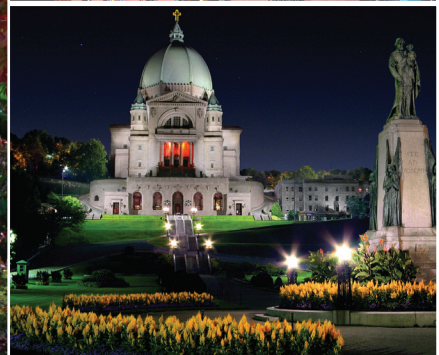
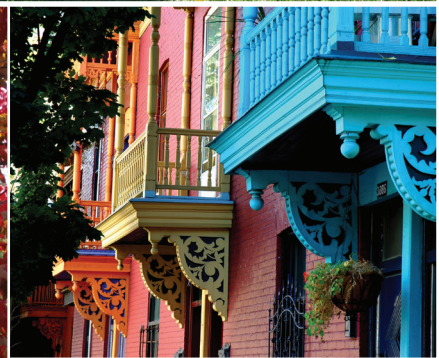




SAY “BONJOUR-HI!” TO MAGNIFIQUE MONTREAL

THIS EUROPEAN-FEELING CITY JUST TO OUR NORTH HAS A VIBRANT CULTURAL SCENE, FABULOUS RESTAURANTS, AND SPECTACULAR NATURAL SURROUNDINGS THAT MAKE IT WELL WORTH CROSSING THE BORDER FOR. (THERE ARE SPECIAL SIGHTS FOR DOCTORS, TOO.)

BY BETH WEINHOUSE

“Bonjour-hi!” is the greeting you’ll hear everywhere in Montreal, and it nicely sums up the vibe in this exciting, cosmopolitan city. While the city’s language—and the language in all of Quebec province—is officially French,

most inhabitants speak perfect English, and signs appear in both languages. That makes the city both foreign-feeling and easy to navigate for Americans. (Yet if you choose to practice your French, beware: the locals will understand

you perfectly, but their French isn’t the Parisian French you probably learned in school.) The advantages to crossing our northern border are numerous: fabulous French food, world-class art and architecture, beautiful natural surround-

ings . . . and even destinations of special interest to doctors (see sidebar, page 78).

The most distinct feature of the city is the mountain smack in the middle of downtown—Mount Royal, which gives the city its



name. You can drive to the top, or walk the 400-step staircase that begins on the corner of Peel Street and Pine Avenue. Either way, the view at the summit is worth it. “And don’t forget, that’s where [the real] Anna in *The King and I* was buried,” says Ross Feldman, MD, chair of medicine, Health Sciences Centre, St. John’s, Newfoundland. (Deceased in 1915, Anna Harriette Leonowens is interred at the Mount Royal Cemetery on the north slope of the mountain.)

There’s a lot to see in the city of 1.7 million people (3.5 million if you include the surrounding area), situated on an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence River. It’s easy to navigate on foot or by subway, bus, or cab. It’s big enough to have distinct neighborhoods, but not so big as to be overwhelming. We asked a few current and former medical Montrealers (or Montréalais in French) for their recommendations.

“When I’m organizing a conference, and there are people who haven’t visited the city before, I always encourage people to do what

you won’t get or won’t get as well anywhere else,” says Christopher Lyons, head librarian at the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill University.

Tops on nearly everyone’s must-see list is Old Montreal. As the name suggests, it’s the oldest part of the city, with a few parts dating as far back as the 17th century when the area was still called New France. Says one New York area internist, who went to school in Montreal years ago, and returns to visit periodically, “Old Montreal is the part of the city that’s changed the most from when I was a student. It used to just be a warehouse district near the waterfront. But now it’s filled with great restaurants, nice shops, and boutique hotels.”

Old Montreal is an ideal area for visitors to make their temporary home during their stay. Lyons recommends the [Auberge Bonaparte](#). “It’s a small hotel with a fantastic French restaurant,” he says. “It’s right around the corner from the Notre-Dame Basilica.”

Dr. Feldman seconds the recommendation of Old Montreal as a great place to stay. “It has a great feel to it, with lots of little art shops,” says Dr. Feldman, who has family in the city and tries to visit as often as possible. He recommends the [Hotel Place d’Armes](#), the [Hotel Le St. James](#), and the [Hotel Nelligan](#). For those who prefer large hotels, all the major chains—including Ritz-Carlton, Sofitel, Omni, W, Hilton, Marriott, Westin, etc.—have hotels in the downtown area.

If you love visiting museums, Montreal won’t disappoint. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts ([Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal](#)), on Sherbrooke Street, a main avenue bisecting the downtown, is hard to miss. Out front is a gigantic glass sculpture by the artist Chihuly, with bright yellow and red tendrils snaking in all directions. Inside, the museum has a permanent collection of masters like van Gogh, Dali, Picasso, and Matisse, as well as collections of Canadian art, including the work of the Inuit people who inhabit the

Arctic region of the country.

