

THE PANIC
OVER FUKUSHIMA



REVIEW

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O Canada!

A Long Weekend in
Quebec City

OFF DUTY

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WEEKEND

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OFF DUTY



D5

D4

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D10

COOKING | EATING | STYLE | FASHION | DESIGN | DECORATING | ADVENTURE | TRAVEL | GEAR | GADGETS

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, August 18 - 19, 2012 | D1



3:15 p.m. Saturday
Buy tea at Camellia Sinensis



12:45 p.m. Sunday
Shop for cheese at the
Marché du Vieux-Port



6:45 p.m. Saturday
Dine at L'Affaire Est Ketchup



3:15 p.m. Saturday
Buy tea at Camellia Sinensis



Take Monday Off QUEBEC CITY

Quaint? Bien sûr. Boring? Mais non! This buzzing French-inflected city blends the best of old and new, with historic battlefields and industrial-chic hotels, classic cafes and maple-apple macarons

BY JEFF CHU

At first glance, Quebec City seems all about the past, its stolid walls, cobbled streets and mansard roofs testifying to 400 years of rich history. It feels quaintly European in a way few New World cities do, the town's look and sensibility a souvenir of its years as a French settlement and then a British colonial capital. But climb those walls, walk those streets and see what's beneath those roofs—you'll realize that this is no Canadian time capsule. From the modern architecture and art tucked throughout the city to the contemporary gastronomic delights served in its restaurants, the city performs a constant dance between old and new. There's no better time to experience that than late summer, when Quebec City sparkles and offers its warmest *bienvenue*.



6:30 p.m. Saturday
Have a drink at Le St-Laurent Bar
at Fairmont Le Château Frontenac



10 a.m. Sunday
Watch the changing of
the guard at La Citadelle

Turn the page for a day-by-day guide
to a perfect long weekend



ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

QUEBEC CITY: CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY

Continued from Page One

DAY ONE

FRIDAY

7 p.m. From Jean Lesage International Airport, it's 20 minutes by taxi into town (flat rate: \$34.25). Check into the **Hôtel Le Germain-Dominion** (from \$235 per night, 126 Rue Saint-Pierre, germaindominion.com), two old Quebecois buildings reincarnated as a boutique hotel. A century ago, the eight-story, Chicago-inspired western tower, home to Dominion Fish & Fruit, was the tallest in town. The vaults of its neighbor, Hochelaga Bank, held the riches of Quebec's traders. Today, the buildings boast spacious rooms with relentlessly modern furnishings—only the old blueprints on the exposed-brick walls hint at the past.

8 p.m. Dinner is just around the corner at **Café Le Saint-Malo** (75 Rue Saint-Paul, 418-692-2004). Saint-Malo, the proprietor's hometown in France, was also the birthplace of Jacques Cartier, who in 1534 claimed what's now Quebec for France. The faithfully old-country flavors, including fine escargots and succulent duck confit, pair nicely with the plank-floored, thick-beamed space.

9:30 p.m. Stroll a block to **Quai Saint-André** for a stunning limited-time-only spectacle: "The Image Mill," a 40-minute documentary-cum-art-film on Quebec, past, present and fu-



ture. Renowned director and native son Robert Lepage has turned an old industrial landmark into a modern-media venue, projecting his film onto the side of Bunge Grain's silo complex. The show starts at 9:30 in August, 9 in September. Post-show, the silos revert to their year-round evening lighting, Mr. Lepage's Northern Lights-inspired "Aurora Borealis."

DAY TWO
SATURDAY

8:45 a.m. Head downstairs to Le Germain-Dominion's lobby for one of the city's best breakfasts, complimentary for hotel guests. The croissants, from celebrated local patisserie Paillard, are a must. (Croissant connoisseurs ought to visit Le Paingriél at 375 Rue Saint-Jean to try their chocolate version.)

9:30 a.m. **Place-Royale**, Quebec City's center since Samuel de Champlain founded the settlement in 1608, is a five-minute walk away. Behind the square's newest façade—a modern expanse of glass and metal at the base of 27 rue Notre Dame—is the **Centre d'Interprétation de Place-Royale** (*mcq.org*), which illuminates the area's early history. For contrast, also on the square is **Notre Dame des Victoires**, a simple weathered-stone edifice that is Canada's oldest church building. Built in the 1680s, it has been repeatedly renovated, notably after suffering damage in the French and Indian War.

