

TRAVELOGUE

Montréal in Summer . . . Magnifique!



Coasting
with Bonnie Carroll

In summer, Montréal is North America's hottest destination, and every year I head up the freeway to the airport, armed with a suitcase and gifts for my family to board an Air Canada jet for the adventure of re-discovering my favorite Canadian city. The flight to Dorval is a pleasant prelude to the "Taste of Paris" experience awaiting visitors who are arriving in a city declared "New France" in the 1600's, which is celebrating its 354th anniversary.

A musical selection is available for flyers' listening pleasure, including the cool jazz of Les McCann, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and Ramsey Lewis, providing a tempting preview of the Jazz greats appearing at the

renowned Festival International De Jazz De Montreal, beginning this year on June 27 running through July 7. This world-class Jazz festival transforms downtown Montréal into a unique urban celebration of music and joie de vivre, providing over 1.5 million visitors with 350 shows, including blues, latin rhythms, Cajun, as well as popular and world music.

Sightseeing in The Old Port of Montréal, located on the Rue de la Commune, can be enjoyed most from a beautiful horse drawn carriage that comes with a tour guide/driver, who will recant all the historic stories associated with the landmark buildings of the city. Lunch on the du Vieux Port terrace, followed by a souvenir hunt on rue St-Paul promises to be an afternoon of fun for everyone.

The second largest French-speaking city in the world is the home of the Just For Laughs Festival scheduled from July 17 to 28, which boasts



The beautiful Montréal

an alumni roster that includes Kelsey Grammer, Brett Butler, Jerry Seinfeld and David Schwimmer. World-class performers pack the Montréal entertainment calendar between June and September with a full and varied program of exciting exhibitions.

Beginning April 28 to September 22, American artist Louise Bourgeois will display her select works from 1947-1955 for the first time in the Musee d' Art Contemporain De Montréal on Sainte-Catherine Street W., and the McCord Museum of Canadian History will feature a new exhibit "Montréal, That's Hockey!", a display on the past 120 years of hockey history.

As a woman with a well earned reputation for world class shopping, I highly recommend browsing through the popular boutiques on Sherbrooke, Côte Ste-Catherine, and St-Laurent. Cours Mont-Royal, a hotel built in 1922, has become a lively place to shop and eat. If your budget is a bit tight, the second hand shops on Mont-Royal are a good choice.

A visit to Montréal is never complete for me without "high tea" at the Ritz-Carlton Kempinski, where Elizabeth Taylor married Richard Burton. The elegant hotel garden is a cool oasis of calm on a hot summer day. On my last visit, I was joined by Princess Natasha André Melikoff, a Montréaler who has perfected the art of "afternoon tea".

With over 4,000 restaurants, from ritzy to rustic, you could literally dine till you drop in this city. My personal favorite is Chez La Mere

Michel on St-Guy, offering a classical French menu and superb service. Food show fanatics and gourmets may enjoy tasting culinary samples of five continents at the Les Fêtes Gourmandes Internationales De Montréal on Notre-Dame Island, August 8 to 18.

The crème de la crème of any summer visit to Montréal is a side trip to Saint Donat', a small lake resort village just a few hours drive from the city, where everyone speaks French. The local bakery in St. Donat' prepares fresh breads daily that literally melt in your mouth, while the garden fresh fruits and vegetables sold in the open market are the sweetest I can remember.

Charming gift shops line the main street of the village, and the shelves of local antique shops offer rare finds. The natural beauty of the Canadian lakes in this trendy resort in summer are remarkable, but locals boast that the area becomes a wonderland for skiers in winter.

The energy and excitement of Montréal combined with the country French allure of resort villages like St. Donat' make it understandable why tourist flock to this charming part of the world each year. Personally, I agree with Pierre Bourque, Mayor of Montreal, who said "the warmth of the people who live and work in Montréal will never fail to enchant the hearts of visitors." I have always found Montréal both seductive and unforgettable. My response after every visit is always Encore . . . S'il Vous Plaît!

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