Old Montréal Walking Tour

On the edge of the St Lawrence River, Old Montréal is the city’s birthplace, composed of picturesque squares and grand old-world architecture.

Start Basilique Notre-Dame
Distance 2km
Duration 2 hours

2 Head along Rue St-Jacques, once known as Canada’s Wall St. Stop at the grand Royal Bank Tower, Montréal’s tallest building in 1928, to see its palatial interior.

3 Loop onto Rue Notre-Dame and down Rue St-Jean. On the corner of Rue de l’Hôpital, the Lewis Building has dragons and mischievous gargoyles on the facade. It was built for Cunard Shipping Lines, a steamship company founded in 1840.

4 A few blocks further is Place d’Youville, one of Old Montréal’s prettiest squares. Some of the first Europeans settled here in 1642. An obelisk commemorates the city’s founding.

5 Nearby is the fascinating Musée d’Archéologie et d’Histoire Pointe-à-Callière (p109). Inside see the city’s ancient foundations, or go to the top floor for fine views over the Old Port.

6 Across the road is the 1836 Old Customs House. It’s in front of Place Royale, the early settlement’s marketplace in the 17th and 18th centuries.

7 Walk down Rue St-Paul to see the 2006 bronze sculpture Les Chuchoteuses (the Whisperers), tucked in a corner near Rue St-Dizier. This was one of many projects to revitalize the old quarter.

8 Head up St-Dizier and turn left onto lovely Cours Le Royer, a tranquil pedestrian mall with fountains. On the north-side passageway is a stained-glass window of Jérôme Le Royer, one of Montréal’s founders.

9 Turn right on Rue St-Sulpice and return to Place d’Armes. Note the New York Life Building, Montréal’s first skyscraper (1888), eight stories tall.

Classic Photo
The ornate interior of Basilique Notre-Dame

1 Start with the city’s most celebrated cathedral, the magnificent Basilique Notre-Dame (p108). Inside is a spectacularly carved pulpit and richly hued stained-glass windows relating key events from the city’s founding.

X Take a Break
Refuel at Olive + Gourmando (p116) with hearty breakfasts and lunches.