Not far away on Sherbrooke, on the McGill University campus, is the Redpath Museum of Natural History. The quirky and eclectic collection of ancient and modern organisms, minerals, and ethnological artifacts in the small museum will delight both adults and curious children.

Then there’s the Montreal [Biodome](#), in a building originally constructed as a velodrome for the 1976 Olympics. Inside, the Biodome contains living replicas—including vegetation and some wildlife—of four ecosystems. Visitors can walk through a South American rain forest, a North American wilderness forest, Arctic/Antarctic polar regions, and a river ecosystem modeled on the St. Lawrence River. For obvious reasons, the tropical rainforest’s heat and humidity feel especially wonderful when visiting during a frigid Canadian winter.

DÉLICIEUX!

Perhaps because of their French ties, Montrealers are proud of the

OPENING SPREAD: ALTO; (2) LES AMIS DE LA MONTAGNE; S. MONTIGNÉ; 2008; MONTREAL BOTANICAL GARDEN; TOURISME MONTREAL; MICHEL CATY; TOURISME MONTREAL; STEPHAN POULIN; (2) MARGUERITE-BOURGOIS MUSEUM AND NOTRE-DAME-DE-BON-SECOURS CHAPEL



local cuisine, and rightly so. The options for elegant and casual dining are far too numerous to take advantage of during a short trip. . . but it's fun to give it your best shot.

For breakfast, try one of these three options:

1. Visit almost any of the cafés dotting the city to enjoy the kind

bakery cases will make you think you're in France.

2. Try a very distinctive Montreal bagel. "Montreal bagels are different than bagels anywhere else in the world," says Dr. Feldman, "and you can get them right out of the oven." Smaller, thinner, sweeter, and denser than their New York

known purveyors are [Fairmount](#) and [St.-Viateur](#), both of which sell the bagels fresh 24 hours a day, and both located in the district east of Mount Royal, called le Plateau. Stroll along rue Saint-Denis and Saint-Laurent Boulevard, the two main commercial streets in the neighborhood, while

your coffee light and sweet, you can order like a local, too. Ask for a "double-double," which means coffee with two creams and two sugars.

Here are three good options for midday fare:

1. Go native, and try Quebec-favorite poutine for lunch. "No one should leave Quebec without having tried poutine," says Dan Deckelbaum, MD, a surgeon, director of the Global Health Program, and professor in the division of trauma surgery at McGill University's medical school. "It's amazing. It's especially great in winter, when it's so cold outside."

The traditional version of poutine is a plate (or bowl) of french fries, covered in brown gravy, with cheese curds on top. New versions of the dish include fries topped with chicken, bacon, smoked meat, sausage. . . even

FUN FACT: IF YOU HEAR SOMEONE REFERRING TO "LOONIES," THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT CRAZY PEOPLE. CANADIANS CALL THEIR DOLLAR COINS LOONIES BECAUSE OF THE PICTURE OF A LOON ON THEM. TWO DOLLAR COINS? THOSE ARE "TOONIES!"

of flaky, buttery croissants usually available only in Paris. Try [Pâtisserie de Gascogne](#) in the Westmount section of town. The charming decor and tarts, gâteaux, breads, and pastries in the

counterparts, with a larger hole in the middle and a crunchier outside, the bagels usually come topped with sesame seeds ("white seed" in the local lingo) or poppy seeds ("black seed"). The two best-

munching a fresh, warm bagel.

3. Stop at [Tim Hortons](#), Canada's equivalent of Dunkin' Donuts or Krispy Kreme. To find one, ask a local where the nearest "Timmy's" is. And if you like

Photos above, clockwise from top left: The Casino de Montréal, the largest casino in Canada, located on the Île Notre-Dame; Parc La Fontaine, an 84-acre park in the middle of the city; a pedestrian street in Old Montreal, a district with many fine shops and restaurants; the Montreal Biosphere (not to be confused with the Biodome), a museum dedicated to environmental issues; Aires Libres, a yearly public art happening; the city's Chinatown neighborhood; lanterns in the annual Gardens of Light Festival at the Montreal Botanical Garden.

foie gras, caviar, or truffles. Montreal outlawed street food carts in 1947, and since then the city has spawned small, greasy-spoon type restaurants that sell poutine, as well as the small hot dogs that Montrealers call “steamies” and other kinds of street fare. But even fast food chains like McDonald’s and Burger King sell poutine in the city, and high-end restaurants often serve upscale versions.

2. Visit one of the large indoor/outdoor food markets—Atwater and Jean-Talon—to browse the local bounty and sample artisanal food offerings for lunch. The **Atwater market** is in the southwest part of the city near the Lachine Canal, while **Jean-Talon** is in the

middle of Montreal’s Little Italy neighborhood. Both enormous markets feature produce from local farmers, as well as small shops and stands selling flowers, spices, oils, cheese, meat, fish, baked goods, regional and ethnic cuisine, maple products, etc. You can wander around and try various international cuisines from the many vendors and small cafés.

