

Québec

RECOGNIZED BY UNESCO

Old Québec City, Montréal (as a City of Design), Lac Saint-Pierre in Mauricie, Mont Saint-Hilaire in Montérégie, the Charlevoix region, Manicouagan-Uapishka, and Parc national de Miguasha in Gaspésie.

A FEW MUST-SEE SITES AND ATTRACTIONS

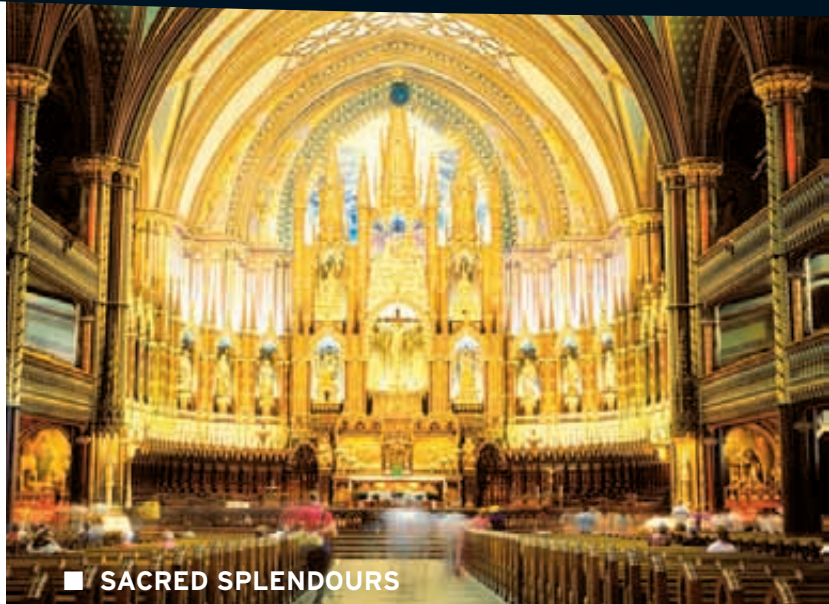
The Saguenay Fjord

Whale watching

Percé Rock

Château Frontenac

Old Montréal, the Old Port and the Quartier international de Montréal



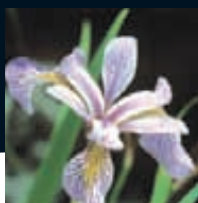
■ SACRED SPLENDOURS

Whether you are passionate about church architecture or sacred works, every region has many buildings and places of worship that reveal the dual cultural and religious heritage of Québec. Be they awe-inspiring basilicas with their opulent ornamentation, humble, centuries-old country churches that charm with their simplistic nature, or renowned sanctuaries made larger-than-life with their historically descriptive glasswork, each discovery bears testimony to the incomparable skill of its artisans. **bonjourquebec.com**, under *To do and see*

IN THE GARDEN...

Discover Québec's lovely regions through its gardens. From the Montréal Botanical Garden, with activities throughout the year, 22,000 plant species and greenhouses, to fabulous Reford Gardens in the Bas-Saint-Laurent, take a leisurely stroll through these fragrant and vibrant artistically landscaped spaces. Whether your visit is of an educational or romantic nature, you will be enthralled by the flowery scents. **www.jardinsduquebec.com**





FLORAL EMBLEM

Blooming in late spring, the blue flag (*Iris versicolor* Linné) is Québec's floral emblem. This gorgeous flower has multiple hues, with blue dominating, and thrives in moist areas. Its harmonious shape resembles the heraldic fleur-de-lis that appears on Québec's coat of arms.

OFFICIAL BIRD

The snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*), Québec's official bird, is a diurnal bird of prey that lives mainly in the Arctic but winters in the St. Lawrence Valley. It perfectly symbolizes the beauty and whiteness of Québec's winters.

OFFICIAL TREE

The yellow birch (*Betula Alleghaniensis Britton*) was chosen as Québec's official tree in 1993. It is not only one of our best-known noble species, but is also noteworthy for the variety of ways in which it can be used and for its high commercial value. It is used in furniture making and is much admired for its colourful fall foliage.

SOME UNUSUAL (AND MAYBE HANDY!) EXPRESSIONS

A **siffleux** is a furry little guy who, when he shows his nose, officially predicts the arrival of spring. You might know him as the groundhog!

Poutine is, basically, a mountain of nice, greasy fries covered in gravy and cheese curds. You'll find variations in finer establishments, including a foie gras-based version.

Pâté chinois is traditionally composed of a layer of browned ground beef, a layer of *blé d'inde* or corn and a layer of *patates pilées* or creamy mashed potatoes. It bears more than a passing resemblance to shepherd's pie.

Cretons, made of ground pork and spices, much like *tête fromagée* or head cheese, is eaten on toast at breakfast.

