

# INTRODUCING MONTRÉAL



*Pull up a stool at Schwartz's deli (p134) for the best smoked meat in town*

GOVLAN DOYLE

A captivating blend of old-world beauty and new-world innovation, this bohemian, culture-loving city has many virtues, not least of which is its uncanny ability to astonish.

Montréal is many things to many people, but it is never predictable. Where else in the world will you find French-speaking artists eating gravy- and cheese-curd-covered fries while eagerly following the ice hockey game playing overhead? Amid irresistible patisseries, English pubs, 80-year-old Jewish delis and magnificent food markets reminiscent of Paris, you'll come face-to-face with Montréal in all its surprising diversity. This city is home to over 80 different ethnic groups, with one in three Montrealers an immigrant.

The urban landscape presents an equally strange and wondrous twist on the traditional city. A day's wander might take in the photogenic 18th-century facades of Old Montréal, before moving on to the glittering shops and restaurants of ultramodern downtown and ending at the inviting terraced cafés of Plateau Mont-Royal, perhaps allowing for a cycle along the lovely Canal de Lachine or a stroll through verdant Parc du Mont-Royal. If the weather is cold, there's ice-skating on frozen lakes and endless amusement in the underground city (with its 32km of pedestrian walkways).

Toronto may be Canada's economic capital, but Montréal remains the country's cultural juggernaut, with some 250 theater and dance companies, over 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.

For the lowdown on Québec City's burgeoning civic scene see [p194](#).

## MONTRÉAL LIFE

Overshadowed by bigger, better-known cities like New York and Paris, Montréal quietly revels in its underdog status. Perhaps it's those infamously cold winters or the issue of separatism that once dominated the headlines, but Montréal doesn't have much recognition on the world stage. For locals – and travelers in the know – that's just fine. There are many facts about the city they'd just as soon keep to themselves, like the incredible dining scene: after New York, Montréal has more restaurants per capita than any other city in North America, with scores of different ethnic and regional cuisines on offer. Montréal is also a remarkably green city, where 70% of residents get around without a car. Locals enjoy 2000 hectares of green space and over 450km of bike lanes, with another 400km in the works. In 2009, it also became the first North American city to sponsor a public bike-sharing system – a network to be emulated in London and Boston.

Although residents complain about ongoing gentrification and rising housing costs, Montréal still remains one of the cheapest cities in Canada to rent an apartment (\$670 a month for a two-bedroom in 2009, compared with \$1100 in Toronto and Vancouver). In business and industry, Montréal does well for itself, boasting the highest number of research centers in Canada, an impressive high-tech sector and the third-largest fashion industry in North America (after New York and Los Angeles). The global economic downturn, however, has contributed to rising unemployment. Other pressing issues are the city's aging infrastructure and its bloated bureaucracy. Montrealers also complain about paying the highest taxes of any province in Canada. In spite of the city's shortcomings, Montrealers remain proud, citing the city's burgeoning film and music industries, its vibrant multiculturalism and its rich intellectual life. Not surprisingly, Montréal does quite well in quality-of-life surveys (often ranking well ahead of Paris, Barcelona and San Francisco for instance), a secret not all locals are eager to share.

'Montréal is a remarkably green city, where 70% of residents get around without a car'

BRIAN CRUICKSHANK



When the temperature drops, take to the ice at the Parc du Bassin Bonsecours (p170)

# THE AUTHORS

## Regis St. Louis



A longtime admirer of the free-spirited ethos that rules Québec, Regis has fallen hard for Montréal and Québec City. During research on this book, he mounted his bike and logged hundreds of kilometers along Montréal's (generally)

bike-friendly streets, in search of the latest restaurants, galleries and bars around town. He has written over two dozen guides for *Lonely Planet*, and his articles have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* among other publications. He lives in New York City, but often daydreams of pulling up stakes and moving to the Plateau. Regis wrote all chapters in this book except Shopping, Drinking, Nightlife and The Arts, and shared duties in Québec City.

