



DISCOVER LGBT MONTRÉAL ITINERARY

FROM RESTAURANTS TO NIGHTLIFE TO SHOPPING TO SIGHTSEEING, THERE IS MUCH THAT APPEALS TO GAY PEOPLE IN MONTRÉAL, A CITY AS OPEN-MINDED AS IT IS KIND-HEARTED. AND WHILE OUR **GAY VILLAGE** IS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD, MANY GAY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS CAN BE FOUND ACROSS THE CITY. FOR UP-TO-DATE DESCRIPTIONS OF HAPPENINGS AND VENUES, BE SURE TO CHECK OUT **THE MONTRÉAL BUZZ**, THE TOURISME MONTRÉAL BLOG THAT IS WRITTEN BY CITY INSIDERS WHO CAN TELL YOU WHAT TO SEE, WHERE TO EAT, AND WHAT TO DO AS A GAY OR LESBIAN TRAVELLER.



THE BIXI SYSTEM

THE BIXI (A CONTRACTION OF THE WORDS BIKE AND TAXI) RENTAL BIKING SYSTEM IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO VISIT MONTRÉAL LANDMARKS. THE SERVICE ALLOWS YOU TO BORROW A BIKE FROM ONE STATION, TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION, AND RETURN THE BIKE TO ANY OTHER STATION ACROSS AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK, 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK, FROM MAY TO NOVEMBER.

SUMMER FESTIVALS FOR ALL

MONTRÉAL IN THE SUMMERTIME HOSTS AN ABUNDANCE OF FESTIVALS, INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL, L'INTERNATIONAL DES FEUX LOTO-QUÉBEC FIREWORKS FESTIVAL, THE JUST FOR LAUGHS FESTIVAL, DIVERS/CITÉ, OF COURSE, PRIDE. BE SURE TO **CHECK DATES** BEFORE YOU BOOK YOUR TRIP!

DAY 1 – OLD MONTRÉAL

The cobblestone streets of Old Montréal have witnessed the passage of time for more than 360 years. Today, art galleries, artisan boutiques, terraces, and cafés conduct business within the walls of gracious, century-old structures.

You can start your day at the charm-filled breakfast and brunch locale, **Le Cartet**, where urbanites gather in a unique resto-boutique that offers European-style selections, including Blueberry French Bread and the healthy and popular *Brunch Santé*.

Now that you are energized for a fun day ahead, consider heading to **Montréal on Wheels**, a centre that rents out a wide range of bicycles and accessories, including tandems, road bikes, and cruisers, as well as child trailers and rollerblades. Two-wheel travel is a good way to cover a lot of territory in a short amount of time and get your bearings in Montréal. The centre's accredited guided bike tours provide for an amazing way to visit landmarks and sites across the city. These 3-hour trips include breaks and commentaries, and depart at 9 a.m. An

added bonus is that you get to keep the bike for the rest of the day if you like, after the guided tour!

For lunch, options are plentiful in this neighbourhood. You can try the outdoor terrace at the [Château Ramezay Historic Site](#) to get a sense of 18th century Montréal while you dine on 21st century fare, or you can head to one of the many fine restaurants located at the picturesque [Place Jacques-Cartier](#).

After midday, take some time to stroll down Saint-Paul Street where you will find chic art galleries and designer shops, including [Michel Brisson](#), Reborn, and the boutique of legendary fashion designer, Denis Gagnon.

For art of a different kind, head to the [DHC](#), a space for exciting and relevant contemporary art exhibitions, or, for an archaeological exploration of Montréal, proceed to [Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History](#), a national historic site rising above the actual remains of the city.

A trip to Old Montréal would not be complete without a visit to the [Notre-Dame Basilica of Montréal](#), an impressive Gothic Revival

cathedral built between 1824 and 1829, and the site of the wedding of the illustrious gay icon, Céline Dion, and manager René Angélil!

