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'Today' show in Montreal - North America's 'Paris'



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CTV News Video

CTV Montreal: Rob Lurie on the review

Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb, the hosts of the final hour of NBC's Today show were broadcasting live from Montreal on Thursday, and their Friday show will also be from the Montreal city.

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The Canadian Press
Date: Thu. Jul. 14 2011 5:23 PM ET

MONTREAL — From stuffed moose to Molson's beer hats, myriad aspects of kitschy Canadiana were on display for a U.S. television audience as the Today show broadcast from Montreal on Thursday.

Show hosts Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb even swigged their brews from red and blue Canada- and Quebec-themed beer helmets.

The duo sampled ketchup potato chips, dined on lobster poutine concocted by Iron Chef winner Chuck Hughes, and consumed or displayed virtually every conceivable type of maple syrup product.

Cirque du soleil juggled, the Barenaked Ladies sang, and the hosts took a horse-carriage ride through Old Montreal over the course of the one-hour segment.

Gifford remarked during her carriage ride that Montreal felt like Europe - only closer: "It's like you're in Paris, you're in France - but you're not. You're in Canada."

The taping marked Kotb's first visit to Montreal and though she agreed with the comparison to Paris, Montreal was declared the winner. "It felt warmer to me," she said. "It (the city) has a graciousness."

The \$360,000 cost to bring the crew to the city was paid by a mixture of public and private money, involving all three levels of government and private tourism-association cash.

For the Montreal tourism office, it was money well spent. It pegs the attention generated

Photos



Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb of 'The Today Show' are seen in Montreal, Thursday, July 14, 2011.

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by the Today Show at \$13 million worth of media exposure.

"It's one of the best promotions of the past year," said Tourism Montreal vice-president Pierre Bellerose. "It's already generating talk in Quebec City and Vancouver."

NBC says it's the first time since the Today show began airing in 1952 that the final hour of the four-hour program is taped outside the U.S.

The hosts made a stop at the Queen Elizabeth hotel and posed for pictures where John Lennon and Yoko Ono staged their famous bed-in and recorded Give Peace a Chance.

They used the occasion to take a stab at French - with mixed results.

In the opening segment, as they rode the carriage down cobblestoned St-Paul Street, Gifford crowed: "It is glorious! There's not a ciel in the soleil... That (means) cloud in the sky."

A more accurate translation of her impromptu weather observation would be that there's not a sky in the sun. Gifford was actually born in France, as the daughter of a U.S. navy officer. She hardly had much time to perfect the language, however; the family moved to the U.S. when she was two months old.

The hosts also used the segment to provide their audience with a lesson on Canadian geography.

They put up a graphic of a map of Canada, with pictures of themselves over Montreal. They also noted that the entire population of Canada would fit into the considerably smaller state of California.

"Why don't you people populate more?" Gifford joked.

The City of Montreal had a scant two weeks' warning that the 50-member crew would descend upon the city for their two-day stay.

The event required co-ordination between local police, hotels, guides, businesses and technical staff.

One prominent participant deemed the final result worth all that logistical effort.

"I think it's great that the Today Show decided to come here," said Barenaked Ladies drummer Tyler Stewart, "to a truly culturally different place than New York City."

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Neville Longbottom

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