



MONTREAL

3 Days in Montréal, Canada

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You can't see it all in 72 hours, but you won't waste a minute with this itinerary.



Though it may be **125 years older** than the country it calls home, these days, Montréal dazzles with a new energy. Its restaurants draw discerning (some may say snobby?) New Yorkers who will happily fly an hour and a half just to eat for a weekend. The city is close (and compact) enough to tackle in three days—be it on foot, along Old Montréal's cobblestoned streets, or in a quick Uber to the top of Mount Royal. Here's how to make the most of your long weekend to Québec's biggest city.

Checking In

A Canadian grande-dame without parallel, the 🏨 **Ritz-Carlton Montréal** opened in 1912 and was the very first hotel in North America to bear the Ritz-Carlton name. It underwent a four-year, \$200 million facelift, completed in 2012, and the result remains understated and elegant—now with tech upgrades like light motion sensors and heated floors, all on a prime location on the Golden Mile. (We'll forgive you for staying in and sipping at the Dom Pérignon Champagne Bar in the famed Palm Court.) For something more contemporary, try the 🏨 **Hôtel Nelligan**, a state-of-the-art hotel in Montréal's arts district consisting of three stone-and-masonry 19th-century buildings. Guest rooms with exposed-brick walls come with cherry-wood furnishings; writings by the French-Canadian poet Émile Nelligan appear in paintings throughout.

Day 1: Historic Montreal

Vieux-Montréal is the Montréal pictured on most postcards—and for good reason. Begin your day at **Olive et Gourmando**, which draws crowds with its tartines, chia bowls, and poached eggs. If you don't want to wait for table service, squeeze past the line (and trust us—there will be one) and grab a raisin scone or Gruyère sesame croissant to go instead. Then walk north along Rue Saint-Paul and hang a left on Rue Saint-Sulpice to arrive at the Gothic Revival **Notre-Dame Basilica**, a famed church built in the 1820s known for its century-old Casavant Frères pipe organ, stained glass depicting Montreal's religious history, and brilliant blue ceiling. Admission is \$6 CAD (about \$4.70), but free, 20-minute tours of the cathedral in English and French are offered every 15 minutes—and they're excellent.

Continue walking north, stopping at Place Jacques-Cartier for a drink at the flower-filled terrace of **Jardin Nelson**. Next, duck into the nearby **Château Ramezay**, a National Historic Site of Canada housed in the former estate of Montreal's governor, where visitors can learn about the city's more than 500 years of history. (Budget at least an hour and a half.) Hungry? Rest your legs—and satisfy your appetite—at **Stash Café**, which is a ten-minute walk south. You'll want to Instagram the interiors (think beams, brick, and church pews functioning as seats), but you'll no doubt put your phone away when the food—traditional Polish—comes out: We're partial to the kielbasa, *sledz* (pickled herring), and *golabki* (cabbage rolls filled with pork and rice), but there are very few wrong orders here. Once you're feeling fortified, walk a few minutes east along Rue de Callière to the **Pointe-à-Callière**, a sprawling archaeological site and museum built on the spot where Montreal was first established in 1642. It sums up nicely all the city history you've been seeing on foot today.

Time to eat again! For Québécois dishes like foie gras terrine, venison carpaccio, and squab with wild rice, nab an early table at **Toqué!**, which was recently named Canada's second-best restaurant (after Alo in Toronto); reservations very much recommended.



Jean-Talon, one of the oldest and largest markets in North America.

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Day 2: A Good Old-Fashioned Food Crawl

Start with a hand-rolled bagel (or two) from **St-Viateur Bagel**, a Mile End neighborhood fixture since 1957 that remains open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and even counts Quebecois singer Celine Dion among its fans. There aren't many places to eat in the shop, so take your goods to Mount Royal, Montreal's namesake and a year-round, 200-hectare public park that towers over the city. Walking to the summit of Mount Royal will take you about 45 minutes from its base, but we won't judge if you Uber it up there instead. Allot at least an hour to sit and enjoy the views, and add on another half hour, at least, to explore the park, which was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who is also credited with creating a little place called **Central Park**.

Down the hill, 24-hour poutine palace **La Banquise** and smoked meat heaven **Schwartz's** may beckon, but we suggest your next stop be **Rotisserie Romados**, a no-frills Portuguese pit stop in Le Plateau-Mont Royal: the tender, flame-licked chicken served with fries and a vinegar-based sauce will put your regular rotisserie bird to shame. Once you've, uh, licked your fingers, order several housemade—and still warm!—*pastéis de nata* for the road. Head 30 minutes west on the #30, #55, or #2 bus to Little Italy and hop off at **Jean-Talon**, one of North America's largest public markets. (It's also accessible from from the blue line's De Castelnau Métro station.) Brush up on your French, mingle with Montrealers buying their local groceries, and pick up edible souvenirs like cured fennel sausages (**Les Cochons Tout Ronds**), creamy Quebec cheese (**Fromagerie Hamel**), and maple syrup (the market's west side).

If you have time, head to **Birra Bar à Bières Maison** to sample some of Montreal's best craft brews; if not, dive right into dinner at the 30-seat **Provisions 1268** in Outremont. Control freaks will have to surrender to the whim of the chef, who, each night, designs five- or seven-course meals based on what was best at the market at that day (a peek at the chalkboard will tell you what was purchased). Cocktails here are solid, but don't quit here—instead, end your day where you started it, in nearby Mile End. Take a car to **Bar Henrietta**, a slick bar inspired by Portuguese taverns of the 1960s. As the night goes on, the music gets louder, so if you want to party, **reports** *Traveler's* Mary Holland, you know where to stay.



WATCH

A Day in Montreal

Day 3: Flora, Fauna, and French-Italian Food

You're probably taking it easier today, and we don't blame you. Sleep in, but once you're ready to move, forego that hotel breakfast and hold out for caffeine at **Paquebot** in the Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie neighborhood. Best known for being the first place to serve nitro cold brew in Montreal, the coffee shop also turns out *that-sounds-so-strange-I'm-not-sure-it-will-work* drinks including curry ginger lattes and cold brew with tonic, rhubarb, and lemon. From there, hop in a car for the ten-minute trip to the **Montreal Botanical Garden**, where you'll need two hours to stretch your legs across the 185 acres and ten greenhouses, each dedicated to a specific theme.

Come lunchtime, secure a spot at neighborhood joint Le Saint-Jacques, a family-run restaurant that dishes out housemade, unpretentious Italian and French dishes in a way that actually works—think veal meatballs and manicotti next to duck confit. Sated, hop on the Métro at Cadillac stop, and take the green line south toward Angrignon, changing to the southbound orange line at Berri-UQAM. Get off at the Place-d'Armes, and walk to the Old Port to board the **Petit Navire II**, which runs tours of the 150-year-old Lachine Canal from the beginning of July to the end of August every summer. The tour takes approximately two hours, which means by the end of it—when you reach the celebrated **Atwater Market**—you may even be hungry again. If you'd rather just have a drink, switch boats and descend onto the Canal Lounge, a permanently moored 42-year-old glass-top boat that opens for the season on May 27. Savor a Caesar (like a Bloody Mary, but with Clamato) and come dinner time, head back uptown to **Bouillon Bilk**, one of Canada's best restaurants: Inside the spare, industrial space, plates are thoughtful and refined, and include rabbit with pistachios, ras-el-hanout, and potatoes; and cappelletti with foie gras, sweetbreads, pecans, and maple. ♦

MAP

Places We Went



HOTEL
Ritz-Carlton Montréal



HOTEL
Hôtel Nelligan