11:00 a.m. Steps away from Place-Royale, board the ferry to **Lévis**, a city across the St. Lawrence River. The journey is your destination—the 45-minute round-trip offers panoramic views of Quebec's dramatic skyline.

Noon Check out of Le Germain-Dominion and drop your bags at the granddame of Quebec City hotels, the **Fairmont Le Château Frontenac**. (The hardy can make the 10-minute uphill hike. It's also a short taxi ride away.) The copper-roofed behemoth has

Roosevelt strategized during World War II. Normally closed to the public, it's shown to guests upon request (from \$299 per night, *1 Rue des Carrères*, *fairmont.com*).

12:30 p.m. Cab it to **l'Alambic** (208 Rue Saint-Vallier Ouest, 418-522-3485), which opened in April in the slowly rejuvenating Saint-Sauveur neighborhood. Owners Christian Lavoie and Bryan Bouchard say it's a bistro, but with a new, locavorous twist. A neighborhood beekeeper makes their honey, and Quebecois beers are on tap and in their sauces.

1:45 p.m. Two blocks south, enter the trendy Saint-Roch neighborhood. Turn left onto Rue Saint-Joseph Est, where a culinary U.N.—Colombian, Cambodian and Canadian eateries—mixes with boutiques selling vintage records, eco-friendly cosmetics, even African wigs. Highlights include toy emporium **Benjo** (No. 543), with its four-foot-high VIP entrance, and housewares shop **Baltazar** (No. 461). **Signatures Québécoises**, a womenswear boutique at No. 560, sits within Saint-Roch Church's walls. It stocks only local lines, including Harricana by designer Mariouche Gagné, who recycles "noble materials," including old furs and silks.

3:15 p.m. One sure sign of contemporary urban gentrification: a fresh crop of caffeine-refueling stations. For tea lovers, **Camellia Sinensis** (624 Rue Saint-Joseph Est, *camellia-sinensis.com*) offers dozens of Asian varieties and a few unexpected Canadian ones, such as l'Ange-gardienne ("guardian angel") blend—thyme, balsam, echinacea, mallow and goldenrod. For coffee, try **Le Nektar** café (235 Rue Saint-Joseph Est, *lenektar.com*). In either case, get a to-go cup and take it to the nearby **Jardin de Saint-Roch**. Its man-made waterfall's sharp angles were inspired by the cliffs of Cap Diamant, the cape upon which the city is situated.



BEAU CANADA Clockwise from top: Place-Royale; a cassoulet dish at Café Le Saint-Malo; the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec; a view of Fairmont Le Château Frontenac; part of the lobby at Le Château Frontenac.

center **Engramme** (*engramme.ca*). It's a 20-minute mostly uphill walk to the hotel for a rest before dinner.

6:45 p.m. Food-loving hipsters pack **L'Affaire Est Ketchup** (46 Rue Saint-Joseph Est, *laffaireestketchup.net*), which has just 26 seats, so book ahead. What the restaurant lacks in space, it makes up for in exuberance, innovation and quality, from the novel Bloody Cesar—a Mason-jarred, gin-laced gazpacho accented with sea urchin and a bacon-salted rim—to a

stairs (310, all going down in this direction) above the St. Lawrence River delivers you to the Terrasse Dufferin, the historic boardwalk that leads to Le Château Frontenac.

12:45 p.m. It's another 10-minute all-downhill walk to the **Marché du Vieux-Port**, the indoor farmers' market built in the 1980s on the model—and site—of a 19th-century one. Maple syrup (\$7.50 for 250ml tins at the *Serres Roch Hébert stand*) makes a fine souvenir, but a more immediate

DAY FOUR
MONDAY

9:30 a.m. Start your day with a jog (or stroll) from the Old City to the **Plains of Abraham**. Looping through this precinct of shaded pathways, rolling lawn and urban forest, it's hard to imagine that, in 1759, hundreds of British and French troops were killed or wounded here. The Battle of Quebec secured Quebec City for the British Crown.

