

Québec: Québec City & the Saguenay Fjord

Tour-Only Itinerary

With steep granite fjords, tranquil birch forests, and charming historic towns, this journey through Quebec showcases the region's natural beauty and European heritage. Gaze into the sapphire waters of the St. Lawrence River watching for beluga whales, and delight in a savory picnic lunch at a scenic lookoff in Charlevoix Valley. On a Quebec City walking tour, learn about the history of this walled city – one of the earliest settlements in North America. Enjoy French-influenced cuisine with fresh seasonal ingredients along with a generous serving of traditional Quebecois hospitality. Your accommodations include grand, historic hotels and quiet countryside retreats where you can relax in comfort each evening. Immerse yourself in spectacular landscapes and European charm, on a walking tour that is unmistakably Quebec.



Highlights

- Trace the footsteps of European settlers on a Quebec City walking tour that takes you along cobblestone streets, past historic buildings, and quaint shops
- Delight in an exciting whale watching tour aboard a Zodiac boat, watching for minke, beluga, and blue whales in the St. Lawrence River
- Trek through a World Biosphere Reserve of boreal forest and tundra in Grands-Jardins National Park, learning about this fascinating and beautiful landscape

On all Flex-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Opportunities to break away from the group and explore on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 20 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious multi-course meals—a majority are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Flex-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with 2 to 7 miles per day of walking. While some ascents and descents on this tour are gradual, others are sharp and steep, but short. The terrain includes gravel roads, wooden boardwalks, and dirt wooded paths, which may contain rocks and roots. For this reason, it is especially important to wear hiking boots or shoes with ankle support. The pace is generally leisurely, approximately 2 miles per hour. The tour encompasses the history and sophistication of Quebec City and the natural beauty of the hills, valleys, and preserves surrounding the Saint Lawrence River. Please note that the transfer on Day 1 will be approximately four hours in duration however there will be stops along the way to break up the journey. As one of our Flex-Guided tours, some

days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

Join your *Quebec City & the Saguenay Fjord* tour. **Quebec City**

Quebec City walking tour; 2-3 miles, easy city walking. Transfer to Tadoussac

Your guides will meet you at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby of the Auberge Saint-Antoine. After a brief introduction to the group, your adventure begins.

After a brief orientation meeting in Quebec City where you meet your guides, you embark on a guided exploration of Quebec City where you learn about its history, from the first European settlements in the early 17th century to the present and, in particular, the struggle for control of the continent between the French and English in the 18th century. As a result of that conflict, Quebec City is the only fortified city north of Mexico. Its charming cobbled “Lower Town” and the Place Royale date to the earliest days of the French colony. Architectural landmarks of stone and wood, winding streets, and outdoor cafés are all a part of the tapestry of this French-speaking city.

After a picnic lunch you begin the drive northeast to the town of Tadoussac. This lovely village is located at the confluence of the Saint Lawrence River and the Saguenay Fjord and was the first trading post in New France, founded in 1600, making it the oldest surviving French settlement in the Americas. A stunning setting, the sheltered bay is surrounded by unique sand dunes, the cliffs of the Saguenay in the background, and the vast St. Lawrence—home to an abundance of marine life.

Your home for the next two nights is the historical Hotel Tadoussac. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner of refined Quebecois cuisine in its intimate dining room that overlooks the St. Lawrence River.

Accommodation: Hotel Tadoussac, Tadoussac

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Zodiac whale watch. Halte des Beluga

2-3 miles, easy to moderate

Today, after a copious breakfast, you embark on an exciting whale watch by Zodiac boat, cruising into the St. Lawrence River and underneath the soaring granite cliffs of the fjord. With luck, you may spot minke or beluga whales, just two of 10 different species that make their summer home in these rich, warm, salty waters. The Zodiac allows for up-close encounters with these large mammals and your experience is enriched by commentary from your guide on board.

After lunch in town, continue your exploration of the Saguenay Fjord and St. Lawrence Estuary. One of the longest fjords in the world at just over 60 miles, the Saguenay is unusual not only because its fresh waters run into the saline estuary, but also for its southerly location—most fjords are at much higher latitudes (in either the Northern or Southern Hemispheres).

