

10 Reasons to Visit Quebec in the Winter

Reader's Digest.CA

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2018-01-07



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HAVE FUN IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Lately, you may have been idly surfing around for package deals that will allow you to [escape to a beach](#). But before you [book your vacation](#), consider the fun you could have a bit closer to home. Quebec, for example, is a [province that embraces winter to the fullest](#)--there is even a whole carnival dedicated to the season. Though you may not be able to pack as lightly (long johns and a really warm jacket are a must), you will experience enough unique adventures that you may start to welcome winter each year instead of dreading its arrival. Here are 10 ways to take advantage of winter in "[La Belle Province](#)."



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1. CELEBRATE WINTER AT CARNAVAL DE QUEBEC!

From late January to mid-February, head to Quebec City to experience the [largest winter carnival in the world](#). The Mardi Gras of the north kicks off each year with a spectacular opening night of fireworks and revelry. After that, 17 days of winter fun, including skating and sleigh rides; watching canoe races on the St. Lawrence and dog sled races through the streets; outdoor dance parties; night parades and a whole host of other [family-friendly activities](#) are supervised by the jolly Bonhomme Carnaval. Interesting fact: the first winter carnival in the city in 1894 was actually organized as a way to help the population forget about winter's hardships. Now it draws travellers from all over the world who want to experience a [true Canadian winter](#).



2. CUDDLE UP IN A COTTAGE

Cottages aren't just for [summer vacations](#). If you can find winterized accommodations like the quaint but spacious cottages at [Pohj?n?gamook sant? plein air](#), then you'll have just as much fun cocooning indoors as you will [getting sporty outdoors](#). Test your balance and endurance by ski sailing, which is basically windsurfing on skis; cross country skiing, ice skating, ice fishing and inner tubing, among other outdoor activities. And, if you're brave, relax those tired muscles in their outdoor Scandinavian Spa.



3. STARGAZE AT MOUNT MEGANTIC NATIONAL PARK

On a clear winter night, [snowshoe through the woods](#) by torchlight in this northern part of the Appalachian Mountains and enjoy an evening learning about astronomy. Discover which stars will dominate the sky over the winter and enjoy a hot meal that is included with your tour. If you're not keen on snowshoeing uphill, hitch a ride to the top and enjoy the easier hike going down. Tour times vary. Craving a higher altitude? Here's [How to Plan the Ultimate Colorado Ski Adventure!](#)



4. BRAVE THE ELEMENTS IN AN IGLOO

For the [truly adventurous](#), settle in for a momentous night in an igloo. In the [Parc national du Bic](#), you can purchase the [NunaBic package](#), which will provide you with all the gear you need to stay cosy and warm: a winter sleeping bag and polar fleece blanket, a ground mattress, transport sled (though don't pack too much!), a firewood and access to a hut where you can cook a hot meal. In the morning, strap on some snowshoes and explore this picturesque park. Check out the spectacular scenery at [Quebec's national parks!](#)



6/11 SLIDES © Hotel de Glace

5. SPEND THE NIGHT IN AN ICE CASTLE

If you're a little claustrophobic at the thought of spending a night in an igloo, head to the more spacious [Ice Hotel](#) just north of Quebec City. Each year, the space is re-imagined and rebuilt into a chiseled [architectural masterpiece](#). Choose from 45 rooms with different themes. An information session will answer all your questions about what it's like to sleep on a bed of ice in a room made of ice. Enjoy the Nordic Area with its spas and saunas under the stars. Check out our countdown of [Canada's 10 Greatest Hotels!](#)



6. RIDE ON A DOG SLED

If you've never had the opportunity to yell "mush," then you absolutely must experience the exhilaration of riding behind a pack of sled dogs. Two companies in the Quebec City area offer unique excursions where you can ride by torchlight. With [Aventures Nord-Bec Stoneham](#) you can follow your canine ride with a local three-course meal and Aventure Inukshuk caps its rides with cocktails in a yurt. Check out [Canada's 10 Coolest Winter Festivals!](#)



8/11 SLIDES © Red Bull Crashed Ice

7. WITNESS EXTREME ATHLETES IN ACTION

Every year since 1996, fearless athletes lace up sturdy skates, stand at the top of Quebec City and then plummet down an ice chute that winds its way through the historic streets. But it's not smooth sailing on the race to the finish line. The course features twists, sharp turns and heart-stopping vertical drops, and usually draws around 100,000 spectators. Explore the [Intriguing History of Quebec's Log Homes!](#)



9/11 SLIDES © Denis Pepin/Shutterstock

8. HIT THE SLOPES

One of [Quebec's big attractions](#) are its numerous ski hills. [Mont-Tremblant Resort](#) is a charming village at the base of a ski hill with lots of amenities that cater to the skier or snowboarder. It's also great for families, offering plenty of outdoor activities, as well as shops, restaurants and groceries. There are lots of different accommodation options from hotels to condos for rent. When you're looking to book, search for accommodations that offer lift tickets as part of the package price. Check out our countdown of the [Top 10 Things to Do in Charlevoix!](#)



9. RELAX IN YOUR SWIMSUIT IN AN OUTDOOR WINTER WONDERLAND

After a day on the slopes in Mont-Tremblant, head to the [Spa Scandinave](#) for some hydrotherapy. This authentic Finnish experience involves saunas and dips in both hot and [cold-water outdoor pools](#) to revitalize and refresh. If you go at night, small white lights encircling the trees and the mist rising off the hot pools add ambiance and an element of privacy after a long day of outdoor activities. A variety of massages is also available. The spa will provide you with towels, a robe and a key to lock your belongings. But be sure to bring your own flip flops so that you're not skipping to each pool in your bare feet.



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10. TREK THROUGH THE GASPÉSIE

Every year, cross-country skiers can embark on a trip that takes them across miles of well-groomed trails in the [Gaspé Peninsula](#). For an entire week, everything is included: transportation, meals, lodging-you just have to bring your gear. Every morning you are presented with a map for that day's 35 kilometres of trails. Snowshoes are also acceptable footwear. Planning on skiing in Quebec this winter? [Here are 20 French phrases you should know!](#)