

4-Day Road Trip Through Quebec

According to the legend, before the continent stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Arctic to the tip of Patagonia, there was Skywoman alone and adrift on the back of a turtle. For years, many animals attempted to help her by diving to the bottom of the sea and bringing up dirt. None succeeded aside from the Muskrat. And from there the land grew and grew into Turtle Island or the Americas.

Given the expanse, it is unsurprising then that this land has become synonymous with one form of travel—the road trip. An untold number of movies, books, and social media posts have highlighted the wonders of the lands on Turtle Island (the indigenous name for North America.) Unsurprisingly, setting off on an adventure map in hand with one foot on the pedal has become synonymous with North America.

And while road trips are a year-round affair, one of the best trips that you can make, particularly during the fall, is through the province of Quebec. If you have unlimited time, you can bunny hop from city to city, small town to little village. But if you are like the rest of us and need to be back to work on Monday, an extended long weekend, namely four days, would be enough to soak up the best that Quebec has to offer!

First up, Montreal!

As the province's largest city, Montreal is nothing if not diverse. With the beautiful mélange of both historic and modern architecture, walking through Montreal's streets is like stepping into the past and leaping into the future simultaneously. But the beauty doesn't just lie with the facades, but with the amazing street art that the city has become famous for all around the globe.

Here are some stand out that simply cannot be missed. The first is "Mirror Effect" located at in the heart of *Plateau-Mont Royal*. As the name implies, the mural creates an optical illusion, of the city scape above and its reflection in the waters below. D*Face located at 3523 *Boul Saint-Laurent* is an ode to Pop Art. So, if you are a fan of Roy Lichtenstein and everything he created, swing by here. The last one may be one that you have to let come to you. Located in various locations throughout the city, *Cité Memoire* is not a painting, but a projection. One that chronicles the history of the city in astonishing and artful detail.

Hit the Road

While the trip between Montreal and Quebec City can be made with a relatively quick trip down the Trans-Canada highway, for the most scenic route, stick to as many small country roads as possible. If you decide to do this trip in the Fall, it is an amazing way to take in all of the

changing foliage. But keep in mind, this is the French speaking area of the country, so the farther out you go, the less likely you will be able to find someone who speaks English. So, be sure to keep a GPS, French to English dictionary, and maybe even an old-fashioned paper map nearby if you need to stop and ask for directions.

Day 2: Go East, Young Girl!

Founded by the British as a haven for Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution, this picturesque region is one of the most charming regions of the province. Filled with cute motels, and charming Airbnbs, you may find that you are so comfortable that you'll hardly want to leave. But if and when you do, be sure to check out the food scene. While small, this area plays host to a large majority of the organic farms in the country. So, there is no shortage of delicious and healthful treats here.

But before you leave this region, be sure to visit both the *Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook* and *Abbaye de Saint Benoit du Lac*. The park is home to a huge suspension bridge which has a great view of all the foliage. This would be particularly beautiful in the fall with the changing leaves. Founded in 1912 by Benedictine monks, the monastery, which overlooks Lake Memphremagog, with its geometric shapes and multicolored stonery pays tribute to the sacred geometry found in nature.

While admission to the Abbey is free, you must book your trip in advance. And as it is a rather popular tourist destination, it is best to do so in advance. Keep in mind, however, that they will speak only French. So, if your French skills were left on the seat of your high school graduation, it may be best to find someone who speaks the language do it just in case.

Day 3: Quebec City

After a meandering through the back roads, you'll finally arrive at the only remaining fortified European settlement in the New World—Quebec City. While Montreal straddles both past and present, Quebec City remain steadfastly rooted in the past. In fact, the city has been so wonderfully preserved that the entire *ville* is an UNESCO world heritage site.

As such, it is the perfect place to appease your inner history nerd. You can do so by signing up a walking tour of the city. Thereby allowing yourself to soak up as much of the city's heritage as possible.

Despite being the capital of this province, the city of itself is small but that doesn't make it any less fabulous. That being said, despite its size, this city still has big city prices. Rest assured that anywhere that you stay would be well worth it, but if you are on a budget, it might be best to just stay here for a night or two. Either way, a good mid-range option to stay the night is

at the *Hotel du Vieux-Quebec*. At \$115 dollars a night, it is neither terribly inexpensive nor supremely luxurious. And split between a fellow driver or two, it can make for very comfortable lodgings in one of the oldest cities in North America.

Day 4: Laurentian Mountains

After a night or two in the Old City, you can take a step back into the country and head to the Laurentian Mountains. Whether they are truly mountains and not big hills remains to be seen. But regardless of how they are classified, you'd do yourself a disservice by heading to this area and not spending a few hours walking through some of the trails. If you head there in the winter, you can also ski down these hills.

But if you just need to take a reprieve or just want to end your trip in style, be sure to head to book an appointment at Spa Scandinave. Here you'll find amazing outdoor water facilities and fire pits with cocoon style hammocks. And while you may view the spa as a place to get cozy, Spa Scandinave offers both a chance to relax and reinvigorate with the Scandinavian circuit.

Essentially, the Scandinavian circuit is a series of hot and cold pools. You begin by dipping into a hot pool then a cold one. As you continue, the pools become progressively hotter and colder. In the end, take one last dip in the hottest pool before finally cooling off with a dive in the river that runs through the spa.

While this may sound like a unique brand of torture, it actually highly beneficial to your health—especially for your cardiovascular and circulatory systems. If repeated regularly, it can help one adapt to colder climates. And whether one is new to the Canadian cold or just has an aversion to winter, a few hours at Spa Scandinave will have you fitting right in in no time!

So, there you have it! A brief guide to exploring this small slice of the *Quebequois* region of Turtle Island. Whether you spend two days or four, one week or two, we are certain that you will enjoy this little slice of France in North America. And we're even more certain that you'll come heading back for more!