the walls, through the historic town gates of Porte St-Louis and Porte St-Jean, four additional neighborhoods are easily accessible: St-Jean Baptiste, Montcalm, Colline Parlementaire, and St-Roch, each boasting wonderful restaurants, shopping and nightlife. Also noteworthy here are the vast Plains of Abraham, where the British defeated the French in 1759; nowadays enshrined as a national park, this area offers superb recreational opportunities.

Québec City goes to great lengths to entertain visitors. All summer long, musicians, acrobats and actors in period costume take to the streets, while fantastic festivals fill the air with fireworks and song. In the coldest months of January and February, Québec's Winter Carnival (p198) is arguably the biggest and most colorful winter festival around. Fall and spring bring beautiful foliage, dramatically reduced prices and thinner crowds.

Top Tip

Make lunch your main meal. Most restaurants, including some of Québec City's fin-

est, offer midday table d'hôtes (fixed-price menus) for about half the price of a comparable dinner.

The Best...

- ➔ **Place to Sleep** La Marquise de Bassano (p205)
- ➔ **Place to Eat** Panache (p190)
- ➔ **Place to Drink** Le Moine Échanson (p194)

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Train** Via Rail (www.viarail.ca) runs four trains daily from Montréal's Gare Centrale to Québec's Gare du Palais (three to 3½ hours, one way/return \$87/173).
- ➔ **Bus** Orléans Express (www.orleansexpress.com) offers frequent bus service from Montréal (three to 3½ hours, one way/return \$59/94).
- ➔ **Car** Driving from Montréal to Québec City takes about three hours, via Hwy 40 (north of the St Lawrence River) or Hwy 20 (south of the river).
- ➔ **Air** Regular Air Canada flights (45 minutes) run from Montréal to Québec City's Jean Lesage Airport. There are some direct flights from the USA and Europe.

Getting Around

Bus RTC (p240) offers efficient service all around town. To get around the Old Town, your best bet is the nifty Écolobus, which runs on electric power and charges \$2 per ride. Single rides on other RTC buses cost \$3.25; alternatively, purchase a day pass for \$7.50, or a two-day pass for \$13.50. The most convenient hub for catching multiple buses is on Pl d'Youville, just outside the Old Town walls. To get here from the Gare du Palais train station or long-distance bus station, take bus 21 or 800.

Need to Know

- ➔ **Area code** ☎418
- ➔ **Location** 260km northeast of Montréal
- ➔ **Tourist Office** Centre Infotouriste (p247)