### REGIS' TOP MONTRÉAL DAY

Like a growing number in Montréal, my favorite way of getting around town is by bicycle. After rising early, I pedal along the Canal de Lachine (p98) for a bit of fresh air before stopping at Marché Atwater (p61) for *chocolatines* (chocolate croissants), café au lait and fresh fruit. After that I head along Rue Notre-Dame (aka Antique Alley), stopping for a peek in some of Montréal's best antique stores. Afterwards, I'll head downtown to take in the latest exhibit at either the Musée McCord (p60) or the Musée des Beaux-Arts (p60). For lunch, I'll go to Old Montréal, stopping at either Le Local (p121) for something decadent, or more likely Olive + Gourmando (p123) for a sure-to-be-fantastic sandwich (plus dessert). In the afternoon, I'll head up to Parc du Mont-Royal (p79) for more cycling action, stopping to take in the fine view over the city from the Chalet du Mont-Royal (p80). After a nice ride, I'll head down toward the Plateau, stopping for a coffee and perhaps a snack at Café Santropol (p133). Afterwards I'll take a stroll along the lovely tree-lined streets, starting at Carré St-Louis (p75) and working my way north along Rue St-Denis, stopping in

at book and record stores along the way. As the evening nears, I'll phone a friend for a rendezvous at Bily Kun (p145), followed by tapas at Pintxo (p131). If I still have any energy, I might try to catch a show at Casa del Popolo (p153) or perhaps just have a final nightcap at Le Cagibi Café (p148).

## Contributing Author SIMONA RABINOVITCH



Simona is a Montreal-based writer and journalist specializing in travel, entertainment and the arts. She's lived in California, Israel and New York and is now the editor of *Zink Canada* and contributes to the *Globe & Mail*, *Nuvo*,

*Spin.com*, *Dazed Digital* and others. She also acts and is working on her first book. Simona wrote the Shopping, Drinking, Nightlife and The Arts chapters, as well as sections of the Québec City chapter.

## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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# GETTING STARTED

Preparing for a trip to Montréal can be as easy as buying a ticket and setting off. While spontaneous adventurers will feel right at home in this bohemian-loving city, it never hurts to do a bit of prep work – particularly if you're going in the height of summer when lodging tends to fill up fast. A well-planned itinerary will also help you to maximize your time, though try to include time for just wandering through some of the city's endearing tree-lined neighborhoods.

No matter your budget, Montréal will welcome you with open arms. Backpackers, first-class travelers and everyone in between will find plenty of places to hang their hat, whether at a European-loving hostel, a boutique hotel, the celebrated five-star restaurant (that you booked well in advance) or the old-school diner on the corner.

## WHEN TO GO

Montréal stays open all year round, though few travelers brave the city's darkest days of winter. Most people arrive in summer, when temperatures are pleasant and much of the action moves outdoors. While June through August is undoubtedly the busiest time to visit, it's also the most festive time. This is when the city throws its biggest fêtes, sidewalk tables pack the restaurant-lined streets of Plateau Mont-Royal, and the parks fill with joggers, cyclists and strollers as everyone celebrates the return of warm weather after too many months spent indoors.

While Canadian winters aren't for the delicate, Montréal has plenty of appeal for those who aren't afraid of a little (or a lot of) cold weather. Prices dip noticeably in the off-

season (October to April), and people still find ways to get out, from ice-skating on frozen lakes in neighborhood parks to cross-country skiing in Mont-Royal, followed by a meal or a cocktail served fireside at one of the city's cozy dining rooms. You can also head off to the mountains for a ski-getaway less than an hour from town. Those with an aversion to snow can stay indoors, drink beer and watch ice hockey on TV. All are fine ways to get through Montréal's impressively long cold season.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Described by some as the city of festivals, Montréal has a packed calendar of lively events when entire blocks close to traffic, and stages appear across town for free concerts, improv and cinema. Public holidays are also usually marked with massive downtown parades and raucous concerts. Winter events tend to have fewer out-of-town visitors but Montrealers themselves come out in droves. See [p259](#) for public holiday listings.

## January

### LA FÊTE DES NEIGES

☎ 514-872514-6120; [www.fetedesneiges.com](http://www.fetedesneiges.com);  
Île Ste-Hélène, Parc Jean-Drapeau

Montréal's Snow Festival features some ice-sculpting contests, dog-sled races, snow games and costumed characters like mascot polar bear Boule de Neige. It's held over three consecutive weekends in late January and early February.

