



EYEWITNESS TRAVEL

TOP 10

MONTREAL & QUEBEC CITY



THE 10 BEST OF EVERYTHING

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ESSENTIAL TIPS

A quick read of these tips will help you find everything you are looking for, quickly and efficiently.



SEARCH

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IMAGE GALLERY

All entries with this icon have an accompanying photo, simply click the link to view.



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INTERACTIVE MENUS

1 Museums 

2 Churches 

Navigate by using our interactive table of contents, click each link to be taken to that section. These appear at the beginning of each chapter.

NAVIGATION

The best way to explore this guide is to begin at **Highlights**. This first chapter shows you, quite simply, the best sights in the destination. This is followed by: **Top 10 of Everything** – themed Top 10 lists that allow you to make the most of your time away; **Around Town** – must-see sights, area by area; **Streetsmart** – essential practical information; and the **Image Gallery** – A selection of great images that accompany many of the sight listings.

INTRODUCING MONTREAL



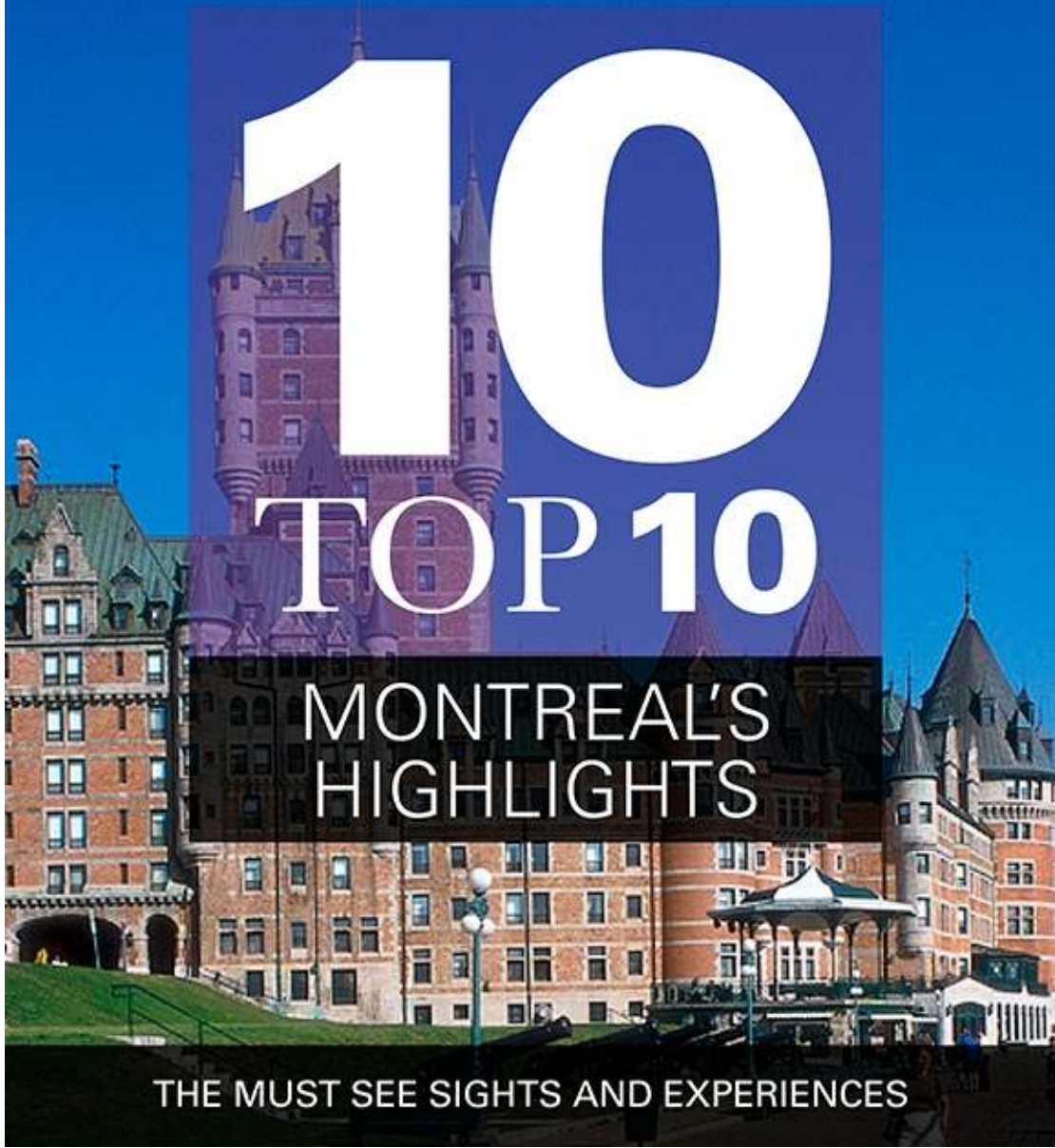
Situated on the mighty St Lawrence River, the sights of these two cities captivate visitors with their history, culture, and festivity. Not only were they both major players in the foundation of Canada but their portside locations have kept them at the heart of international commerce, resulting in a harmonious blend of heritage architecture and exciting modern venues that charm all those who come to Canada's "*belle province*".