COAT OF ARMS

The Québec coat of arms features three gold lilies on a blue background, symbolizing the French Regime, a gold leopard on a red background, symbolizing the British Regime, and a branch with three maple leaves, symbolizing Canada. Below the shield is a banner with the motto *Je me souviens* (I remember). These words were used for the first time in 1883, on the façade of the Parliament Building. They were inscribed above the main door, reflecting the goals of the architect, who had designed the façade as a lasting reminder of Québec's history. The motto became official on December 9, 1939, when the Québec government adopted its current coat of arms.

FLAG

The fleur-de-lis flag was raised for the first time at the Parliament Building in Québec City in 1948. The lilies are a legacy of French royalty, and date back over 1,000 years. The royal blue background is a reminder of the coat of arms of the ruling sovereigns in the days when France dominated North America.

A **dépanneur** is a store that's open late and sells food and a limited selection of convenience goods.

For strolling on the beach, many people wear **gougounes** (flip flops).

Caler dans la bouette literally means to sink into the mud.

Être de bonne heure sur le piton means to get up early.

The **huard** is a magnificent bird that also designates the Canadian one-dollar coin on which it appears (the "loonie" in English).

Magasiner means to do some shopping.

C'est tiquidou is what we say when something's perfect!

USEFUL INFORMATION

Visit the *Useful tips* section at bonjourquebec.com, and to learn more about safety when partaking in the various activities offered in Québec, enter the word “safety” into the search engine on bonjourquebec.com.

CUSTOMS AND ENTRY PROCEDURES

Foreign visitors must carry a valid passport. Visas are required for visitors from certain countries. To re-enter the United States, American tourists need to be aware of and comply with the new rules in effect in their country (consult www.cbp.gov). At all times, it is recommended to check the regulations in the host country. It is also advisable to check with the Canadian consulate or embassy in your country prior to your departure.

As of January 23, 2007, anyone, including U.S. citizens, entering or re-entering the United States by air from Canada must have a passport or a NEXUS card (when used at a NEXUS kiosk at participating airports). Since January 31, 2008, anyone travelling by land or sea must present one of the following documents: a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's licence AND proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate; or a birth certificate for Canadians aged 16 and under; or a Canadian passport, or a NEXUS card; or a Free and Secure Trade (FAST) card. For more details, visit www.cbsa.gc.ca and www.cic.gc.ca.

BUSINESS HOURS

Stores, shopping centres and most businesses are generally open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays, and from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sundays. Some establishments open earlier and close later in the evenings, such as pharmacies and grocery stores. A few shopping centres are open every weeknight until 9:00 p.m. Business hours for banks are much more restricted.

STATUTORY AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

In Québec, most businesses, government offices, banks and stores are closed the following days:

New Year's Day (January 1)

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Journée nationale des patriotes (Patriots' Day, the second-to-last Monday in May)

Fête nationale du Québec (Québec's national holiday, June 24)

Canada Day (July 1)

Labour Day (first Monday in September)

Thanksgiving (second Monday in October)

Christmas Day (December 25)

CURRENCY, MONEY AND THE EXCHANGE OFFICE

The legal tender is the Canadian dollar, which is divided into 100 cents. Bank notes are available in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollars, and coins in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 cents and 1 and 2 dollars.

The leading credit cards are accepted everywhere, namely Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Traveller's cheques are generally accepted in large hotels, some restaurants and major stores. Otherwise, they must be cashed at an exchange office or bank.

There are numerous exchange offices in Québec's main cities. Airports also offer exchange services. Some businesses accept American money, but they offer a less competitive rate than the exchange offices.

Banking institutions are generally open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can withdraw cash from most automatic teller machines (linked to the Cirrus, PLUS System or Interac networks) any time, seven days a week.

HEALTH

Foreign travellers must cover their own medical expenses. Consequently, it is important that you take out an insurance policy prior to your departure.

Travellers bringing their own medications with them are responsible for inquiring about customs formalities with the Canada Border Services Agency. Pharmacies can fill prescriptions only if they've been written by a member of the Collège des médecins du Québec (Québec's professional corporation of physicians). In the event of an emergency, dial 911 from any telephone.

TAXES AND TIPPING

Two taxes, the federal goods and services tax (GST) and the Québec sales tax (QST), are added to the selling price of most goods and services. Several tourist regions charge a specific tax on accommodations. The amount is \$2 or \$3 a night or 3% of the price of the room per night, before the GST and QST are added.

You must leave a tip on service provided in restaurants and bars and by taxi drivers and hairdressers. The amount, which is not included in the bill, generally represents 10% to 15% of the total bill (before taxes). Here in Québec, for a restaurant bill, we usually add the amounts of the two taxes (GST and QST) together, the sum of which equals approximately 13%. Tipping bellhops or porters is at your discretion (generally, \$1 per bag carried).

