



TRAVEL

Montréal En Lumière

Let the light shine on Canada's premiere winter party.

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Festival season may traditionally be thought of as summer, but next month things will really be heating up for fans of fine food, booze, music and more in the cultural capital of our neighbor to the north, Montréal.

First-time visitors are sure to be transfixed by the city's European feel (not just because *ils parlent français*, but due to the architecture, cuisine and population's general *mode de vie*). With more colleges and universities per capita than even Boston (and the most in North America) there's an astute, youthful vibe to the place, only complemented by the centuries-old cathedrals and cobbled streets travelers delight in when exploring the Old Town.

Return visitors will be stunned by all of the new, inventive options that've sprung up, as Montréal's entertainment scene has really experienced a renaissance in recent years. And with a stellar mass transit system, it's dead easy to get to know different neighborhoods across the sprawling city.

So what's the best way to get a taste of everything? You got it — attend the upcoming Festival of Light.

What's it all about?

Between February 22 to March 4, more than 1 million folks are expected to visit MONTÉAL EN LUMIÈRE, which is one of the largest winter festivals in the world and will be celebrating its 19th year in 2018. During those 11 days the *crème de la crème* of Canada's culinary and collaborative arts scenes get the spotlight they deserve, and most events are free to the public. Here are some highlights.

For foodies

Scores of the top names in fine dining, celebrity chefs and globally recognized vineyards descend on the city to put on literally hundreds of events, from exotic tastes (like gastronomic tours of Italy, the Ukraine, Belgium, Mexico and more) to hands-on workshops on charcuterie, and family-themed experiences such as grandmother-granddaughter cooking and kitchen fun with kids to expert wine pairings (and tastings – yummm!), there's truly something for every palette. Many of the events are free, but there are also ticketed wine and champagne brunches, lunches and dinners with multiple courses at venues throughout the city. Feeling more Mountie than traditional Michelin? Opt for a meal based entirely on maple!

Gig goers

Motown, the Martha Graham Dance Academy, maestros of all makes of instrument and masters of the stage all hustle for the spotlight at performance spaces across Montréal during the festival. So whether you're in the mood for some Édith Piaf, Isabelle Boulay or experimental cultural catnip, you're covered.

Outside? Really?!

Sure, it's likely you'll need to don your thermals to enjoy them, but a hearty New Englander like you should have no problem exploring the myriad art, tech and light installations that are completely free to wander with wonder. "Pocket" will be a giant reproduction of a French torch that will light up along with music. "Chimes" will bring together lights and sound in a completely different way. "Nor Mind" promises an interactive sculpture that will react to its audience. And those are just the beginning. There's also going to be a ferris wheel, a "family fun zone" with slides and games, a zip line and Winter Olympic-themed activities such as ice hockey, cross-country skiing and mogul skiing.

Let's go!

In order to plan your trip, check out the schedule of offerings on montrealenlumiere.com/en/ and build out an itinerary.

Getting there

Air Canada and WestJet will get you from Logan to Montréal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau in around an hour and a half for not much more money than the bus companies (around eight hours) or Amtrak (about six hours, but traveling late at night). If you opt for your own set of wheels it's about five hours, with beautiful scenery along the way.

Be sure to bring a valid passport regardless — this border may not have an imposing wall (yet?), but you'll need proper documentation to enter and return home.