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# Montreal Travel Book

Your essential guide · 2026 edition

## Welcome to Montreal

Montreal is the largest city in Quebec and the second-largest in Canada — a place where French and North American cultures meet, festivals fill the calendar, and four distinct seasons each bring something new. This short guide gathers the essentials for a great visit.

## What Montreal is known for

- World-class festivals (jazz, Just for Laughs, Osheaga)
- Wood-fired bagels and smoked meat
- French language and a bilingual, multicultural character
- Mount Royal and the Old Port
- Old Montreal and Notre-Dame Basilica
- Cirque du Soleil, hockey and four major universities

## When to visit

Summer (June–August) is peak festival and terrace season. Fall brings foliage and smaller crowds. Winter is cold and snowy but festive, with Christmas markets and the Underground City (the RÉSO). Spring is a quieter transition season.

## Getting around

The STM metro (four lines) and buses cover the city; BIXI bikes are handy in summer. Downtown and Old Montreal are very walkable. From the airport (YUL), the 747 shuttle reaches downtown around the clock.

## Top sights

- Old Montreal and Notre-Dame Basilica
- Mount Royal and its lookout
- The Old Port and riverfront
- The Botanical Garden and Olympic Park
- Jean-Talon Market
- The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
- The Quartier des Spectacles

## Where to eat

Start with the classics — bagels, smoked meat and poutine — then explore an international scene and the public markets (Jean-Talon and Atwater). Great food is found in every neighbourhood.

## Neighbourhoods to explore

- Old Montreal — cobblestone streets and heritage
- Downtown — shopping, museums and festivals
- The Plateau & Mile End — cafés, murals and indie life
- Little Italy & La Petite-Patrie — markets and food
- Verdun & the Sud-Ouest — riverside and canal walks

## Day trips from Montreal

- Eastern Townships — vineyards and lakes (~1.5 hrs)
- Mont-Tremblant — skiing and outdoors (~1.5 hrs)
- Quebec City — history and charm (~3 hrs)
- Ottawa — museums and the capital (~2 hrs)
- Charlevoix — scenery and the river (~5 hrs)

## Festivals & holidays

Saint-Jean-Baptiste (June 24) is Quebec's National Holiday and one of the biggest celebrations of the year, followed by Canada Day and a packed summer festival season. Winter brings Christmas markets, Igloofest and Montréal en Lumière. Festival dates change yearly — check official sources.

## Free things to do

- Hike Mount Royal and enjoy the lookout
- Walk or cycle the Lachine Canal
- Stroll the Old Port and riverfront
- Browse Jean-Talon Market
- See the street-art murals on Saint-Laurent
- Catch free outdoor festival stages in summer

## Practical tips

- French is the official language; English is widely understood in tourist areas
- Customary tipping is about 15–20%
- Taxes are added at checkout
- Dress for the season — temperature swings are large
- Currency is the Canadian dollar (CAD)

*Discover more guides, neighbourhoods and local businesses at [MTLPages.com](https://www.mtlpages.com). Details such as hours, prices and event dates change over time — please confirm with official sources before you go.*