Well, this has been quite a busy day, so taking a moment or two (or more) to relax at one the neighbourhood's wonderful spas might be a nice option. [Scandinave Les Bains Vieux-Montréal](#) is a veritable Eden offering a multi-sensorial experience of hydrotherapeutic renewal for your active body. Meanwhile, [Bota Bota, spa-sur-l'eau](#) is magnificently fashioned in an old ferryboat and hosts some of the most sublime views of the St. Lawrence River and the city. Both offer comfort, joy, and a soothing way to end the afternoon

For evening fine-dining, make your way to the Gay Village where [Restaurant Chez Ma Grosse Truie Chérie](#) awaits with fresh, local products and house specialities including lamb, pheasant, veal, foie gras, and a number of dishes smoked on site, such as salmon, magret de canard, and barbecued pork ribs. For a nightcap or to dance away some of those calories, discover some of the many [night spots](#) that the always vibrant Village has to offer.

DAY 2 – DOWNTOWN

Montréal's downtown scene is a bustling study in contrasts where the latest architectural marvels soar beside stately Victorian-era residential, civic, public, and religious buildings. Amidst this urban mix lies an abundance of attractions worth checking out.

Begin your day with a hearty, delicious breakfast at one of two centrally located eateries. At [Café Vasco da Gama](#), the freshest ingredients for quick meals are served up with the warmth and kindness characteristic of Portugal. For a morning inspired by the story of a couple whose recipe for love was made up of happiness and good food, [Ben & Florentine](#) offers a variety of dishes in a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere.

For the rest of the morning you might want to see the latest exhibition at the [Montreal Museum of Fine Arts](#), the city's foremost repository for art and artefacts from pre-antiquity to the present day. If architecture is more your passion, then head to the [Canadian Centre for Architecture](#), an international research centre and museum recognized for the richness of its collections and the quality of its exhibitions.

Hungry? Now is a good time to head to the legendary [Holt Renfrew](#) department store, an Art Deco era emporium that offers not only a vast selection of designer brand clothing, cosmetics, and fragrances, but also delicious meals at its fashionable, in-house restaurant, the [Holt's Café](#), a wonderful place to relax and review the route of your upcoming afternoon shopping experience.

Montréal is known for its diversity of people, many of whom have put together their own unique, personal style that makes up the totality of the Montréal vibe. This is remarkably easy to achieve, considering the shopping resources the city has to offer. After you have found everything you want at Holt Renfrew, head down [Crescent Street](#) to peruse some of the stylish boutiques and art galleries lining the way. When you get to Sainte-Catherine Street, head eastward for even

more boutiques on this Montréal's renowned commercial thoroughfare. Be sure to stop off at Ogilvy, a retail landmark occupying a 1908 Romanesque Revival stone building; La Maison Simons, an establishment well-frequented by an LGBT clientele offering all kinds of stylish clothing for men and women; [M0851](#), a Montréal-based boutique that has built an international reputation on bags, clothing, and accessories made of the finest leather, linen, and cashmere; and finally, the grand Birks jewellery store, where you can admire luxury brand rings, watches, flatware, and cutlery, as well as have a snack, coffee, tea, and, even a glass of wine, at the cozy, yet elegant, [Birks Café par Europea](#).

In between all of this, you also might want to explore Montréal's famed [Underground City](#), accessible through many points of entry in the downtown area, including Sainte-Catherine Street, and offering more than 33 kilometres of interconnected shop-lined passageways.

A pleasant way to end the afternoon is with a visit to the [Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal](#), Canada's premier museum devoted exclusively to contemporary art. A superb place to explore the wealth of Québec creativity, the museum also has a large collection of artworks stemming from prominent international movements.

For evening diversions, head back to the Village and check out some of the city's best antique and vintage dealers on [Amherst Street](#) before having a nice casual dinner at [Le Saloon](#), a Village institution serving western-fusion fare in an electric atmosphere with high calibre DJs. Or, if you would rather opt for Italian cuisine, head to the relaxed and friendly [La Piazzetta](#), where you can indulge in superior pizzas, stuffed pastas, focaccias, Italian wraps, as well as in one of the many vintages on the restaurant's extensive wine list. If you're up for it, continue discovering the [Village's many entertaining bars and nightclubs](#).

DAY 3 – MILE END AND THE PLATEAU MONT-ROYAL

Mile End and the Plateau Mont-Royal are fantastic Montréal neighbourhoods with an urban fabric that features exterior wrought-iron staircases and old-style stone masonry. Here, diversity reigns, and there is something of interest for everyone, whether it's designer boutiques, vintage shops, nightspots, restaurants, or cafés, these two beautiful districts have what you are looking for or what you are glad you found in Montréal.

