

A guide to Montreal

A stylized orange leaf graphic with a central vein and two smaller veins branching out, positioned between the words 'to' and 'Montreal'.

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Montréal is an engaging mixture of the old and the new. The old exists in the history still so alive in Vieux-Montréal while the new powers the city with its hum of industry, energy and a cosmopolitan look and feel. What a wonderful city for Localization World's conference.

A little history of Montréal

Montréal, which sits on an island in the St. Lawrence River at the western end of the Province of Québec, was thought to have been visited by Vikings, the Italians and even Basque sailors from the Spanish-French border. But it was the French, in the person of Jacques Cartier, who “discovered” the city in 1535. The British gained control in 1763, but the French influence in Québec and Montréal has remained strong over the centuries.

Politics, a touchy subject just about everywhere, is especially sensitive here. A long-standing separatist movement (secession from Canada) gave birth to a powerful political party and a 1980 referendum on separation, which went down to defeat.

Montréal, given its location on the St. Lawrence River, has long been Québec’s center of commerce, and has developed a lively, international flavor.



The people of Montréal

People in Montréal are very friendly. The “joie de vivre” is contagious in this bustling cosmopolitan city. Whether it’s sipping a café au lait in a café, visiting the Old Town or gambling in the Casino Montréal, you might find it difficult to attend all of the sessions your boss at home has asked you to attend.

Truly global in its outlook, Montréal is home to thousands of immigrants so those of you who might feel homesick can always find someone from your home country: Italians, Irish, Scottish, English, Haitians, Chinese and Greek make the top of the list.

But Montréal remains truly French. Here’s a tip from the City’s tourist bureau on whether to kiss or shake hands when greeting someone: greeting a French person from Montréal can be confusing for visitors. The customary way to greet friends in Montréal is to kiss them on both cheeks, starting with the right, whereas Canadians in other provinces tend to keep their distance and simply shake hands. If you can’t remember this rule, just start kissing until they tell you to stop!



Joie vivre

Language

French is the official language of Québec. In fact, Montréal is the second-largest French-speaking city in the world. But English is widely used as well. For you clients attending Localization World, no you can't ship your software in English.

Weather

The fall is a lovely time in the southern parts of Québec. In October, the temperature usually ranges from the high 30's to the mid-50's (F) and the weather is fairly dry. However, Montréal is a port city and the weather can change quickly due to the river influence.

Smoking

While smoking is forbidden in stores, movies, theatres, government offices, elevators and banks, it's still a popular habit. Montréal does not treat smokers like criminals as does its neighbor to the south. Smoking is allowed in bars and restaurants, though restaurants are supposed to have non-smoking areas.

Cosmopolitan



Attractions

Mont Royal (Mount Royal)

A mountain (actually three mountains) in the city, Mount Royal hosts one of the city's largest open spaces, Parc du Mont Royal. Designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed New York's Central Park, Mont Royal has an extended network of beautiful walking trails, leading to forests, open spaces and scenic vistas of the city.

Vieux Montréal (Old Montréal)

This is Montréal's original downtown. Some of the buildings here date back to the 1600's. Old Montréal is now an atmospheric district, complete with historic churches, fashionable shops and tantalizing restaurants. Le Vieux-Port (the Old Port) sits on the district's riverbank, replete with maritime history and attractions. A good starting point is Place Jacques Cartier on the Rue de Notre Dame in the center of Vieux Montréal.

Underground City

Beneath the city of Montréal is another city, complete with more than 1,700 shops and businesses. This network of pedestrian walkways extends over 30 kilometers (more than 18 miles). In addition to connecting to certain metro stations, the Underground provides access to museums, restaurants, movie theatres and other entertainment venues.

What to See



Food

Of course, as the second-largest French-speaking city in the world, Montréal boasts wonderful Gallic restaurants and bistros, traditional and contemporary French cuisine. But Montréal also has its own Little Italy and Chinatown as well as restaurants representing the finest national cuisines of the world.



Royal Ambiance

Best spot for a power lunch

Otto in the new W Hotel (901 Victoria Square, 514.845.5333)

This restaurant caters to the hip, young, international executives.

Best late night dining

L'Express (3927 Rue St. Denis)

This hot spot doesn't need any marketing efforts or even a sign outside because it stays packed until 3:00AM every night.

Top choice for fish and fun

Milo's (5357 ave. du Parc, 514.272.3522)

If you plan to go to dinner and experience excellent seafood but you want a lot of ambiance, partygoers rubbing elbows, you can go to Milo's. This in spot for Hollywood stars serves you awesome food, garnished with a loud and fun client list.



Entertainment

Quatier Latin - *Location: Rue Saint-Denis and environs between Rue Sherbrooke Est and Blvd. de Maisonneuve Est. Note that bars stay open until 3:00AM*

The home of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and the Collège du Vieux-Montréal, the district has a vibrant cultural scene of theatres and art galleries as well as lively nightlife with tons of bistros, bars and clubs. Look for funky shopping opportunities as well (students do set the fashion scene here).

Casino de Montréal - *1 du Casino Avenue - Parc Jean-Drapeau*

From the Quebec and Montreal pavilions of the 1967 Expo, a grand casino was born, complete with restaurants, a performance hall, and, of course, slot machines and table games.

Crescent Street

This festive street, between René-Lévesque and Maisonneuve boulevards, is home to festivals, events and street shows. There are clubs, restaurants and more than 25 bars!



Clubs

1234

(1234 de la Montagne, downtown Montréal)

One of the city's hot new nightclubs.

System

(2020 Crescent, 514-288-2888)

Pick your music, this place has it all.

737 Altitude

(1 Place Ville Marie, 514.397.0737)

Two floors of partying on top the Place Ville Marie tower, plus a great view of the city.



Notes

Thanks to the following Internet resources for information used in this article

1. wikipedia
2. Montréal e-Guide (moreMontréal.com)
3. www.Montréal.com
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