## February

### MONTRÉAL EN LUMIÈRE

☎ 514-288-9955, 888-477-9955; [www.montrealhighlights.com](http://www.montrealhighlights.com)

## top picks

### ONLY IN MONTRÉAL

- **La Fête des Neiges** (right) Dogsledding, ice sculptures and, best of all, body-warming drinks.
- **Festival TransAmériques** (opposite) Watch cutting-edge performances (like a man dancing with a back-hoe as we witnessed in 2009).
- **Montréal Beer Festival** (opposite) Drink beer, speak French.
- **Fantasia** (p14) Dress up as your favorite anime character and meet people who won't laugh at you for doing so.
- **Montréal International Dragon Boat Race** (p14) Everyone loves a dragon boat race.
- **Nuit Blanche sur Tableau Noir** (opposite) See dozens of artists slapping down masterworks in a major street.

Created to help locals shake off the late-winter doldrums, the Montréal Highlights Festival is a kind of wintry Mardi Gras with most events taking place downtown. There are classical music and dance performances, exhibitions, fireworks, celebrity chefs and weirdly wonderful events like a 5km race through the underground city (see the boxed text, p68).

## March

### ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

☎ 514-932-0512; [www.montrealirishparade.com](http://www.montrealirishparade.com)

Rue Ste-Catherine turns shamrock-green during this monster event. Hundreds of thousands of Montrealers turn out annually for the 40-plus marching bands and floats on the second Sunday in March.

### MONTRÉAL FASHION WEEK

☎ 514-876-1499; [www.montreal-fashion-week.ca](http://www.montreal-fashion-week.ca)

This twice-yearly fashion event (March for the winter/fall collections and October for the spring/summer collections) is closed to the general public, but is worth noting for the excitement it generates around local fashion and the festivities that spill over into local bars afterwards. Venues change regularly.

## April

### BLUE METROPOLIS – MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL

☎ 514-932-1112; [www.blue-met-bleu.com](http://www.blue-met-bleu.com)

This festival brings together 200-plus writers from all over the globe for five days of literary events in English, French, Spanish and other languages in the first week of April.

## May

### BIENNALE DE MONTRÉAL

[www.biennalemontreal.org](http://www.biennalemontreal.org)

One of Montréal's most creative events showcases the best and the brashest on the Canadian art scene, including conferences and seminars on contemporary art. Expect interactive, cutting-edge multimedia pieces, often with opportunities for viewer participation. Upcoming dates are May 2011 and May 2013.

## FESTIVAL TRANSAMÉRIQUES

☎ 514-842-0704; [www.fta.qc.ca](http://www.fta.qc.ca)

The grande dame of Montréal's dance and theater world, the ever-expanding Festival TransAmériques features some 450 artists representing over a dozen countries. It's held over 18 days from late May to mid-June and includes free shows at outdoor venues as well as paid performances at theaters all across town. The repertoire leans heavily toward the avant-garde. Many shows sell out, so check the website and plan well in advance.

### MONTRÉAL BEER FESTIVAL

☎ 514-722-9640; [www.festivalmondialbiere.qc.ca](http://www.festivalmondialbiere.qc.ca)

Quaff brews from around the globe inside the old Windsor Station. The five-day event starts late May/early June.

## June

### TOUR DE L'ÎLE

☎ 514-521-8356; [www.velo.qc.ca](http://www.velo.qc.ca); Île Ste-Hélène & Downtown

Also known as the Montréal Bikefest, the Tour draws 30,000 enthusiasts for a 50km spin around the Island of Montréal and a big party in the city afterwards. It's staged on the first Saturday in June, with pre-registration.

### NUIT BLANCHE SUR TABLEAU NOIR

☎ 514-522-3797; [www.tableaunoir.com](http://www.tableaunoir.com)

Ave du Mont-Royal becomes an artist's canvas on the second weekend in June when the street comes alive with music, various workshops and children's activities.

### MONTRÉAL FASHION & DESIGN FESTIVAL

[www.festivalmodedesign.com](http://www.festivalmodedesign.com); Ave McGill College

Unlike Fashion Week (left), this colorful couture-loving event is free and open to the public. In mid-June style-hounds descend on Ave McGill College for four days of open-air fashion shows along with performances by live bands and DJs.

### FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX

In 2009, Montréal was dropped from the Formula One race calendar for the first time in 20 years. As this book went to press, negotiations were under way to bring the famously speedy race back to the city. If it does happen, it will take place in mid- to late June

on the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve and undoubtedly bring flashy drivers, crew, entourages and Formula One lovers from all corners of the globe. Don't forget your earplugs.

### ST-AMBROISE MONTRÉAL FRINGE FESTIVAL

☎ 514-849-3378; [www.montrealfringe.ca](http://www.montrealfringe.ca)  
An off-Broadway-style theater and repertory festival of new local and international talent, with dancing, music and the ever-popular drag races (as in drag *queen* races). Held over 10 days from mid-June.