MONTREAL

10 TOP 10

MONTREAL'S
HIGHLIGHTS

THE MUST SEE SIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES



MONTRÉAL AND QUÉBEC CITY'S HIGHLIGHTS

MONTRÉAL



SOUTHERN QUÉBEC



1 Parc du Mont-Royal

2 Basilique Notre-Dame

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10 Les Laurentides

PARC DU MONT-ROYAL



PARC DU MONT-ROYAL

The geographic highlight of Montréal is undeniably Mont-Royal's steep slopes. Named by [Jacques Cartier](#) in 1535, the protected district of Parc du Mont-Royal covers more than 343 acres of forested mountain, providing abundant green spaces, shrubs, and flowers, as well as habitats for hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife. Designed in 1876 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Mont-Royal continues to inspire locals as an arboreal delight in the center of their metropolis – activity options, depending on the time of year, include skating, cycling, paddle-boating, tobogganing, and snowshoeing. To the northwest of the park is the impressive Oratoire St-Joseph. [1 514 843 8240](#) • www.lemontroyal.qc.ca • *Dis. access • Free*

 [Google Map](#)

1. LA CROIX

Standing 31 m (100 ft) high, the original steel cross was erected by Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, on this site in 1643.

2. TRAIL SYSTEMS

The park has a network of forested corridors, popular with cyclists and runners in summer and cross-country skiers in winter.

3. LOOKOUTS

Belvedere Kondiaronk is the lookout of the Chalet du Mont-Royal. The Camilien Houde lookout faces east over the river. Locals sometimes refer to it as “Lovers’ Lookout.”

 [View photo](#)

4. CEMETERIES

Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges (Catholic) and Cimetière Mont-Royal (non-Catholic) are the two main resting places of the city. Far from sombre, they are adorned with lovely statues, sculptures and luxuriant plantings.

5. LAC AUX CASTORS

The heart of Parc du Mont-Royal is Lac aux Castors. People gather during fair weather to paddle board or to ice skate in winter.

 [Google Map](#)  [View photo](#)

6. POLICE STABLES

Visits to the Police Cavalry Stables are possible, and it is common to see officers on horseback cantering through the park.

7. MAISON SMITH

Built for Boston merchant Hosea B. Smith in 1858, Maison Smith is now home to the Centre de la Montagne exhibitions.

 [View photo](#)

8. CENTRE DE LA MONTAGNE

This is the base of a citizen group focusing on the preservation of and education about both the historic and natural legacy of the park.


 [Google Map](#)  [View photo](#)

9. TAM-TAM FESTIVAL

Sundays in the park during the summer belong to the exuberant Tam-Tam Festival. For more than 30 years, drummers, musicians, dancers, and artisans have met at the Monument Sir George-Étienne Cartier to party.

 [View photo](#)

10. ORATOIRE ST-JOSEPH

The dome atop this shrine is an overwhelming sight to the west of the park. Pilgrims flock to the oratory, inspired by tales of miracle cures (for further details see [Features of Oratoire St-Joseph](#)).


