

# THE WEEK

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## Quebec City's winter wonderland

*The Week Staff*

*Each week, we spotlight a dream vacation recommended by some of the industry's top travel writers. This week's pick is Quebec City in Canada.*



*(Courtesy image)*

"Quebec City in winter weaves a spectacular spell of sheer magic," said Amy Bertrand at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. I'm sure the French provincial capital is a marvel in any season: After all, its Gallic heritage and centuries-old stone buildings make the city "feel like Europe, at half the travel time." But in winter, when its expansive parks and cobblestone streets are blanketed in 4 feet of snow, Quebec City is at its most enchanting. And when the temperature drops below zero, you can warm yourself up with the town's bounty of comfort food — poutine with tenderly cooked rabbit, or crepes loaded with butter and maple syrup. "I always say the best way to see Quebec," said my guide, Tony Gagnon, "is to eat and drink your way around."

A great place to start is Ciel, a rotating restaurant high above the trendy Grande-Allée. Its menu is filled with French classics, but the real reason to visit is the 360-degree panorama. You can look out at the frozen St. Lawrence River, which is affected by tides that push massive slabs of ice back and forth — "a sight to behold, especially from 28 stories up." Looming over the undulating waters are the stone towers of the 611-room Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, built in 1893 and said to be the most photographed hotel in the world. Even if you're not staying there, it's worth a visit, because the city's famous toboggan run sits outside the hotel. After you've grabbed a sled and hauled it up the steep hill, make sure to take in the gorgeous view of the river, "because you won't notice it as you fly at 70 mph down the slope."

My favorite neighborhood is Petit Champlain, which has narrow brick streets lined with quaint restaurants and adorable shops — "some kitschy and touristy, some with wares by true artisans." You're almost sure to find at least one pub "straight out of a Dickens novel," with stone walls, a fireplace, and a friendly bartender. Should you feel like an afternoon escape, Montmorency Falls Park is a mere 15-minute drive from downtown, and its spectacular 272-foot cascade is always worth seeing — even during the city's winter festival, which starts Jan. 26 this year. Around these parts, "winter wonderland isn't just an expression."

Read more at the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), or book a room at the [Fairmont Le Château Frontenac](#). Doubles start at \$240.