

Visit

Quebec

City

Enjoy Canada's rich history and architecture



View from the La Citadelle de Québec

ARTICLE BY SANDY BORNSTEIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE TRAVELING BORNSTEINS

Québec City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of Canada's most visited cities. This walkable and safe city is known for its remarkable architecture, dating back hundreds of years. Québec City was founded by the French in 1608 and, soon after, was recognized as the gateway to the North American continent.

Comfortable shoes are a necessity when exploring the cobblestone streets in Upper Town, built on a cliff, and the Lower Town near the harbor. Year-round visitors are attracted to this city known for its history, culture, architecture, beautiful surroundings, boutique shops, and restaurants.

A fall cruise itinerary with an overnight stay provided an opportunity for my husband and I to explore Québec City. On our first day in port, a rainstorm pelted us when we disembarked. And like all seasoned travelers, we adjusted. Our rain gear – waterproof jackets, an oversized umbrella, and rain-resistant hiking boots – came in handy as we maneuvered the slick, hilly streets.

Raindrops forced us to hopscotch between walking down the narrow streets and seeking refuge inside some of the city's historic buildings. In drier and warmer conditions, a horse-drawn carriage ride might have been a preferred option.

NOTRE-DAME-DES-VICTOIRES CHURCH

In 1929, the provincial government recognized this Roman Catholic Church as one of Québec City's first three historical monuments. The current building has been renovated numerous times since the first stone was placed in the chapel's foundation in 1688.

MONTMORENCY PARK NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

This park stands on the former site of the Province of Canada's Parliament and the place where pivotal resolutions were drafted leading to the creation of the Dominion of Canada. We viewed statues of historical figures— Étienne-Paschal Taché, (one of the founding fathers of the Confederation) and Sir George-Étienne Cartier (an architect of the Canadian Confederation).

LA CITADELLE DE QUÉBEC AND MUSÉE ROYAL 22 RÉGIMENT

Individuals have to join a guided tour to visit. Our English-speaking guide gave an informative historic overview. I recommend the tour coinciding

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Horsedrawn Carriage in Quebec City



Montmorency Park



Upper Town Looking Down on Lower Town, Quebec City

with the daily firing of the cannon at noon. Summer visitors can witness the changing of the guard with soldiers dressed in scarlet tunics, bearskin caps, and navy-blue slacks.

DUFFERIN TERRACE

Lord Durham created a promenade named after Lord Dufferin, a Governor General of Canada from 1872 to 1878. It's above the former site of Fort Saint-Louis, built by Champlain in 1620. Summer visitors can walk down to an archaeological crypt exposing 200 years of life under French and British governors.

FAIRMONT LE CHÂTEAU FRONTENAC

The exterior of the Fairmont Le Château Frontenac resembles a castle with turrets. The Middle Age and Renaissance architectural styles coupled with the hotel's location on a cliff overlooking the St. Lawrence River make this place a great photo opportunity.

MUSÉE DU FORT

A driving rainstorm forced us to retreat inside this tiny museum where we viewed a light and sound show highlighting the six

military assaults on Québec. The museum added to our understanding of Québec's history and complimented our earlier tour of the Citadelle.

MUSÉE DE LA CIVILISATION

Interactive exhibits engage visitors in the process of learning about Québec's history and culture, including the First Nation and the Inuit. With an ever-changing base of temporary exhibits, visitors can continually learn about local culture and history.

BICYCLING TO MONTMORENCY FALLS

With a small group of cruise passengers, we bicycled to Montmorency Falls which stands at a height of 272 feet. That's a full 99 feet higher than Niagara Falls.

SECOND VISIT

On my second visit, I arrived by air. As the plane was circling near the airport, I identified the St. Lawrence River and spotted Montmorency Falls.

As a solo traveler, I checked into the Auberge Place d'Armes, a 20-room

boutique hotel, and was immediately taken back to the 17th century. In fact, descendants of the original colonial era owner ran the hotel when I visited. Guests can choose from two different styles of rooms--either French with stones and exposed beams or an English-themed room with brick and woodwork.

I strolled in and out of boutique shops lining both sides of a pedestrian walkway in the Quartier Petit Champlain. I watched artisans craft wooden pieces and looked on as another showed me alpaca sweaters from Charlevoix. I eventually wandered away from the shops and ended up near sections of the old wall. By luck, I passed by La Maison Jacquet, the oldest house in Quebec, built between 1675 and 1676.

Quebec City is a perfect getaway for travelers seeking a touch of European culture in North America.

Disclosure: Sandy Bornstein's second visit to Québec City was during a media trip arranged by DQMPR in conjunction with the Travel Classics International Travel Writers Conference in Montreal.



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