Oratoire St-Joseph • 3800 chemin Queen-Mary • 514 733 8211 • Mass: 7am, 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am, 4:30pm, & 7:30pm Mon–Sat, 7am, 8am, 9:30am, 12:30pm, 4:30pm, & 7:30pm Sun • Dis. access • Free


• www.saint-joseph.org

 [Google Map](#)  [View photo](#)

Frederick Law Olmsted

A champion of the City Beautiful movement of landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted was born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1822. Best known for his visionary designs of Central Park in New York City, Olmsted's aim was to reject the formal plantations that had previously been in vogue and to complement the natural landscape with his pastoral designs and designated areas for recreation.

 **Tip:** If visiting Montréal in winter, you can still enjoy a version of the Tam-Tam Festival, as well as a drink, at the nearby El Zaz Bar.

 **Tip:** Parking fees are high in Parc du Mont-Royal. Park your car inside the grounds of one of the cemeteries and walk to the summit lookout.

FEATURES OF ORATOIRE ST-JOSEPH

1. SAINT BROTHER ANDRE

Alfred Bessette, born in 1845, joined the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1870. Here, as a humble cleric, he assumed the name of Brother André and began working extraordinary curative powers on the sick. He attributed his skills to St Joseph and petitioned for donations to build the Oratoire. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010.

2. NEO-CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

Inspired by the temples of Corinth, architects Dalbé Viau and Alphonse Venne designed the exterior of St Joseph's, but the completion of the project was a collaboration of Lucien Parent, monk Dom Paul Bellot, and architect Gérard Notebaert.

3. MUSEE DE ST-JOSEPH

An extensive religious art collection heads the permanent features on display in the Museum of St Joseph. A fascinating wax figure exhibition depicts the life of the Holy Family in scenarios created by Canadian artist Joseph Guardo.

4. CRYPT CHURCH

Created in 1917 at the base of the basilica, the concrete structure of the crypt church is built into the mountainside and forms part of the Oratory's foundations. It has a main altar of Carrara marble and a 1,000-seat capacity. Don't miss the stunning stained-glass windows.

 [View photo](#)

5. 300 STAIRS

It is common to see a pilgrim struggling up the 300 steps to the basilica on his knees. Since many climb each year, plans to refurbish the stairs are in place, to the tune of \$8 million.

 [View photo](#)

6. PILGRIMS' PAVILION

A convenient overnight hostel adjacent to the parking area contains a souvenir shop and cafeteria. A resident organization also helps arrange personalized religious journeys for the faithful.

7. VOTIVE CHAPEL

Canes, crutches, and other medical aids left behind by cured pilgrims line the walls in this small but inspirational chapel. Visitors can light a devotional candle, then walk past a statue of St Joseph to the room of Saint Brother André's tomb.

8. SAINT BROTHER ANDRÉ'S TOMB

Brother André died on January 6, 1937, at the age of 91. While his remains are buried in the church, his heart was removed and placed in a reliquary. It prevails as a popular draw for pilgrims. A beautiful fresco, created by Henri Charlier, decorates his tomb wall.

9. ALTAR AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The magnificent altar, crucifix, and wooden statues of the 12 Apostles are creations of the French artist Henri Charlier. Roger Villiers sculpted the Way of the Cross between 1957–9; the stunning interior mosaic was added to the altar in 1960.

 [View photo](#)

10. LES PETITS CHANTEURS DU MONT-ROYAL

Begun in 1956 by the then head of the church Father Brault, the oratory's choir is made up of 210 boys aged between 8 and 17. Their silky vocals embellish more than 70 religious festivities each year, both at the oratory, around the country, and abroad. The boys receive their schooling here when they are not performing.