### LOTO-QUÉBEC INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS COMPETITION

☎ 514-397-2000; [www.internationaldesfeuxloto-quebec.com](http://www.internationaldesfeuxloto-quebec.com)  
Thousands camp out on rooftops and on the Pont Jacques-Cartier for the planet's hottest pyrotechnics contest accompanied by dramatic musical scores. The 10 shows last 30 minutes each and are held on Saturday nights and a few Wednesday nights from late June to the end of July.

### OFF-FESTIVAL DE JAZZ

☎ 514-570-0722; [www.lofffestivaldejazz.com](http://www.lofffestivaldejazz.com)  
The alternative jazz fest presents around 50 shows in several downtown venues to showcase young new talent. It's held over 10 days in late June and early July.

## July

### SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

☎ 514-931-2644; [www.shakespeareinthepark.ca](http://www.shakespeareinthepark.ca)  
Families spread out on blankets for performances of the bard's best plays at park stages around town on weekends, usually throughout July and August.

### MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

☎ 514-523-3378, 888-515-0515; [www.montrealjazzfest.com](http://www.montrealjazzfest.com)  
With over 400 concerts and nearly two million visitors every year, North America's hippest music fest just gets bigger and better with world music, rock and even pop music sharing the program with jazz legends and upstarts. Hundreds of brand-name musicians hit the halls and outdoor stages, and dozens of concerts are given for free over 13 days from late June to mid-July (see the boxed text, p23).

### FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL NUIITS D'AFRIQUE

☎ 514-499-9239; [www.festivalnuitsdafrique.com](http://www.festivalnuitsdafrique.com)  
Celebrates the cultures of Africa and the Caribbean with more than 500 artists from 20-plus countries, with workshops, exotic cuisine and an African market. Held at Pl Émilie-Gamelin and several clubs and halls for 10 days in mid-July.

### JUST FOR LAUGHS

☎ 514-845-3155, 888-244-3155; [www.hahaha.com](http://www.hahaha.com); Quartier Latin  
More than 650 artists perform in over 1000 shows at this comedy festival which runs for two weeks in mid-July. Past events have featured Jason Alexander of *Seinfeld* fame, Craig Ferguson, John Cleese and Margaret Cho.

### FANTASIA

[www.fantasiafestival.com](http://www.fantasiafestival.com)  
An unabashed love-fest for devotees of international fantasy, action and horror films; Japanese anime geeks are drawn out in droves. Local genre films are also screened during this 18-day festival held in mid-July.

### DIVERS/CITÉ

☎ 514-285-4011; [www.diverscite.org](http://www.diverscite.org)  
Montréal's Gay Pride is *the* event on the Village calendar, drawing more than a million people, even in slow years. The streets around Pl Émilie-Gamelin pulse with dancing, art exhibits, concerts and parades. It's held over one week starting in late July.

### MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL DRAGON BOAT RACE

☎ 514-866-7001; [www.montrealdragonboat.com](http://www.montrealdragonboat.com)  
Rowing teams from all over the world compete in Chinese dragon boats on Île Notre-Dame, punctuated by entertainment and gastronomic events. Held over one weekend in late July.

## August

### OSHEAGA FESTIVAL MUSIQUE ET ARTS

[www.osheaga.com](http://www.osheaga.com); Île Ste-Hélène in Parc Jean-Drapeau  
On one weekend in early August, Parc Jean-Drapeau becomes a giant stage

(actually four of them) for one of the city's grand rock festivals. Some 70,000 fans typically turn up to the powerhouse lineup of performers, which in recent years has included Coldplay, Rufus Wainwright, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Gotan Project, Feist and many more. Catch live bands playing each day from 2pm to 11pm. One-day/two-day tickets cost around \$75/\$130.

## LES FRANCOFOLIES

☎ 514-876-8989; [www.francofolies.com](http://www.francofolies.com)

The annual musical showcase of international French-language music and theater spotlights today's biggest stars, and those on the rise. There are 200-plus shows and free outdoor presentations over 10 days around mid-August.

## MONTRÉAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

☎ 514-848-3883; [www.ffm-montreal.org](http://www.ffm-montreal.org)

One of the most prestigious film events in Canada, attracting 400,000 visitors to screenings from 70 countries. The stars come out, as well as the directors, producers and writers of the big screen. It's held over 10 days in late August and early September.

