



DISCOVER CULTURE IN MONTRÉAL ITINERARY

OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "CANADA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL", MONTRÉAL IS A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR NUMEROUS REPOSITORIES OF VISUAL ART, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND HISTORICAL ARTEFACTS. GENERALLY, MUSEUMS OPEN AT 10 A.M. AND ARE CLOSED ON MONDAY.



DAY 1 - OLD MONTRÉAL

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

Your visit begins with the meticulously restored (ca. 1860) **Sir George-Etienne Cartier National Historic Site**, which commemorates the life and work of the renowned politician and Father of Confederation. Remember to make reservations for guided tours and theatrical presentations.

Next, visit a prestigious residence from the 18th century, the **Château Ramezay**, which is a portal to Montréal's past and the first building in Québec to be classified as an historic monument. By intermingling exhibitions with multimedia portrayals of historical figures, the Château invites you to relive more than 500 years of history, from the pre-contact Amerindian era to the 20th century. The site includes the Governor's Garden, a typically delightful 18th century urban retreat.

After a morning of cultural activity, take the opportunity to sample exceptional cuisine, rest your legs, and gaze at superb panoramas of the Old Port at L'Arrivage, the restaurant located on the second floor of the **Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History**.

Once you have recharged your batteries, go downstairs to the Museum. Pointe-à-Callière is a national historic site rising above the actual remains of Montréal's birthplace. Through an authentic archaeological tour, the Museum allows you to discover First Nations'

artefacts, the city's first Catholic cemetery, its first marketplace, and lots more. Cutting-edge technology and a multimedia show bring Montréal's past to life. The Museum's contemporary building is linked by an underground passage to the Ancienne Douane, Montréal's first Custom House, which houses the **Museum Boutique**. Beneath the raised portion of Place Royale lies an archaeological crypt safeguarding more than six centuries of history.

Now fast forward through history and head to the **DHC / Foundation for Contemporary Art**, an exhibition space that presents three to four contemporary art exhibitions per year and offers a dynamic program of film screenings and talks. The foundation also has an inclusive education and outreach program.

As the day draws to a close, this might be a good time to drop in on a popular hangout for local artists, Cluny Artbar, for a snack. Also, check out the adjoining **Darling Foundry**, a centre showcasing various forms of contemporary art.

For supper, here are two choices. First, **Le Local**, just around the corner from the Foundry, serves bistro-style cuisine in a heritage building once occupied by an architectural firm. The space is open and airy with high ceilings, giant light wells, a vast dining room, a front terrace, and a cocktail lounge. The second option is **Boris Bistro**, a charming nearby establishment offering savoury meals and a pleasant two-level outdoor terrace.

As night falls, take an **Old Montréal Ghost Tour** and learn about the hidden secrets and legends of the historic district. Spooky, but fun!

DAY 2 - DOWNTOWN, PART 1

Montréal's downtown scene is a bustling study in contrasts where the latest architectural marvels soar beside stately Victorian-era residential, civic, and religious buildings.

Start off the day with a nice breakfast at [Café Vasco da Gama](#), a Portuguese restaurant that prepares culinary gems with the freshest ingredients possible.

Take joy in the rest of your morning at the [Montreal Museum of Fine Arts](#), whose permanent collection and temporary exhibitions rank among the finest and most innovative in the world.

With lunchtime fast approaching, head west on Sherbrooke Street until Guy Street, and explore the many commercial art galleries that line the thoroughfare. Then, backtrack east to the [Holt's Café](#) for some creative cuisine, which includes menu items carefully prepared with local, seasonal ingredients. You will cherish the scrumptious

bites in the elegant setting of one of downtown's most luxurious department stores, the legendary [Holt Renfrew](#).

Continue eastward on Sherbrooke Street and check out the [Redpath Museum, McGill University](#), a natural history museum chronicling evolution from the primordial to the present, and featuring a permanent exhibit on the history and diversity of Québec, which include fossils, minerals, and zoological specimens. World culture exhibits focus on Egypt, Africa, and Oceania.

As the sun begins its descent, walk to the [McCord Museum](#), one of the most important historical museums in Canada, and celebrate Montréal life past and present—its people, artisans, communities, and metropolitan area. The Museum offers stimulating exhibitions, educational and cultural activities, and innovative Internet projects.

DAY 3 – DOWNTOWN, PART 2

A trip to the [Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal](#) is a great way to discover the wealth of Québec creativity along with leading Canadian and international trends. Spend the morning here perusing the museum's permanent collection and latest exhibitions.

From creative sustenance to gastronomic nourishment, proceed to [Bistro Le Contemporain](#), the Musée's dining establishment that highlights local expertise and meals featuring Québec cheeses and charcuterie.

Now, with a content belly, you can appreciate all that the [Maison du Festival Rio Tinto Alcan](#) has to offer. The Maison is a centre devoted to the dissemination and promotion of jazz and musical practice at large. It houses the Astral, a multipurpose hall, the Balmoral bistro terrace, the TD Gallery Lounge, a gift shop with souvenirs of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal and FrancoFolies de Montréal, and an audiovisual documentation centre for the preservation and protection of the Festival's musical heritage.