The History of the Oratoire St-Joseph


The saga of Montréal's mammoth Oratoire St-Joseph began with the construction of a tiny chapel in 1904 by Brother André and friends. However the final structural elements only came together in 1967 – 30 years after Brother André's death. More than 150 m (500 ft) above street level, it is a staggering 60 m (195 ft) from the floor to the peak of the dome – the second largest in the world after St- Peter's in Rome. Reminiscent of Italian Renaissance architecture, the basilica features Corinthian columns, stained-glass masterpieces, and one of the largest carillons in North America (56 bells). More than two million visitors pack the monument each year, with crutches and wheelchairs left behind as evidence of the continuing cures taking place here. Brother André's followers had long been asking for his canonization. In accordance with the Catholic church, two posthumous miracles are needed to earn sainthood. The first, the cure of a cancer victim in 1958, led to his beatification in 1982. The second was in 1999, when a young boy emerged from a coma after a car accident. It made him the 11th Canadian, and first Québec-born, saint.

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BASILIQUE NOTRE-DAME



BASILIQUE NOTRE-DAME

The most magnificent landmark of Vieux-Montréal is this mammoth Gothic Revival undertaking designed by Irish architect James O'Donnell and built between 1824–9. The thriving Catholic church has a stunning medieval-style interior that features walnut-wood carvings, exquisite stained-glass windows, 24-carat gold stars in a vaulted blue ceiling, as well as one of the largest Casavant organs in North America. Don't miss the fine art paintings in the nave and the impressive Chapelle du Sacré-Coeur hidden behind the altar.  110 rue Notre-Dame Ouest, Place d'Armes • 514 842 2925 • Open 8–4:30pm Mon–Fri, 8–4pm Sat, 12:30–4pm Sun • Adm \$5 • www.basiliquenddm.org

 [Google Map](#)

1. GOTHIC REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE

Rectangular in shape, contrary to the norms of the day, Notre-Dame features arcades with cross-ribbed vaulting.

2. STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS

In 1929 Olivier Maurault, a priest and author, conceived the present-day windows, which depict both early religious events as well as scenes from the everyday lives of the people of Vieux-Montréal.

3. LE GROS BOURDON

It is possible to hear the amazing chimes of Le Gros Bourdon, the largest bell in North America, some 30 km (18 miles) outside Montréal.

4. CASAVANT ORGAN

Joseph Casavant was a Québécois blacksmith and the first significant builder of pipe organs in Canada. He built the famous Notre-Dame organ for the basilica in 1891.

 [View photo](#)

5. THE ALTAR

In 1880 local artists Henri Bouriché and Victor Bourgeau created complementary wood sculptings backed by azure for this spectacular altarpiece.

6. THE PULPIT

Architect Victor Bourgeau's first known work is the 1844 spiral staircase pulpit, which some say resembles the tiers of a wedding cake. Set in the middle of the church, it allows the congregation to hear sermons without any amplification.

 [View photo](#)

7. CHAPELLE DU SACRE-COEUR

Opened in 1891, this gem hides behind the main altar. Countless marriage ceremonies take place here inspiring the moniker, “The Wedding Chapel.”

 [View photo](#)

8. DAUDELIN SCULPTING

Sculptor Charles Daudelin’s bronze *reredos*, which hangs behind the Chapelle du Sacré-Coeur, is among his most dramatic works.

 [View photo](#)

9. FAMOUS WEDDINGS

Many famous couples have tied the knot in Notre-Dame, but the most mentioned celebrity wedding is that of recording star [Céline Dion](#) in 1994.



10. SEMINAIRE ST-SULPICE


Built in 1685 by the Sulpician order, this structure beside the basilica is the oldest building in Montréal (for further details see [Séminaire St-Sulpice](#)).

 [View photo](#)

James O’Donnell

Irish architect James O’Donnell was contracted to draw plans and oversee the construction of Basilique Notre-Dame in 1823. A Protestant by birth, O’Donnell’s pride in the basilica caused him to convert to Catholicism, allowing him burial inside “his” church. Synthesizing many divergent design elements from contributing architects, he introduced the Gothic Revival style into Canadian architecture.