## NASCAR: NATIONWIDE SERIES

[www.circuitgillesvilleneuve.ca](http://www.circuitgillesvilleneuve.ca); Île Notre-Dame, Parc Jean-Drapeau

Held in late August, this big two-day event brings race lovers from all over North America and beyond to catch the roaring action. Race days are often sweltering – and there's no shade at the track – so plan accordingly.

## September

### MAGIC OF LANTERNS

☎ 514-872-1400; [www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/propos/lanternes.htm](http://www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/propos/lanternes.htm); Jardin Botanique

The Jardin Botanique extends its hours into the night and lights up hundreds of Chinese lanterns all over the park. Locals swamp this popular event, running from mid-September to early November.

### MANIFESTATION INTERNATIONALE DE CHAMP LIBRE

☎ 514-393-3937; [www.champlibre.com](http://www.champlibre.com)

Every two years, this event provides a stage for the fusion of art, architecture and technology in creative – often highly concep-

tual – exhibits. This fantastic niche event, held at different venues each year, draws everyone from families with small children to retirees. Upcoming editions take place in late September in 2010 and 2012.

## October

### FESTIVAL DU NOUVEAU CINÉMA DE MONTRÉAL

☎ 514-282-0004; [www.nouveaucinema.ca](http://www.nouveaucinema.ca)

This festival highlights who is up-and-coming in feature films, documentaries, experimental shorts, videos, narrative features and electronic art forms during 10 days in early October.

### BLACK & BLUE FESTIVAL

☎ 514-875-7026; [www.bbcm.org](http://www.bbcm.org)

One of the biggest gay events in the Village, with major dance parties, cultural and art shows as well as a killer mega-party in the Olympic Stadium, all in the second week of October.

### MONTRÉAL FASHION WEEK

Spring/summer collections are shown in the second session of this twice-yearly event. See the listing under March (p13) for more information.

## December

### CHRISTMAS AT THE JARDIN BOTANIQUE

☎ 514-872-1400; [www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin](http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin)

'Tis the season at the Jardin Botanique. The main greenhouse becomes a fairyland of poinsettia Christmas trees and fanciful chandeliers made of plants. Activities in past years have included storytelling for kids, or choirs. It's open the entire month of December.

## COSTS & MONEY

The Canadian dollar (the loonie as some call it) has enjoyed a strong showing against the (currently weak) US dollar in the last few years. Against the British pound and the euro, the Canadian dollar hasn't shifted much.

While Montréal isn't the world's cheapest destination, it compares quite favorably with other major American and European cities, and is even a touch less expensive than

Toronto and Vancouver. As elsewhere in the world, accommodations will likely be your biggest expense.

On average, single travelers who stay in a B&B or midrange hotel, eat at least one meal a day out and take in a bit of museum-going and nightlife can expect to spend \$175 or so per day. Couples can anticipate paying a bit more – something in the daily range of \$250. For those on tight budgets, there are plenty of ways to cut costs, such as sleeping in a hostel, self-catering from local markets and limiting entertainment options.

Breaking things down a bit: midrange accommodations average around \$75 to \$90 per night for a room in a European-style B&B with a shared bathroom. A room with a private bathroom will cost around \$120 to \$150 on average for a comfortable midrange option in a good location. Going up a notch, starting at \$200 per day, you can stay in a boutique hotel or in a guesthouse with obvious style and charm. At \$300 per day and up, the city's best accommodations are at your disposal.

At the low end of the scale, it's possible to bunk in a hostel dorm bed for around \$23 per day. Most hostels also have a few private rooms, for around \$60 single or double, but these are highly coveted so book early if that's what you're after. In summer, the universities also open their dorms to nonstudents at prices that are hard to beat.

Keep in mind that you'll have to pay tax also, which will add another 16% or so to the bill. Some places include the tax in their prices. Inquire if you're not sure.

Do browse online for accommodation specials – tripadvisor, orbitz, expedia and their ilk often have competitive rates that you won't

receive just walking in off the street (or even calling).

When it comes to eating, prices vary widely. A midrange restaurant meal with a glass of wine or beer will cost around \$15 at lunchtime and \$25 for dinner per person, plus tax and tip (adding another 30% to the bill). If you're dining at one of the city's trendier places, count on spending at least twice that amount.