Also in the same area is the [Belgo building](#), an old factory warehouse that is now home to many of the city's hottest galleries in the contemporary art scene. Here you can get a feel for current art trends and visit studios located in vast lofts where each gallery features exhibits on photography, sculpture, mixed media, print, and digital creations, to name a few.

Montréal is a destination that constantly hosts concerts, cultural activities, and other events, and [La Vitrine culturelle de Montréal](#)

([Montréal's cultural window](#)) is an excellent place for tourists and locals alike to gather information, calendars, and tickets for upcoming shows. Take advantage of last-minute prices at this central box office serving the Greater Montréal area.

If you have purchased some tickets at a great deal for an evening show, you can relax, grab a bite, and sip on a beverage at the [Café du Nouveau Monde](#), which serves all kinds of classic French specialties.

In the unlikely event that you didn't get tickets to an interesting show this evening, head to the [Society for Arts and Technology \[SAT\]](#) where there is, more often than not, something fascinating happening. The SAT is an interdisciplinary centre dedicated to research, creation, production, presentation, education and conservation in the field of digital culture, and has hosted, produced, and co-produced numerous events associated with more than 8,000 artists, many of whom have gone on to pursue distinguished careers on the national and international scene.

To top off the evening, why not have a late night snack or drink at the [Brasserie T](#) or the [F Bar](#), both located at the [Place des Festivals](#). Brasserie T offers tempting little morsels such as scalloped potatoes, pigs in a blanket, and devilled eggs, all served in an ultra-design décor, while F Bar delights with Mediterranean pots of goodness and a crisp, chic interior. Whichever you choose, have a wonderful evening!

DAY 4 – ÎLE SAINTE-HÉLÈNE

Start off your day by picking up a gourmet lunch box at [Europea Espace Boutique](#) or by grabbing a take-out meal from the [Marché du Vieux](#). Both offer yummy treats that you will be able to eat at Île Sainte-Hélène, a favourite destination for the many visitors who value the beauty and activities that this island, only minutes away from Old Montréal, has to offer. You can get to Île Sainte-Hélène by subway (Métro Jean-Drapeau), car, bike, or boat. The Maritime Shuttles of the St. Lawrence, which links the Old-Port to Île Sainte-Hélène, offers you the chance to admire the view of the city from the St. Lawrence River. The service is offered from mid-May to mid-October.

Once you arrive on Île Sainte-Hélène, head over to the [Biosphère, Environment Museum](#), an architectural masterpiece from the 1967

International and Universal Exposition (or Expo 67) that has been transformed into a venue presenting permanent and temporary exhibitions on major environmental issues related to water, air, climatic changes, sustainable development, and responsible consumption.

As midday approaches, walk around and find a pleasant spot on the island to have your picnic lunch. Along the way, you will be able to admire some of the public art that was erected for Expo 67, including the imposing *Man*, sculpted in steel by artist Alexander Calder.

After lunch, take a short walk to the [Stewart Museum](#), where you will be able to travel into historical times through a remarkable collection

of maps, antique weapons, and instruments, dating from the beginning of the New World to the mid-19th century.

Now that you have seen some of the jewels of Île Sainte-Hélène, travel to another part of town via Métro and bus to the **Maison Saint-Gabriel, Museum and Historic Site**. This 300-year-old house was converted into a museum in 1966 and is one of the most beautiful examples of traditional Québec architecture. The Museum showcases various aspects of rural life in the 17th century and the extraordinary history of the King's Wards.

End today's museum tour by visiting something a little bit different, **Espace VERRE**, a glass blowing and glass arts school, studio, and gallery that teaches glass techniques, promotes glass art, and provides services to professional glass artists. Housed in a former fire house in the south-west of Montréal, its glassblowing workshops are open to the public who can watch artisans in action. The gallery also exhibits and sells various glass items.

For dinner, choose one of the numerous **Montréal eateries** that have made the city an international gourmet hub. Enjoy!

DAY 5 – HOHELAGA MAISONNEUVE

With expansive green spaces and a multitude of attractions surrounding the Olympic Park, the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district, affectionately called "HoMa" by Montrealers, is filled with cultural, historical, and natural treasures.

Built between 1915 and 1918, **Château Dufresne** is a beaux arts-style private mansion which was owned by the Dufresne brothers, two important members of Montréal's French-speaking bourgeoisie. Today, it houses the Château Dufresne museum, dedicated to the history of the neighbourhoods in the eastern part of the city. The building boasts an interior décor painted by artist Guido Nincheri.

In close proximity to Château Dufresne, is an area graced with three natural science museums: the **Biodôme**, the **Insectarium**, and the **Botanical Garden**. Whether you visit one of the museums or all of them, your perspective on natural science will be enriched. If you would like to have a quick lunch or even a cocktail, the Montréal Botanical Garden restaurant and terrace offer a unique and pleasant way to experience the splendid Garden and end your tour of Montréal. À votre santé!