

## **BCD Travel Recommends: Montreal**

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### **Gallic joie de vivre**



Montreal is unique in North America, blending a brash New World urbanity with the romantic charm of its European-flavored historic districts and a Gallic *joie de vivre* evident in the city's many pavement cafés and dynamic nightlife.

Some 67 percent of Montreal's inhabitants claim French as a mother tongue, making it the second most populous French-speaking city in the world after Paris. But Montreal is also home to a cosmopolitan mix of immigrants from around the world, all of whom contribute to the rich cultural heritage and lively atmosphere of the city. This is never more evident than during one of the frequent large-scale festivals celebrated in downtown Montreal, notably the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, when tens of thousands of revelers fill the streets each day.

Boulevard St-Laurent ("The Main"), which runs through the Plateau and divides Montreal into east and west, is the city's liveliest street, where the shops, bars and ethnic restaurants draw crowds until well into the night.

### **Don't Miss**

#### ***Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)***

The permanent collection at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is split between the original beaux-arts building, which houses Canadian, Inuit and First Nations art, as well as decorative arts; and the postmodern structure opposite, where European masters, prints and drawings and decorative arts are exhibited. The museum also has a reputation for hosting outstanding temporary exhibitions.

1379-1380 rue Sherbrooke West

Tel: +1 514 285 2000 or +1 800 899 6873

[www.mmfa.qc.ca](http://www.mmfa.qc.ca)



#### ***The Underground City***

If you've had enough culture and want some shopping action, Montreal makes it easy for you – even in the ferociously cold winter months. Constantly growing, the "city" - which links many major buildings and multi-level shopping malls in the area - is a shopper's paradise in any season. One major section is reached via Peel and McGill metro stations on the green line, and another via Bonaventure station on the orange line. East of McGill station is a growing axis from Place-des-Arts metro down through Complexe Desjardins and beyond. Safe and sheltered from the elements, the Underground City

offers a huge range of goods and services as well as a handy way to get from place to place without weather or traffic problems.

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### ***Montreal International Jazz Festival***

We know, we know, the 2008 festival is months away (it's scheduled for June 26-July 6). But for devotees of jazz, this is one for the calendar already. The festival offers about 500 concerts, of which three-quarters are free of charge, hosting about 2000 musicians, give or take a few, from over 20 countries. About 2 million visitors come from all over the planet to an event that has become an international jazz rendez-vous and a laboratory for the creation of new talent, most recently contributing to the successes of artists such as Diana Krall and Norah Jones.

### **C'est délicieux!**

Montreal's vibrant restaurant scene pays more than passing attention to all things French, as you might expect. But the city boasts a range of delectable discoveries from all corners of the globe, for all budgets.

### ***Fondumentale***

For a romantic evening, this restaurant is a great place to linger over its namesake dishes, by the fireplace in the Victorian dining room or, on warm summer nights, on the patio terrace. Start by dipping croutons in emmental and gruyère cheeses infused with pink peppercorns, or choose from a variety of meats in oil or broth – there is caribou for the adventurous. Either way, finish off with fresh fruit dipped in chocolate or maple syrup fondue.

4325 rue St-Denis

Tel: +1 514 499 1446

### ***Ferreira Café Trattoria***

Right in Downtown, this Portuguese restaurant buzzes at lunchtime as patrons get down to the serious business of enjoying calamari, fish and other well-prepared dishes in a warm interior enlivened by glazed tiles and plates from the old country. The extensive port selection is perhaps best reserved for an evening sitting.

1446 rue Peel

Tel: +1 514 848 0988

### ***Boris Bistro***

You'll get good bistro fare like steak tartare, duck confit and braised rabbit at this Old Montreal restaurant, but the main reason locals and visitors alike come is the terrace. Leafy trees provide a canopy over the candlelit tables, ensconced within high stone walls and the freestanding facade of the old commercial building that once stood here.

465 rue McGill

Tel: +1 514 848 9575

### ***Café Santropol***

They have savory vegetarian pies, but the huge and hugely inventive sandwiches are the trademark here – the triple-decker St-Urbain Corner has cream and cottage cheeses, honey, nuts, olives and ham or chicken served on fat slabs of the most delicious bread. All meals come decked out with fruit, as do the divine milkshakes.

3990 rue St-Urbain

Tel: +1 514 842 3110

**When the weather turns ...**

Ice skates are an integral part of every young Montrealer's sports equipment, which is why the city authorities maintain more than 150 skating rinks in the region every winter. On sunny afternoons and picturesque wintry evenings, large skating rinks, such as those in La Fontaine Park, the Old Port, Mont-Royal Park and Maisonneuve Park, are popular meeting spots where families, friends, lovers, amateur skaters and accomplished athletes enjoy Montréal's beautiful winter days.