 **Tip:**  *Claude Postel Chocolatier*, 75 Notre-Dame Ouest serves incredible sandwiches, coffee, and desserts.

 **Tip:** Breathtaking sound and light (*son et lumière*) shows are worth attending between September and June.

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PARC OLYMPIQUE



PARC OLYMPIQUE

One of Montréal's most remarkable attractions, Parc Olympique is also one of its most controversial. Built for the 1976 Olympic Games, it remained unfinished until the 1980s despite a cost of \$1.4 billion, and the retractable roof over the stadium has never fully worked. Nevertheless, visitors can easily spend a full day or two entertained by the varied exhibitions, sights, and activities available within this immense quadrilateral. Ride the funicular to the top of the Tour Montréal for the most enthralling view of the region.

i 4141 rue Pierre-de-Coubertin • Métro Pie-IX • 514 252 4737 •

www.parcolympique.qc.ca • Adm to specific attractions

 Google Map

1. STADE OLYMPIQUE

Designed by the French architect Roger Taillibert and constructed by local engineers for the 1976 Olympics, the stadium seats 65,000 people, has a cable-suspended roof and is covered in a membrane of space-age Kevlar material. Today it is used to stage events such as rock concerts.

 View photo

2. ARENA MAURICE-RICHARD

Named after the Montréal Canadiens hockey legend Maurice “Rocket” Richard, the indoor rink continues to promote the sport. The museum “Univers Maurice-Richard” features the scoring ace’s memorabilia.

 View photo

3. BIODOME

The Biodôme houses dazzling ecological attractions, with indigenous plants and animals of the Tropical Forest, Polar World, and Laurentian Forest.

4. INSECTARIUM

Quebecer Georges Brossard, known as “the Bug Man,” roams the world collecting exotic insects, then displays them in this riveting showcase.

5. JARDIN BOTANIQUE

Founded in 1931 and covering nearly 200 acres, the lush gardens were created by gifted horticulturist Henry Teuscher (for further details see [Jardin Botanique Features](#)). **i** Jardin Botanique • 4101 rue Sherbrooke Est • 514 872 1400 • Open mid-May–Oct: 9am–6pm daily; Nov–mid-May: 9am–5pm daily. Closed Mon in Nov–May • Dis. access • Adm • www.espacepurlavie.ca/jardinbotanique

 Google Map

6. TOUR MONTREAL

For the best view of Montréal ride the extraordinary, two-minute, 76-seat funicular in the Tour Montréal. An observatory sits atop the world's highest leaning tower, almost 175 m (585 ft) from ground to summit.

7. MARCHÉ MAISONNEUVE

More than just a taste of fresh market fare, the Marché Maisonneuve also provides a gathering point. Attracting clientele from all over the city and the province, the market is a great spot for people-watching.

8. MUSEE CHATEAU DUFRESNE

The Gothic-inspired private residence was originally designed and constructed by Parisian architect Jules Rénard for Oscar and Marius Dufresne from 1915 to 1918. It now welcomes a variety of decorative exhibitions.

 [View photo](#)

9. CENTRE SPORTIF

This sports complex houses five swimming pools with continuously recirculating water. Other resources include badminton courts, a scuba diving club, volleyball, and more.


 [View photo](#)


10. RIO TINTO ALCAN PLANETARIUM

Opened in 2013, the Planetarium uses state-of-the-art technology to explain everything, from the building blocks of life to the far-flung wonders of the universe.

Mayor Jean Drapeau

Many agree that the enthusiasm of Jean Drapeau, the mayor of Montréal from 1954–7 and again from 1960–86, put Montréal on the international map. A lawyer by trade, he was passionate about his city, and while in office oversaw the building of the Métro subway system and the city's cultural venue Place des Arts, brought the World's Fair to town in 1967 and led the successful bid for the 1976 Olympic Games.

 **Tip:** The best place to eat, for both price and atmosphere, is Café Olimpico in the Mile End district.

 **Tip:** “Montréal in Motion” is a free photography exhibition capturing 100 years of the city's history, located in the Observatory on top of the Tour Montréal.

1. GREENHOUSES

A series of greenhouses in the gardens, just past the entrance, provide enough humidity for various botanical environments to thrive, including a rainforest canopy, tropical medicinal plants, and beautiful, brightly colored orchids.


2. CHINESE GARDENS

A classic example of a Ming Dynasty garden, complete with its own Lac du Rêve (*Lake of Dreams*). This garden covers over 6 acres and is lovingly nurtured by specialist teams from both Montréal and Shanghai. These are the largest Chinese gardens outside China.

