

Travel Savers

Montreal: A Taste of Europe in Canada

You don't need to travel far to feel the magic of being in a foreign land. Just head north to Quebec's largest city, where you'll find old European architecture, cobblestone streets and French — the language of romance — being spoken all around.

And with the exchange rate in your favor, you'll pay about 30 percent less for everything you do and see in Montreal.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Pick up a free map of the city at the Infotourist Centre and start your visit with a free, self-guided walking tour around Old Montreal. Some of the

city's spectacular architecture dates back 350 years. The buildings are illuminated at night, so an evening stroll can be just as enchanting.

From there, head down to the city's Old Port, where most of the on-site activities are free, as is the view of the majestic St. Lawrence River. Also free is "the underground city," a subterranean world that includes a pedestrian mall with 900 shops, 10 metro stations, hotels, museums and 2,700 apartments.

Take a guided tour of the Notre Dame Basilica for just \$3. For roughly \$8, visit the Biodome, which features live collections from the four ecosystems of the Americas.



The Montreal High Lights Festival is one of several special events hosted by the city.

Some museums are free on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. After 6 p.m., you can visit the world-renowned Montreal Botanical Garden for free.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Montreal's charming, historic B&Bs include the affordable Les Passants du Sans Soucy, which has nine uniquely decorated rooms and the best breakfast in town (www.lesanssoucy.com). The historic Bonaparte Inn & Restaurant (www.bonaparte.com), with its nice views and exquisite furnishings, is another attractive option. Prices are mid-range though still a good deal.

Another great way to save money is to stay at the Marriott Montreal Westmount (www.residence-montreal.com) in a room with a fully equipped kitchen. You'll save on eating out while enjoying the hotel's complimentary grocery shopping service. Daily hot breakfast buffet is included.

The Montreal Tourism Web site is updated daily with last-minute hotel deals, guaranteeing 10 percent off regular room prices. Visit www.tourism-montreal.org and click on "great deals" for a variety of money-saving packages.

FOOD & DINING

Bonaparte's is known for its classic French food and great atmosphere, not to mention its hearty full breakfast for just \$7-\$8. Altitude 737's menu is pricier, but the food is spectacular and the view from the top of one of Montreal's tallest buildings is worth the extra bucks. Montreal also has a number of BYO ("bring your own" wine) restaurants. Most are on Prince-Arthur and Duluth Streets in the Plateau area.

ENTERTAINMENT

Montreal is a city of festivals — from the famed Montreal International Jazz Festival to the International Festival of Film & Art. Most festivals are free to the public. Check the tourism Web site's calendar for upcoming events.

If you like to dance the night away, Montreal is big on tango, especially at places like Jello Bar, which serves up 50 different kinds of martinis — as well as dance lessons, from salsa to swing — for a \$5 cover charge.

Expert Travel Tip

Courtesy of Gilles Bengle, Director Media Relations, Tourisme Montreal:

"You can get more for your money and more from your visit with the Montreal Museum Pass, which allows you to visit 25 museums for just \$20 over two days during a three-day period. Atop the Pointe-à-Callière Museum of Archaeology and History — overlooking the Old Port, Old Montreal, the St. Lawrence River, the Biosphere and Jacques Cartier Bridge — is a great place to have lunch."

Reader Travel Tip

Submitted by John Dickenson of North Wales, Pa.: "I booked a deluxe hotel in Montreal for \$24 net. The Marriott Courtyard Downtown (410 Sherbrooke St. West) room rate was \$139 CAD, \$162 CAD including taxes, which comes to \$124 USD. At checkout, I received a Marriott Gift Certificate for \$100 USD on a future stay." This offer, the Bonus Bucks promotion, is good through April 30. For reservations, call Marriott toll free at 800-932-2198.

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