

# DEPARTURES

— Travel —

## How to Spend 24 Magical Hours in Québec City



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The city practically glows with sparkling lights at night.

By Ellie Nan Storck on February 05, 2020

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It's hard to say whether [Québec City](#) is best in the early morning, covered by a fresh [blanket of snow](#) and looked at through the window of a cozy coffee shop. Or in the afternoon, from the comfort of a [piping hot pool](#) overlooking the majestic St. Lawrence River. Or at dusk, when the entire city comes to life with tiny, white and gold twinkling lights.

Regardless of the time of year or time of day, Québec City is one of the atmospherically warmest cities in North America. The people, the cuisine, and the dynamic history, still visible in the architecture and cobblestone streets of the walled Old Québec, yield a distinctly European-mountain-town vibe—in the form of a moderately-sized, bustling city. Hugging the icy St. Lawrence River, Québec City is just as beautiful as it is worth exploring for weeks.

But if you only have 24 hours, here's a list of the best things to do in Québec City.

**9 a.m.:** Sit for a quick breakfast and coffee at the [Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac](#), an [American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts](#) property, and where you'll stay the night. Definitely don't skip the maple butter crepes—they're worth the journey up north alone.



*Courtesy Ellie Nan Storck*

**10:30 a.m.:** Arrange a tour with [Maple Leaf Tourism Services](#) to learn about the architecture, food, and culture of Québec City (pro tip: ask for tour guide Odette Bernier). Alternatively, book a [snowshoeing tour](#) through the National Battlefields Commission of the Plains of Abraham, and learn about the Seven Years War, the Siege of Québec, and more. (This is an especially fun activity for little ones and history buffs.)



*Courtesy Ellie Nan Storck*

**1 p.m.:** For one of the more unique (and somewhat new-to-the-city) experiences, make your way to [Strøm Spa Nordique](#), located right alongside the rushing St. Lawrence River. The Nordic spa is made up of a two-story, indoor-outdoor Scandinavian spa. Here, spend a few hours luxuriating in expansive hot pools, floating in a warm lazy river, sweating in multiple river-facing saunas or steam rooms, enjoying a salt flotation pool, relaxation rooms, and dining at a restaurant with an incredibly inspired menu.

For those who are game for something a bit more outdoorsy, head just outside the city (about a 50-minute drive) to [Aventures Nord-Bec Stoneham](#), a snow-covered paradise and home to dozens of very happy huskies. Yep, that's right, it's time to go [dog sledding](#)—and you'll actually get to drive the sled. But be warned: you'll likely want to take a pup home.



*Courtesy Ellie Nan Storck*

**4 p.m.:** Take some time to window shop and enjoy the atmosphere of the Old Québec and newer neighborhoods. Test some chocolate from Érico, a chocolate shop and museum located in a hip neighborhood called Saint-Jean Baptiste (pro tip: definitely don't miss the hot coco: *chocolat chaud*).

**5:30 p.m.:** After wandering around in the cold, enjoy a cocktail at the [Le Chateau Frontenac's](#) hotel bar, 1608.

**7 p.m.:** Sit for dinner at [Louise Taverne & Bar à Vin](#), a city institution boasting some of the best French cuisine in the region.

## Where to Stay



*AlbertPego/Getty Images*

Check into the [Fairmont Le Château Frontenac](#), arguably one of the most iconic (and photographed) hotels in [Canada](#).

Alternatively, if you're in search of a wellness-forward, meditative stay in the historic city, reserve a room at [Le Monastère des Augustines](#). This historic space was the original monastery in the city—and the first hospital in Canada, known as a safe haven for many. Now it's a hotel and wellness center, where guests can wide spiritual horizons, enjoy peace and quiet, yoga, massage therapy, and the like. The original sisters from the monastery still live on-site.