Created in the last Ice Age around 10,000 years ago, the fjord features steep cliffs on either side, rising to 1,400 feet at the highest point and plunging below the surface to a maximum of almost 900 feet. An incredible diversity of wildlife thrives in this amazing geography—beluga whales gather here in the summer, it is thought, for the unique combination of waters and sandy floor, and the cliffs are an ecological success story for the return of peregrine falcons. After lunch, make your way to the Baie-Sainte-Marguerite and trek to Beluga Halt overlook where you can spot the white whales that give the overlook its name.

You return to your hotel to refresh after a full day. Time permitting you explore the charming center of Tadoussac, an easy stroll from the hotel, with its many small shops featuring regional handicrafts and food products, relax at the pool or gardens. Enjoy another sumptuous meal at Chez Mathilde, a nearby restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Tadoussac, Tadoussac

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

Pointe de l'Islet walk. Dunes walk, transfer to Baie-Saint-Paul

2-3 miles, easy to moderate

This morning, enjoy an optional walk from the hotel to Point de l'Islet trail to the Beluga Halt overlook—as

its name implies, a place to spot the small white whales. Next, you will transfer for a walk through the nearby dunes, actually marine terraces, remnants of the last Ice Age. At a lookout over the St. Lawrence, you take in the expansive views, scanning for eagles and peregrine falcons, before descending to the sandy beach. From the crescent beach, you may spot one of the river's beluga whales. Climbing back up and over the dunes, you loop back to town for lunch on your own.

After, you shuttle from Tadoussac to your hotel in Baie-Saint-Paul. Upon arrival at the Hôtel Le Germain you have the option to do a late afternoon stroll on the trails toward the marina and the St. Lawrence River, discover the many art galleries of Baie-Saint-Paul, or enjoy the spa amenities of your hotel before dinner on your own in town.

Accommodation: Hôtel Le Germain Charlevoix, Baie-Saint-Paul

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4

Mont du Lac des Cygnes

2.5 or 5 miles, moderate, 820 or 1,650-ft. elevation gain

This morning, your destination is the Grands-Jardins National Park. We begin on the well-maintained trails to Mont du Lac des Cygnes, one of the centerpieces of the park. You enjoy a picnic lunch along the way. At the summit, you take in panoramic views of the Charlevoix Crater and the Taiga forest, which is unusual at this latitude. This unique environment earned the region a rating as a World Biosphere Reserve. Keep your eyes peeled for some of the park's many inhabitants, such as black bear, moose, woodland caribou, grey wolves, red foxes, porcupines, common loons, lynx, and spruce grouse.

Continuing south to Quebec City, you arrive at your hotel, the Auberge Saint-Antoine, located in the heart of the lower "old" town and rated as one of Canada's best hotels. Built on the foundation of an old warehouse, the hotel today displays more than 700 priceless historical finds that were uncovered during construction. Dinner in on your own tonight. You will stroll through the cobblestone streets perusing the many outdoor cafés, intriguing parks and squares, and numerous quaint shops.

Accommodation: Auberge Saint-Antoine, Quebec City

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5

Parc National de la Jacques-Cartier

3-6 miles, moderate, 1,500-ft. elevation gain or easier option; 2-3 miles

Just over an hour from Quebec City is one of the province of Quebec's largest provincial parks, the Parc National de la Jacques-Cartier. The landscape is characterized by remarkable contrasts—this mountainous upland plateau is cut by steep-sided glacial valleys. A river winds through the most spectacular of them, the Vallée de la Jacques-Cartier, a trench more than 1,800 feet deep. In forests of yellow birch, sugar maple, and black spruce, you are immersed in the classic woodland of North America—habitat for myriad bird and animal species, from the small northern chickadee to large mammals such as black bear, moose, and even re-introduced caribou in the more remote regions. There are a variety of trails to choose from, all of which have lovely views of the valley. You enjoy a trailside lunch at a scenic point.

This afternoon, you return to your hotel to freshen up for another evening in Quebec City. You have some time to wander before dinner at your hotel, where warm hospitality and classical French and Canadian cuisine focusing on savory flavors and ingredients from the hotel's farm on l'île d'Orléans provide a fond farewell meal.

Accommodation: Auberge Saint-Antoine, Quebec City

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Your Quebec: Quebec City & the Saguenay Fjord tour concludes

After a delicious breakfast, your tour concludes at Auberge Saint-Antoine at approximately 9:00 a.m. Begin your journey home.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

One boutique accommodation, one park-style accommodation, and a landmark resort	✓
12 on-tour meals: 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