ALCOHOL, BARS AND CASINOS

You have to be at least 18 years old to enter bars and casinos and to purchase or consume alcohol (you could be asked to show ID). Wines and spirits are sold at outlets of the Société des alcools du Québec, or SAQ, the province's liquor board. You can buy beer at grocery and convenience stores, which also stock a limited selection of wines.

CLIMATE

Most of Québec's cities enjoy a humid continental climate, with four very distinct seasons and significant differences in temperature marking each one. Summer is hot, while winter sees a considerable amount of snow fall. Québec's Great North is characterized by arctic and subarctic climates. The ancestral land of the Cree and the Inuit is known for its lengthy winters and brief summers.

Below is an overview of seasonal temperatures (minimum and maximum):

CITY	January	April	July	October
Montréal	-12/-5 °C	2/11 °C	17/26 °C	5/12 °C
Québec	-17/-7 °C	-1/7 °C	13/25 °C	1/10 °C
Gaspé	-17/-6 °C	-3/6 °C	10/23 °C	0/10 °C
Kuujuuaq	-28/-19 °C	-14/-4 °C	5/17 °C	-3/2 °C

For detailed local forecasts and long-term trends, visit www.weatheroffice.gc.ca

DRIVING AND GETTING AROUND IN QUÉBEC

Buses run between many towns and cities in Québec and numerous ferries offer year-round or seasonal service on the St. Lawrence River and other major waterways. Most foreign driver's licences are valid in Québec. There are lots of car rental agencies, many of which have outlets in the airports and at railroad stations.

Visitors holding a driver's licence from their country of origin can drive on Québec's roads for a maximum period of six months. This means you don't have to obtain an international driving permit, although if your papers are in a language other than French or English, it is highly recommended that you do so.

By law, all vehicle occupants must wear a seat belt.

Consuming alcohol or having alcoholic beverages present in a moving vehicle is strictly prohibited under Québec's Highway Safety Code. Furthermore, a person suspected of driving under the influence will have to submit to a breathalyzer test. If the test reveals a concentration of alcohol in that person's blood of 80 or more milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood, his or her driver's permit will be immediately revoked for a 30-day period.

Although the minimum age for driving a car is 16, some car rental companies require that the driver be at least 25, while others charge higher rates for drivers under the age of 21.

For more information about driving in Québec, road signs and getting around, visit the *Getting there* section at bonjourquebec.com.

TELEPHONE AND POSTAL SERVICES

Local calls can be made from public telephones. You can pay with coins or a prepaid card (you'll pay more if you use your credit card). For long-distance calls, using a prepaid card is usually the best bargain.

Foreign cell phones may work in Québec depending on the technology used and the service offered by your provider.

Visitors who plan to spend several weeks in Québec but with no fixed address can take advantage of the General Delivery service for their mail. The French and international term for this service is "Poste restante." Visit www.canadapost.ca for more information.

ELECTRICITY

The electric current is 110 volts/60 cycles, as it is throughout North America. Because outlets here cannot accommodate European plugs, you'd best bring or buy an adaptor.

THE MUSEUMS PASS: THE WAY TO GO!

Museum lovers will be thrilled: three regions offer fixed-rate museum passes to allow you to make the most of museums in Montréal, Québec City and Trois-Rivières. The choice is yours!

www.museesmontreal.org

www.museocapitale.qc.ca

www.tourismetroisrivieres.com

MAIN TICKET OUTLETS

ADMISSION

www.admission.com

BILLETECH

www.billetech.com

LA VITRINE (last-minute tickets)

www.lavitrine.com

QUALITY FIRST!

To ensure service quality in the tourism industry and an awareness of the commitments made by businesses towards their clientele, the Ministère du Tourisme has adopted the Démarche Qualité Tourisme (tourism quality approach), which leads to a service certification from the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, an independent and impartial internationally accredited organization.





FOR INFORMATION OR RESERVATIONS:

bonjourquebec.com

From Canada or the United States:

1 877 BONJOUR (266-5687)

From the United Kingdom

Freephone number: 0800 051 7055

From 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week

International:

Telephone: 514 873-2015

Fax: 514 864-3838

Ministère du Tourisme du Québec

Case postale 979

Montréal (Québec) H3C 2W3

CANADA

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SERVING THE DISABLED

For information regarding hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions in Québec with facilities for the disabled, please contact Kéroul at 514 252-3104 (www.keroul.qc.ca).

INFOTOURISTE CENTRES | PERMANENT CENTRES

MONTRÉAL

1255, rue Peel (corner of Sainte-Catherine)

QUÉBEC CITY

12, rue Sainte-Anne (across from the Château Frontenac)

Seasonal Infotouriste centres are also located at Québec's main border crossings. Visit the *Contact us* section at bonjourquebec.com.



TRAVEL-WISE TOURIST

In Québec, whether you are enjoying the bustle of the large cities or the diversity of holiday resorts, admiring the majestic St. Lawrence River or exploring the great outdoors, help us to keep these treasures and resources clean. bonjourquebec.com.

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