



— NORTH AMERICA —

5 of my favourite neighbourhoods in Montreal

Becky Moore / 4 June

This time last year I spent an extraordinary seven days in Québec province's largest city for the 150th anniversary of Canada. I was charmed and captivated by the Montreal's joie de vivre and unrestrained love for the arts, festivals, all things creative as well as their unique outlook on life. Destination Canada asked me to reflect on my time spent in the city, so recalling some very happy memories, here are five of my favourite neighbourhoods I think everyone should visit on a trip to this unique city...

The Village



This famous party district is actually the largest gay neighbourhood in the world and the long pedestrianised street (Rue Sainte-Catherine) is adorned with over 60 restaurants and bars as well as a lively club scene. The atmosphere here is upbeat, friendly and electric – especially when darkness falls – and [the merriment at the bars and eateries](#) spill onto terraces in the street. During the day, boutique stores and cool cafes aside, the area is a wonderful manifestation of public art. The current [Aires Libres](#) project will see you marvelling at literally thousands of hanging garlands and brilliant red balls which transform the street into a truly spectacular open-air art gallery.

Mont Royal Park



Parc Royal is the most frequented- green space in the city and once you visit for yourself you'll see why. With over 470 acres of greenery the area dedicated purely to relaxation and leisure sociably draws people from all neighbourhoods, to walk, bike, picnic, exercise, walk their dogs, skate, bird watch and in the winter, toboggan and snowshoe. My favourite area of the park is easily the [Parc-Royal Lookout](#) which sits atop one of the mountains' three peaks. An eternally popular and much-cherished attraction in the city, the lookout offers a truly striking view of the downtown area and the river. The atmosphere is easily worth the climb (or the bus ride!) to the viewpoint, especially on a sunny weekend afternoon. Find a deck chair, a bench or just even a low wall or a step and relax and take in the astonishingly beautiful city vista, often accompanied by an alfresco piano recital.

Mile End



This place was easily one of my favourite places in Montreal, a 10 block neighbourhood conveniently nestled between Le Plateau du Mont-Royal and the foodie paradise Little Italy, [Mile End is Montreal's hipster paradise](#). And wow, Montreal does hipster extremely well! It's an area with an energetic, progressive vibe (probably down to the abundance of tech startups residing in this part of town) mixed with old school bagel bakeries, a myriad of artisan boutiques, vegan smoothie bars and some seriously stylish restaurants. A less touristy part of the city, take a stroll through Mile End to give you a taste of a more local neighbourhood way of life...and feel yourself getting cooler by the minute!

The Underground City



A virtual lifesaver in a hot blazing summer or the freezing snow of the winters, the famous Montreal Underground city is a set of interconnected buildings and walkways below ground level located right in the city. Covering an eye-watering 33 km of the downtown area, it's the place to shop, eat or just stroll in Canada's most extreme seasons. Expect shopping plazas, entertainment, eateries and cafes galore, hotel, bus terminal and metro station access and even the odd random like the world's biggest [Barbie exhibition](#) (yes seriously!) in this fascinating rabbit warren of a place.

Old Port



This recently gentrified area that has quickly risen through the ranks to become one of Montreal's must-see areas. As well as being a cultural and entertainment hub with such as culinary, music and outdoor festivals galore I loved the laid back vibe this area has. In summer, people jog along the boardwalk, relax at [Bota Bota](#) – a boat turned trendy day spa, rent bikes, go for a cruise, dine on fine cuisines or just down smoothies and other plant-based delights at the wonderful [Velish organic food and juice bar](#). During the winter the Old Port plays host to [Iglloofest](#) one of the craziest and coolest outdoor winter festivals in the world.