At the budget end, there are marvelous smoked-meat restaurants where a sandwich still costs just under \$5. You can also eat (but not very often) *poutine*, that marvelous mess of fries, gravy and cheese available at fast-food joints (and some specialty restaurants) for around \$5 as well. The city's captivating markets are another way to eat less expensively, and make for a fun, free outing in themselves.

Going to museums on free days is another way to save money. Walking around Parc du Mont-Royal (or catching the hippie-loving action of the Sunday tam-tam jams held there in the summertime), outings and picnics along the Canal de Lachine, and strolling the waterfront are all free. In fact, this city is made for walking. Those with stamina can walk from Old Montréal to downtown, over to the Plateau and back to the Quartier Latin, stopping for coffee, ice cream and bistro fare en route. When you tire of walking (or if you're going to Little Italy), hop on the metro, which is generally fast and frequent.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Eat Well Montréal** ([www.eatwellmontreal.com](http://www.eatwellmontreal.com))

Restaurant reviews, with photos, plus comments from other readers.

**Fagstein** ([blog.fagstein.com](http://blog.fagstein.com)) Funny, irreverent look at what's happening around the city.

**Midnight Poutine** ([www.midnightpoutine.ca](http://www.midnightpoutine.ca)) A highly readable blog covering music, art, film, restaurants and events in Montréal.

**Montréal Clubs** ([www.montreal-clubs.com](http://www.montreal-clubs.com)) Keeps a finger on the pulse of Montréal's latest and greatest dance and party spots.

**Podcast Alley** ([www.podcastalley.com](http://www.podcastalley.com)) Type in 'Montreal' or 'Quebec' and hear podcasts covering a whole range of wondrous and obscure topics from food and galleries to hockey and indie rock.

**Quebec City Tourism** ([www.quebecregion.com](http://www.quebecregion.com)) Useful tourism website for Québec City and surrounding regions.

**Tourisme Montreal** ([www.tourisme-montreal.org](http://www.tourisme-montreal.org)) Helpful state-run site with info on neighborhoods, events and more.

### HOW MUCH?

1L of mineral water in supermarket \$1.50

Pint of Cheval Blanc \$5

Plate of *poutine* \$4

One-way metro ticket \$2.75

Cappuccino in Little Italy \$3

Hockey game ticket \$30-100

Dinner for two at Au Pied de Cochon \$110

Montreal Gazette newspaper \$1

Chocolatine (chocolate croissant) \$2.50

Souvenir T-shirt \$15



## ADVANCE PLANNING

- **Three to six months before you go** If you're going to the International Jazz Festival or another big event, book tickets for shows. Scan [www.admission.com](http://www.admission.com) for upcoming sports and entertainment events.
- **Two to three weeks before you go** Book a table at one of Montréal's top-notch restaurants like **Toqué!** (p120). Take a browse through local websites like *Midnight Poutine* ([www.midnightpoutine.com](http://www.midnightpoutine.com)) and *epicurean Eat Well Montréal* ([www.eatwellmontreal.com](http://www.eatwellmontreal.com)).
- **One week before you go** Check the tourist office website ([www.tourisme-montreal.org](http://www.tourisme-montreal.org)) to see what art exhibitions are on when you're in town, and take a peek at *Montreal Clubs* ([www.montreal-clubs.com](http://www.montreal-clubs.com)) for parties and nightclub openings.

## SUSTAINABLE MONTRÉAL

Going green in Montréal has become easier in recent years thanks to the addition of numerous new bike lanes coupled with the Bixi network (see the boxed text, p169). For a small

daily or monthly fee, you can grab a bike from one of 300 stands, take it to your destination and check it in, getting a bit of exercise and sparing the atmosphere a few extra hydrocarbons in the process.

Other ways to travel sustainably: skip the bottled water and drink from the tap. The water is safe here. Shop locally: avoid the big chains and support the small café or grocer on the corner. Do visit at least one market while you're here (the Atwater market near the Canal de Lachine is particularly well placed for a picnic); buying fruit and veggies directly from the vendors cuts out the middlemen and puts more money in the hands of farmers.

Unless you're heading off to explore the Laurentians or the Eastern Townships, there's no reason to rent a car in Montréal. The hassle (and expense) of parking, the one-way streets and the slightly touchy drivers all contribute to the less than pleasurable sensation one has slipping behind the wheel here. The no-driving-necessary rule also applies to Québec City. There are plenty of buses shuttling between the two cities, and you can also take the scenic train. Once in Québec City, places of interest are splendidly close to one another – rather like a medieval village (and parking costs even more there).

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