



THE
WINTER SUN
SPECIAL

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SHORT STAY

Katie Bridges heads to Quebec's capital city and details a whirlwind itinerary that combines glimpses of history with cutting-edge gourmet experiences.

[QUEBEC CITY]



FROM VIEILLE TO VOGUE

With arguably more history packed inside its old city walls than anywhere else in Canada, Quebec City is the long-weekend trip you've been meaning to take. Visitors will be rewarded with old-world charm that feels like you're an ocean (and not a one-and-a-half-hour flight) away from Toronto. Horse-drawn carriages trotting down cobblestone streets will sneak into the photos you snap – but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find a cosmopolitan hub with more than just tourist trappings. The 400-year-old city has a thrilling food scene and nightlife that will keep you up later than expected.

BONJOUR, MONSIEUR!

Be one of the first guests to stay at Monsieur Jean, which opened in late September on Rue Pierre Olivier Chauveau. This chic addition to historic Upper Town is walking distance from most attractions and offers guests floor-to-ceiling views of the St. Lawrence River. Decor here is playful but moody with signs of Monsieur Jean (the hotel's omnipotent, namesake host) scattered across the property in flourishes of royal blue. Head across the chequerboard tiles in the lobby to the cubbyhole filled with books and board games, or get yourself some bedtime reading from the short story machine.

GETTING THERE



BY AIR: Flights from Toronto to Jean Lesage Airport take around 1.5 hours. Fly from Pearson with WestJet or AirCanada or with Porter from Billy Bishop (all around \$300 return). Downtown is about a 25-minute drive from YOB.

BY LAND: Quebec City is an eight-hour drive up the 401. Via Rail is an option, but be prepared for a 10+ hour journey.

ABOVE: Quebec City – the province's capital – is the oldest French speaking community in North America

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FRENCH IMMERSION IN HISTORY

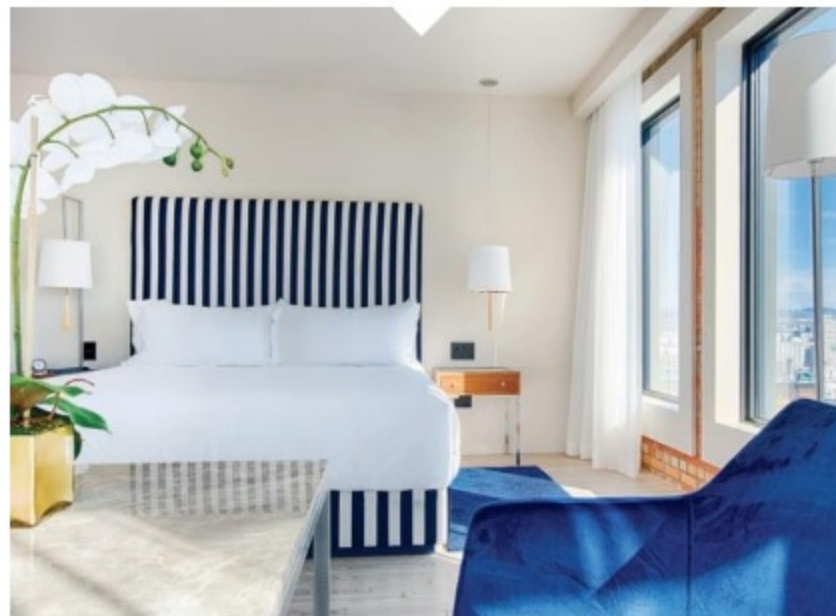
Dedicate time to unpacking the history of this once-strategic fortress, the only walled city north of Mexico. Start at the star-shaped citadel and see for yourself how the city got its name from the Algonquin word "Kébec," meaning "where the river narrows." Terrasse Dufferin has the best views of Château Frontenac, the world's most photographed hotel. Next, head to the nearby Plains of Abraham, Canada's most important battlefield, where the British defeated the French in a short but pivotal battle in 1759. Don't miss Quartier Petit Champlain, the oldest (and dare we say, cutest) commercial district in North America. If you don't feel like taking the Breakneck Stairs, Quebec's oldest staircase, ride the funicular to the shopping row.

SAINT-ROCH'S RANGÉE DE RESTAURANT

Beyond Quebec's old city walls lies the working class neighbourhood of Saint-Roch. What was once a run-down district has seen a Queen-West-esque transformation in recent years, with young professionals calling it home and visitors making the twenty-minute trek to some of the city's trendiest restaurants, coffee shops and bars. Le Clocher Penché is a bustling brunch spot with an impressive wine list and stellar plates of pasta. Down the road, L'Affaire est Ketchup is a small operation delivering big flavours – the only menu is handwritten on a chalkboard and their adventurous French cuisine (sweetbreads, bison) is whipped up in a tiny kitchen consisting of two electric stoves. ♦

The Battle of the Plains of Abraham: This battle in the Seven Years' War, which began on 13 September, 1759, was fought just outside the walls of Quebec City. Visitors can now tour the whole site.

UNPACK THE HISTORY OF THE ONLY WALLED CITY NORTH OF MEXICO



BELOW: Monsieur Jean, a brand new boutique hotel in historic Upper Town, is blessed with stunning views of the St. Lawrence River

GOURMAND'S GUIDE

From bistros to burgers, here's where to eat, drink and be merry in Q.C.



LE SAM BISTRO ÉVOLUTION

This upscale bistro lets you get up close and personal with the Fairmont Château Frontenac. Snag a seat in the sunny conservatory and watch tourists traverse the boardwalk as you sip classic cocktails and dig into life-changing courses like the Gaspesian lobster tail on tagliatelle.



LE CHIC SHACK

This home for 100 per cent Canadian-beef burgers. In Place d'Armes. Is worth the wait. Go all out and order housemade poutine with local cheese, and shakes made with Laiterie De Coatlicook's old-fashioned ice cream. Top tip: spike your milkshake.



CHEZ MUFFY

Inside the Auberge Saint-Antoine hotel, they offer diners a lavish farm-to-fork menu – two can share (\$120) a mix of decadent dishes like oysters and duck foie gras torchon. Snuggle up to the fire at this historic warehouse which dates back to 1822.