 [View photo](#)

3. LAC DU REVE

A lush domain in the center of the Chinese Gardens, where visitors can watch resident geese and ducks, find a comfortable area to relax, or just wander through the landscaped lake area surrounded by rock gardens, bridges, and areas for reflection.

 [View photo](#)

4. FIRST NATIONS GARDEN

The First Nations (native Canadians) celebrate their magical relationship with the plant kingdom within these 6 acres of gardens filled with interactive terminals, shows, and special events. The area is divided up into five different zones: hardwood and softwood forests, an exploration of Nordic life, an interpretation pavilion, and a gathering area.

5. SUKIYA JAPANESE TEA PAVILION

Honoring the traditional Japanese home, architect Hisato Hiraoka has gathered together the artistic ideals of Japanese society within this graceful structure. There is also an art gallery, Zen and bonsai gardens, an exhibition room, and a gift shop.

6. WU YEE-SUN BONSAI COLLECTION

At any time of year, in any kind of weather, the captivating Wu Yee-Sun Collection of miniature bonsai trees is on permanent exhibit inside their greenhouse. This is one of the most impressive and largest collections of its kind in the world.

 [View photo](#)

7. TREEHOUSE

This remarkable interpretation center and interactive exhibition is laid out in four parts: Trees in our History, Anatomy and Growth, Trees and the Forest, and The Many Uses of Trees. The Treehouse exhibit is located in the northeast sector of the gardens.

8. BALLADE

Since the gardens spread over many acres, take advantage of the popular Ballade minibus circulating continuously throughout the day along the paved pathways. Clearly marked areas within the gardens indicate where buses make regular stops.

9. LIBRARIES

Two fascinating libraries are situated within the gardens. The public library boasts an extensive children's section and there is an academic library that is home to numerous scientific books, journals and papers, including studies of botany.

10. CHILDREN'S HIGHLIGHTS

Exciting and informative permanent features in the garden are part of the on-going effort to educate Montréal children and bring them closer to nature. Exhibitions that are exclusively for kids include the Youth Garden, Butterflies Go Free, Noah's Ark, the Hallowe'en Mask Competition, and the Chlorophyll Room. Each season boasts an additional theme.

History of the Jardin Botanique

In 1931, Montréal's then-mayor, Camillien Houde, conceived of a master plan to put the unemployed to work by building the city's first botanical gardens. He hired architect Lucien Keroack to design the main building, and work began in the midst of a deep economic depression. Owing much to the Christian Brothers religious sect and particularly to Brother Marie-Victorin for his visionary concept, the team invited American landscape architect and botanist Henry Teuscher to establish the permanent collections and design the site. By 1938 the greenhouses were built and Montréal has presented this rich horticultural domain ever since.

MUSÉE POINTE-À-CALLIÈRE



MUSEE POINTE-A-CALLIERE

Ascending like a sentinel from the confluence of the St Pierre and St Lawrence rivers, this National Historic Site honors the founding of the city at Place Royale. Within this landmark of stone and brushed steel are three sections: a chic building constructed on top of the ruins of older structures; the archeological crypt; and the renovated Customs House. A self-guided tour system allows each visitor to explore at their own pace, but guides are employed throughout the site to answer questions. These escorts are accomplished storytellers, bringing the history of the city to life. **1** 350 Place Royale at rue de la Commune • 514 872 9150 • www.pacmuseum.qc.ca • Open 10am–5pm Tue–Fri, 11am–5pm Sat & Sun • Dis. access • Adm \$20 adults; \$16 senior citizens; \$12 students (18–30); \$9.50 students (13–17); \$7 children; under 6s free

 Google Map

1. ÉPERON BUILDING

Architect Dan S. Hanganu designed this edifice to create a building that is an exhibition in itself. The front door marks the spot of the first shelter in Ville-Marie (1642).

2. TALES OF A CITY

One of the most inspired introductions to any museum, this 18-minute voyage through the discovery of Montréal enchants visitors and sets the stage for a memorable visit.

