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Québec City Pleasures

Part Two of a Three-Part Series about the Canadian Destination and its Legendary Joie de Vivre.

By Marg Russett



With youngsters in tow, any stay in Québec City amounts to a wonderful, experiential lesson in history and culture.

History, scenery, style and sensational pizzazz make Québec City a North American holiday destination of choice. But did you know it's also a great place to explore with the kids ? It is.

Better yet, visiting en famille doesn't mean you have to settle for ordinary accommodations, eateries or amenities. We took the deluxe route to sampling its many delights and we highly recommend it. A first-class experience awaits you.



The beautiful Auberge Saint-Antoine, an award-winning boutique hotel, is situated in the city's Old Port.

With youngsters in tow, any stay in Québec City amounts to a wonderful, experiential lesson in history and culture. After all, not only is it the capital city of Québec, it's one of the oldest cities on the continent, dating back to 1608. Our children were able to appreciate that in a memorable, hands-on way thanks to our stay at the beautiful Auberge Saint-Antoine in the city's Old Port. In fact, the award-winning boutique hotel is built on an archaeological site ; fascinating historic treasures from both the French and British regimes—uncovered thanks to an archaeological dig on the property—are on view throughout the property.

However there's nothing dated about the amenities or the hospitality. Family-owned, the Auberge Saint-Antoine is a member of Relais & Châteaux, and it's considered one of the top hotels in Canada. Our beautiful suite was ideal for a family of four, and the location of the Auberge, right in the heart of the old village down by the water, is absolutely perfect. Boutiques, antique shops, museums, galleries, gourmet restaurants, cafes and bistros can all be discovered in the area.



Au Jardin Chez Muffy, a new pop-up restaurant at Auberge Saint-Antoine, was a favourite dining spot.

Bistro Le SAM, at Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, is one of them. It's named in honour of Samuel de Champlain. Though he's lauded as the Father of New France, the famous explorer, born in 1567, was also the founder of Quebec City. The bistro is a spot for casual but fine dining, with Fairmont quality service. Its menu offers items ranging from Foie Gras Parfait with Nordic Berries to Pulled Beef Cheek Poutine, Truffle and Woodland Mushroom Ravioli, and Maple Syrup Mille-Feuille. We all enjoyed our lunch in this beautiful setting overlooking the water and port.

As you meander through the Old Port district, Quartier Petit Champlain, Place Royale and Saint-Roch, the Passages Insolites public art circuit, available through October 11, showcases more than 20 unique artworks by contemporary artists.



Chocolaterie de l'Île d'Orléans is a huge hit with the kids.

On any Québec City adventure, one of the unforgettable pleasures is the food. No wonder it ranks among the best foodie destinations anywhere. Our dinner at Restaurant Légende, 255, rue Saint-Paul, was the most delectable proof possible. We experienced the six-course tasting menu and it was fabulous. The current tasting menu is described as “A tribute to our ancestors, a return to our roots and a reflection of our culinary history from the First Nations until today.” Ingredients are locally sourced. Restaurantlegende.com

Next on our agenda was a day tour to Île d'Orléans, the “kitchen garden” of Québec. It's an island located in the Saint Lawrence River a few kilometres from the city. Our excursion included three stops : at Cassis Monna & Filles, Vignoble Isle de Bacchus, and Chocolaterie de l'Île d'Orléans.

Cassis Monna & Filles is a lush, 22-hectare rural site that's famous for its black currant production and products, from black currant jelly, mustard, ketchup, honey, chocolate and butter to Crème de Cassis and black currant vodka. Over 60,000 bottles of black current liquor are produced each year. There's even black current soap.



entree de l'isle de bacchus au coucher de soleil a l'ile d'orleans groupe de jeunes femmes entrant dans le vignoble – été

On site you'll find a museum, wine cellar and gourmet boutique, a restaurant and a dairy bar offering 18 different flavours of gelato and sorbet. Fittingly, black currant-vanilla is a hit. cassismonna.com

Vignoble Isle de Bacchus, at 1335, chemin Royal, is a heritage site that dates back over 300 years. It's also one of the oldest of the many wineries on the island. Established in 1982, the vineyard takes its name from a term Jacques Cartier used to describe the island back in 1535. He called it "Isle de Bacchus" because of the profusion of wild vines discovered at the time. Today this locale offers tastings, guided tours and a terrace and picnic area with breathtaking views of the river. isledebacchus.com

As expected, Chocolaterie de l'Île d'Orléans was a huge hit with the kids. This "sweet spot" was full of deliciousness. All the goodies are made on site, at 8330, chemin Royal, and our youngsters loved their gift baskets and ice cream. In their words? "Heaven."



Visiting Quebec City en famille doesn't mean you have to settle for anything ordinary. We took the deluxe route to sampling the city's many delights and we highly recommend it.

A final noteworthy treat on this epic Québec City adventure was dinner at Au Jardin Chez Muffy, a brand new pop-up restaurant located in a historic setting at Auberge Saint-Antoine. This captivating venue, with its relaxed vibe, was our family's favourite dining place. The cuisine features the organic harvest from the hotel's farm, Ferme du Coteau, on the l'Île d'Orléans. saint-antoine.com

ABOUT

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