



# A tasty tour of Canada

The Chemin du Terroir (Route of the Earth) is an agrotourism trail that meanders along 140 miles (226 kilometers) of country backroads and byways of the Laurentian Mountains of Canada. Just an hour from Montreal, the trail runs between the Lake of Two Mountains (Lac des Deux Montagnes in French), the Ottawa River, and the Riviere du Nord.

by Judy Colbert

Photos: Courtesy of Tourisme Leurentides

**T**he Lake of Two Mountains is at least the third name for this body of water and the referenced mountains are Calvaire Mountain and Saint-Joseph-du-Lac Hill, the two tallest peaks facing the lake from the north. The picturesque lake is roughly eight miles (13 kilometers) long by six miles (10 kilometers) wide or approximately 37 acres (150 square kilometers). Its deepest point is 31 miles (50 kilometers).

## SLOW TRAVEL

The self-guided trails of the Chemin du Terroir are an exploration of the countryside where you could spend a day or a week discovering small towns, heritage, culture, history, romance, food (cheeses, breads, apple orchards, honey and maple products), and beverage (wine, beer, vermouth, gin, mead, port and cider). The route's suggestions include activities and tastings, regional cuisine, local products, and accommodations. Throw two or more interests together and you have a perfect combination and a great escape from the

Quebec is the world's leading producer of maple products (responsible for 70 percent of the world's production), from syrup to candy and beyond. The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers boasts over 7,000 producers scattered across Quebec.

city, whether it's you and your family, just the two of you, or you're wandering solo.

## SWEET DELIGHTS AND GRAPE ADVENTURES

Started in October 2010 the trails are indicated by signs (e.g., three bottles in a circle mark the wine and spirits trail) to help you find your way as you reconnoiter around the area. As an example, you can taste your way through the "Maple Gourmet Road." Remember, that there is a maple leaf on the Canadian flag and it is there for a reason. Native Americans introduced the French to the goodness of maple syrup when they arrived on the continent. Now, more than 100 maple masters are located throughout the province. Quebec is the world's leading producer of maple products (responsible for 70 percent of the world's production), from syrup to candy and beyond. The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers boasts over 7,000 producers scattered across Quebec.

The trees are 30-40 years old before they're tapped for syrup and continue to please the world's taste buds until they're as much as

100 years old. While tapping the syrup is a March to April thing, many sugar shacks are open all year and may offer a short tour and explanation of the maple trees' process as well as a shop full of goodies to taste and take home (maybe Quebecois meat pie drizzled with maple syrup or a maple-smoked ham). As a special bonus, you'll find family recipes that date back to the first maple trees.

Another suggested topic for investigation is the Brome-Missisquoi Wine Route (La Route des Vins), running along the eastern townships which explores the cradle of viticulture in Quebec. The soils and microclimate have combined to create an area perfect for grape growing. Eighteen estate wineries are ready to welcome you, whether you're new to wines or an oenophile. Stop for tastings and learn how grapes are grown in Quebec. Or, you can stop at a u-pick farm and collect your own delectable treats.

## LOCAL FOOD

There's no question that Quebec has some of the best food in the best restaurants in

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the world and now you can sample the farm part of "farm to fork" in the Terroir et Saveurs part of the trail and the restaurants that use the local food ([www.terroiretsaveurs.com](http://www.terroiretsaveurs.com)). A collaboration among Miments du Quebec, the Association de l'Agrotourisme, and Tourisme Gourmand lists more than 450 locations where Quebec food is grown, prepared, or served.

For a summer foodie experience, follow one of five suggested routes along the Outaouais Gourmet Way (Parcours Outaouais Gourmet). You'll have a choice of farms, restaurants, public markets, gourmet boutiques, and kitchen shops filled with the cooking utensil you didn't realize until now that you need.

#### NATURE PROVIDES

Should you be here in the winter and you love a snowy wonderland, you're in for a super treat beside the warm welcome you'll receive at local restaurants, attractions and establishments. The continent's first ski lift was built here in 1931. Skiing took off and trainloads of Montreal skiers flocked to the area by the end of the decade. The mountains and valleys are gentle with more than 9,000 lakes and cute postcard-perfect mountain towns. Besides downhill skiing, there's cross-country skiing, snowboarding, dogsledding, and snowboarding. If snow isn't

the rafting, canoeing, hiking, golf and camping. The 143 miles (232 kilometers) of train tracks that used to carry hundreds of adventure seekers here from Montreal is now the bed for Canada's longest linear park, Le P'tit Train du Nord. Depending on the season, you can bike or stroll, or glide along on in-line skates or cross-country skis. Along the way is a plethora of small towns and villages where you can explore railway stations, restaurants, art galleries and boutiques.

#### STAY AWHILE

A huge selection of accommodations include exquisite resorts, hotels and inns, cottages, condos, tourist homes, bed and breakfast places, campgrounds and outfitters are available according to your tastes and budget, so you don't have to worry about exploring the area and having to return to Montreal in one day.

Once you're home and you realize, "Oh, we should have bought ..." this or that, you can always check out Quebec-made products at the online shop: [www.terroiretsaveurs.com](http://www.terroiretsaveurs.com). There is an enormous range of products available from dehydrated blueberries to lobster oil with fresh vanilla.

Venture into the province of Quebec and seek out its many attractions. It's an experience that will fill you with fond memories for many years

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Astounding nature, great food and nice people. That's Canada for you, eh?!



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