After passing the **Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec**, where

The copper-roofed benemotn has dominated Quebec's skyline since it was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the late 1800s. Its wood-paneled lobby is constantly bustling, so opt for Fairmont Gold, the quieter hotel-within-a-hotel, with just 46 elegant rooms and a separate check-in desk on the 14th floor. Schedule a peek at the Rose Room, where Winston Churchill and Franklin D.

upon which the city is situated.

4:00 p.m. Artists have been key in revitalizing Saint-Roch over the past 20 years. To see some current work, exit the park's south side, turn left on Côte d'Abraham, and find **Méduse** (510-550 Côte d'Abraham, meduse.org), a complex of galleries and ateliers, including the photo-focused **Vu** (vuphoto.org) and printmaking

urchin and a bacon-salted rim—to a seared bison sirloin from Quebec's Laurentian Mountains.

9:00 p.m. At **Le Cercle** (228 Rue Saint-Joseph Est, le-cercle.ca), the entertainment is up-to-date multimedia—art, food, drink and some of Quebec City's best live music. One Saturday, the soundtrack might be local rockabilly; the next, it could be jazz or electronica.

DAY THREE SUNDAY

9:00 a.m. Choose a circular corner banquette for a main course of sweeping city views served with coffee and a buffet breakfast in the hotel's Fairmont Gold lounge.

9:30 a.m. It's a 15-minute wander up Rue Saint-Louis to **La Citadelle**, the fort that guards Cap Diamant. The French had fortifications here in the 1600s, though the current base, shaped like a truncated star, is mostly British, built in the 1820s to protect against Americans. It's still an active installation, so guided tours are required (\$10 per person). Arrive before 10 a.m. on summer mornings to see the changing of the guard.

Noon Exiting the Citadelle, turn left, following the footpaths along the fortress's edge to the **Promenade des Gouverneurs**. A half-hour on the wooden network of walkways and

fine souvenir, but a more immediate task is to construct a picnic lunch: sausage from **Les Cochons Tout Ronds**; blue-veined, ash-covered Me-teorite cheese from **La Fromagère**; and from **La Ferme Québec-Oies**, foie-gras terrine with cranberries. Before grabbing a marina-side table, stop at **Praline et Chocolat** for baguettes and maple-apple or strawberry-marshmallow macarons.

2:45 p.m. Quebec City has a dizzying array of museums, honoring everything from porcelain dolls to motorcycles. The best and most broadly relevant is the **Musée de la Civilisation** (85 Rue Dalhousie, mcq.org), a work of glass, stone and copper by architect Moshe Safdie tucked into the Old City. You can easily spend a couple of hours absorbing its exhibits, especially the ones that survey Quebec's rich history and heritage.

6:30 p.m. After a Sunday-afternoon nap and an aperitif in Château Frontenac's octagonal **Le St-Laurent Bar**, walk five minutes to **Chez Boulay** (1110 Rue Saint-Jean, chez-boulay.com). The sleek new restaurant, whose proprietors include a finalist from "Les Chefs" (essentially the French-Canadian "Top Chef"), aims to source nearly all its produce above the 49th parallel—hence ingredients such as game, mushrooms, trout and cabbages. Try the wapiti pot-au-feu—elk stewed with vegetables in wild mushroom stock, finished with leek foam.

After passing the **Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec**—where an ambitious extension by Rem Koolhaas's architecture firm is rising—exit on Avenue Tache and continue to Rue Saint-Jean. En route back to the hotel, stop at **J.A. Moisan** (699 Rue Saint-Jean, jamois.com), in business since 1871. Peruse the produce, displayed in wicker baskets, and the fine selection of Quebecois cheeses.

Noon If you've got the time and appetite, head to **Brynd Smoked Meat** (369 Rue Saint-Paul, brynd.com). The décor is dull, but the meat—pastrami's Canadian cousin—is delicious. Order a sandwich accompanied by poutine (fries with gravy and cheese).

1:30 p.m. As penance, walk uphill to the hotel and find the gallery down the hall from the lobby. As the hotel replaces its copper roof, it's sending the old metal to Unis Vert l'Art, an artists' co-op specializing in recycled materials. You may like the resulting art, you may not. But there's no better metaphor for Quebec City: What's old is new again.

TAKE OFF TO QUEBEC



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