

Québec: Je Me Souviens

Located at the north-eastern tip of the North American continent, Québec covers an immense territory. Its 1,667,926 km² (643,990 sq. mi.) surface is equivalent to three times the size of France, five times the size of Japan, twice the size of Texas and seven times the size of the United Kingdom, making it Canada's largest province.



Québec's majestic St. Lawrence River is bordered by the Canadian Shield to the north and the Appalachian Mountains to the south. Its vast forests shelter more than a million lakes and rivers. Further north, the deciduous forest makes way for the coniferous forest of the taiga, followed by the shrubs and lichens of the tundra.

Aboriginal & French Roots

About 10,000 years ago, the first people arrived on the territory that is now Québec. Later, these Aborigines welcomed the first French colonists. They traded furs with them and helped them adapt to the tough climate of the New World.

1534

Jacques Cartier lands in Gaspé and finds a territory occupied by Aborigines.

1608

Samuel de Champlain founds the city of "Kébec," an Amerindian word that means "where the river narrows."

1642

Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve founds Ville-Marie, a small evangelistic mission that will later become Montréal.

1701

The Great Peace of Montréal is signed with 39 Amerindian nations; this treaty that brings an end to the hostilities between the Aboriginal nations and the French colony.

1759

The battle of the Plains of Abraham ends with the defeat of the French troops under Joseph de Montcalm at the hand of the English army led by General James Wolfe.

1763

Louis XV cedes New France to the British Crown with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

1867

The British North America Act is passed, creating a confederation of four provinces: Québec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

1960

The Quiet Revolution marks the beginning of major social changes and the modernization of Québec.

1967

Montréal hosts the World Exposition, Man and His World.

1974

The National Assembly declares that French is the official language of Québec.

1976

The Summer Olympic Games are held in Montréal.

1992

Montréal celebrates its 350th anniversary.

2008

Québec City, the province's capital, celebrates its 400th anniversary.

European Charm & Modernity

Québec City, the province's capital, is perched atop Cap Diamant, from where it overlooks the St. Lawrence. The cradle of French civilization in North America and the only fortified city north of Mexico, Québec City has been on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List since 1985.



The province's metropolis, Montréal, is the second-biggest French-speaking city in the world and boasts the largest inland port on the planet. Its architecture combines North American modernity with European charm. Extremely cosmopolitan, it has its own Little Italy, Latin Quarter, Chinatown and Gay Village.

St. Lawrence River

The St. Lawrence is one of the longest rivers on the planet. It is distinguished not only by its size, but by its rich ecosystems, diverse wildlife and countless unique islands.

Its estuary is one of the richest in the world. Various species of marine mammals, birds and fish live, stop over, nest, reproduce or feed here, particularly during the seasonal migrations.

The St. Lawrence is also one of the world's longest navigable waterways, giving access to the Great Lakes and, consequently, the interior of the continent. Its history is shadowed by numerous shipwrecks as a result of shoals that make navigating the river treacherous. Even today, the captains of cargo and passenger ships have to be guided by experienced pilots who are well acquainted with the St. Lawrence's reef and currents.



Quebecers

In 2006, Québec had 7.6 million inhabitants, which is nearly a quarter of the Canadian population. Its population density was 4.7 inhabitants per square kilometer (11.5 habitants per sq. mi.). With almost 80% of its population living along the St. Lawrence River, Québec has many large uninhabited stretches and wide, open spaces.

Aboriginal peoples account for about 1% of Québec's population. In total, the 10 Amerindian nations and the Inuit nation represent nearly 78,000 people.

Québec is primarily a French society thanks to its language and its culture. In 1974, the National Assembly (Québec's parliament) proclaimed French to be the official language of Québec. The population is 80.9% francophone, while 7.8% of Quebecers speak English at home and the remainder speaks another language, such as Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Vietnamese or Portuguese.

Tourism Industry

Tourism is the fifth-largest industry in Quebec. In total, 29,000 companies are involved in the industry, generating 130,000 direct and 48,000 indirect jobs. In 2006, Quebec welcomed 28,551,000 tourists, most of them from the United States, France, the U.K., Germany, Mexico and Japan.

Wikipedia.org

Photos: © MTOQ /J. F.Bergeron

Date: 2009-05-25

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-quebec-je-me-souviens-article887>