3. FIRST CATHOLIC CEMETERY IN NORTH AMERICA

Residents of the original fortification created a cemetery under Place Royale. When the museum excavated the site, the discovery resulted in this exhibit.

4. WHERE MONTREAL WAS BORN

This exhibition represents more than 600 years of local history, from Amerindian times to the present day.

5. UNDERGROUND VAULTED CONDUIT

Montréal's earliest plumbing and sewer system, dating from the 18th century, can be seen in this network of conduits, beneath a cobblestoned walkway. Another excavation revealed the tiny St Pierre River, now permanently below ground.

6. MODELS AT YOUR FEET

Virtual technology bridges past with present here. Meet historic figures, hear archeological explanations, and view five centuries of artifacts under glass beneath your feet.

7. A CUSTOMS HOUSE AND ITS ARCHITECT

Montréal's old Customs House, built between 1836 and 1837, is a Neo-Classical building designed by John Ostell, a local architect. It has been carefully renovated to its original state by the museum.

8. YOUVILLE PUMPING STATION INTERPRETATION CENTER

Across from the museum an old pumping station has exhibits on science and technology.

9. MARKET DAY, 1750


This interactive virtual fresco is set in the archeological remains of the main gate that led to the marketplace in 1750. Visitors can bring to life various figures, who emerge from the stores and play out scenes from their lives.

10. MONTREAL LOVE STORIES

This series of intimate portraits of the city draws on photographs, videos, and first-hand accounts of Montréalers.

History of the Museum

In 1642 Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, founded the settlement of Ville-Marie, now Montréal, on this site. More than 350 years later, a series of excavations unearthed the way of life for these newcomers to Nouvelle-France and Musée Pointe-à-Callière opened with over one million artifacts. A permanent archeological dig is now in place in the area.

 **Tip:** One of the best views in all of Vieux-Montréal is available from Café L'Arrivage on the top level of the museum. It serves good but expensive bistro cuisine.

MUSEE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE MONTREAL

One of the most impressive museums in North America dominates both sides of stately rue Sherbrooke Ouest. It began life in 1860, when a group of collectors set up the Art Association of Montréal to present exhibitions, establish an art school, assemble a permanent collection of paintings, and develop an art library. The members eventually raised finances to construct their own building, now the Michal & Renata Hornstein Pavilion, to house Old Masters and contemporary works. In 1991 the museum expanded into the modern Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion (illustrated here), on the south side of the street. **i** 1379–80 rue Sherbrooke Ouest • 514 285 2000 • www.mbam.qc.ca • Open 11am–5pm Tue & Fri, 11am–9pm Wed & Thu, 10am–5pm Sat & Sun • Dis. access • Free

 Google Map

1. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN

A combined use of light, color, texture, and setting brings a feeling of intimacy to this 1665 Rembrandt work.

2. APELLES PAINTING THE PORTRAIT OF CAMPASPE

Italian artist Tiepolo uses the unusual technique of a painting-within-a-painting in this 1726 work. Notice the artwork hanging on the wall of the studio, which is one of Tiepolo's own, entitled *The Bronze Serpent*.

3. OCTOBRE

An example of James Tissot's control and mastery of space, this 1877 allegorical work is of model Kathleen Irene Newton. It was painted in London after the demise of the Commune of Paris in 1871.

4. JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOPHERNE, DIDON

Created as two paintings (1500), Andrea Mantegna here displays classic Renaissance elements: absence of emotion, knowledge of anatomy, and determinism of line.

5. THE TRIBUTE MONEY

Philippe de Champaigne's 1655 work portrays the Biblical tale of the Pharisees in this dramatic religious painting. The figure on the right is said to be a self-portrait and borrows stylistically from Raphael and Valentin.

6. PORTRAIT OF THE LAWYER HUGO SIMONS

Otto Dix's artistic freedom is evident in this 1929 portrait of lawyer Hugo Simons. Seen with a halo of copper light, it illustrates the artist's wish to portray his subjects' souls in his works.

sample content of Top 10 Montreal & Quebec City: The 10 Best of Everything (DK Eyewitness Travel)

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