In the Mile End quarter, streets of interest include, Fairmount, Saint-Viateur, and Bernard and their crossing arteries. Start off the day at **Faimount Bagel Bakery** in the heart of Mile End. Since 1919, this Montréal institution has been treating customers to traditional bagels baked in a wood-fired oven.

Next, take some time to wander around and fully appreciate the district's mix of people, places, and things. For sweet treats, head up to **Chocolats Geneviève Grandbois**, where handmade gourmet chocolates are delightfully prepared into jewellery-like pieces of edible luxury and presented in fashionable metal boxes or gift packages to go. The shop's unique selection of flavours includes caramel fleur de sel, vanilla-saffron, as well as spicy combinations made with pepper! Indulge.

A stroll to Waverly Street will take you to Dépanneur le Pick-Up, a convenience store (*dépanneur* in French)/eatery/art space that boasts a mouth-watering menu of hot sandwiches, soups, salads, and innovative brunch and dinner specials. With an antique lunch counter and a back patio where local meat packers and mechanics rub shoulders with members of Montreal's internationally renowned arts community, the place is a must.

Another Mile End essential is **Le Cagibi**, located on St. Laurent Boulevard. Often compared to a community centre of sorts, it's not uncommon for patrons to find themselves amongst a mélange of musicians, artists, students, and bike messengers who all appreciate the inviting bohemian décor. An oasis for ardent vegetarians, Le Cagibi also offers free wireless Internet access and a non-stop line-up of live shows and soulful DJs.

Walking just a few blocks southward from Le Cagibi will bring you to the Plateau Mont-Royal, a.k.a. "The Plateau", where you can find even more cafés, restaurants, and boutiques, one of which is **Blank**, a Québec-based apparel store that sells affordable quality clothing entirely made in Québec, for women, men, and children.

Head farther south on St. Laurent, and you'll reach **Laïka**, a restaurant/Wi-Fi café/bar/lounge frequented by trendy locals and visitors like you! Laïka is a fantastic place to slow down, chill out, have a meal, and Montréal-watch to the soothing sounds of electronic music. Other mealtime options include the **Café Méliès**, an easy-breezy bistro-wine bar on the ground level of the eXcentris multimedia complex, or **Schwartz's** another Montréal classic, which has welcomed celebrities and other guests from all over the world since 1928 as they stop in for an unbeatable smoked meat sandwich.

As you have traversed down St. Laurent Boulevard, you have no doubt noticed one of the three peaks of the majestic Mount Royal rising above the city to your right. And herein lies a choice. For the first of two options, you can make your way up what locals lovingly call "The Mountain" and enjoy some of the spectacular views this park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted of New York City's Central Park fame, affords. On Sunday afternoons when the snow is gone, the **Tam Tams** occupy the area at the base of Mount Royal around the statue of Sir George-Étienne Cartier. Here you will find hundreds, if not, thousands of music-makers and dancers celebrating the unique beats of drums! Whether you are witnessing or partaking in the action, the experience is breathtaking.

No less intriguing is your second option, which consists of continuing down St. Laurent Boulevard to **Prince Arthur Street**, and heading east (turn left) to appreciate what was once the hippie haven of Montréal. Extremely lively during the summer, street artists and musicians add character to this now revitalized pedestrian zone strewn with cafés and restaurants. Follow the street to the end and you will reach **Square Saint-Louis**, with its imposing 19th century homes. This was where some well-to-do French-Canadian families settled in the early 1800s, including the famous poet, Émile Nelligan.

Once you reach the eastern end of Square Saint-Louis, you will hit **Saint-Denis Street**, which reveals a multitude of charming shops whose pretty windows beckon with creations from Québec fashion designers, beautiful wares for the home, and treasures of music and literature. Adding to the lively ambiance of the street are a wealth of cafés and restaurants, whose sidewalk terraces fill up with patrons who revel in the food, sun, and scenery. You can either go north on Saint-Denis and catch some of the character of the busy area, or you can head further east to **Parc La Fontaine**, which in the summer is a haven of shady trees for sunbathers and picnickers.

To end your day, check out **Aires Libres**, an eco-artistic happening that magically turns Sainte-Catherine Street East in the Gay Village into a pedestrian zone between Berri Street and Papineau Avenue from May to September. It's an ideal setting for strolling, interacting with artists, and reflecting upon your next trip to magnificent Montréal.

Au revoir!