3. If you’re really hungry, make a meal of Montreal’s famous “smoked meat,” a kind of cross between New York-style pastrami and corned beef. “If you miss the Stage Deli in New York, you can create the same kind of meal at Schwartz’s, a Montreal landmark,” says Dr. Feldman. “That’s

where you go for traditional Montreal smoked meat.” Be prepared to wait in line to get into the tiny restaurant. If you’re impatient, the smoked meat is also available packaged and ready to go.

Now it’s dinner time, and the options are even more daunting. TripAdvisor lists 4500 restaurants in the city. Here are a few recommendations. . . but realize that there are very many more fine restaurants in Montreal than are possible to list here.

“If you want to look for authentic French, I recommend **Euro-pea**,” says Dr. Feldman, adding that it’s always high up in the TripAdvisor ratings. The restaurant is extremely popular, so if you plan

to visit, try to make a reservation (you can do it on Open Table) even before you leave the States.

Dr. Feldman also recommends **Moishes**, a 75-year-old steakhouse on Saint-Laurent Boulevard. And **Gibby’s** for steak and seafood, located in a 200-year-old stone building in Old Montreal.

One last word about food in Montreal, and it’s a sweet one: maple. Quebec produces about three-quarters of the world’s maple syrup, and the city is crazy for it. During maple-tree-tapping season—February to April—you can find maple on menus all over the city, and maple for sale everywhere. Besides syrup, there’s maple sugar, candy, cookies, muffins,

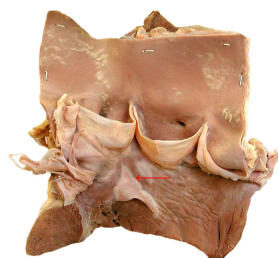
THREE DESTINATIONS JUST FOR DOCTORS

THE PHRASE “BUSMAN’S HOLIDAY” REFERS TO A BUS DRIVER TAKING A VACATION. . . AND TRAVELING BY BUS. SO WHAT’S A DOCTOR’S HOLIDAY? RELAX, WE’RE NOT SUGGESTING YOU START TREATING PATIENTS WHILE YOU’RE AWAY. BUT EVEN ON VACATION YOU MIGHT ENJOY THESE THREE MONTREAL ATTRACTIONS THAT SHOWCASE FASCINATING ASPECTS OF MEDICAL HISTORY.



THE OSLER LIBRARY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Renowned physician Sir Wiliam Osler (1848-1919) created the first medical residency program and was one of the founders of Johns Hopkins Hospital. A McGill graduate and later a professor there, he left his impressive medical books collection to the university upon his death. “The oldest item in the museum is 2700 years old,” says Christopher Lyons, head librarian. “It’s an Assyrian clay tablet, ophthalmological, and it says, ‘Give the patient the best beer!’” Inside the 1960s building is the original 1929 oak-paneled library room, which was moved when the library relocated. The collection of about 100,000 volumes also includes medieval manuscripts, beautifully illustrated anatomical atlases, bibliographies, and vintage pharmaceutical ads. Visitors are welcome. For more information: <http://www.mcgill.ca/library/branches/osler>



THE MAUDE ABBOT MEDICAL MUSEUM AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY

A nice complement to the Osler Library, this museum includes objects as well as documents. The Osler Collection in this museum, for instance, contains about 150 preserved body organs, skeletons, etc. dating to the late 19th century. “The collection was set up specifically for recreating the idea of the medical museum, common in nineteenth and twentieth century medical teaching,” explains Lyons, who says the diseased organs, preserved at autopsy, were used to teach doctors about illness before there were safer surgical methods or more high-tech ways to look inside the body. The most famous artifact in the museum is the “Holmes heart,” an organ procured at autopsy in 1822 by Dr. Andrew Holmes, the first dean of medicine at McGill. For more information: <http://www.mcgill.ca/medicalmuseum/introducti>



MUSÉE DES HOSPITALIÈRES DE L'HÔTEL-DIEU DE MONTRÉAL

This museum, on Pine Street downtown, illuminates some of Quebec’s health history: specifically, the hospital rebuilt and served by a religious order—the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph—to serve the sick poor of the area. The first Hospitallers arrived in Montreal in 1659, and they are still active in the city today. The museum’s collection contains 20,000 artifacts kept by the order over the centuries. In addition to the museum exhibits, the garden and architecture—which includes the 17th century staircase at the museum’s entrance—are also worth a look. For information about visiting the museum: <http://www.museedeshospitalieres.qc.ca/english.html>

—B.W.

donuts, and even soap and candles. Little sugar shacks—called *cabanes à sucre*—spring up to offer all kinds of maple products, which make excellent souvenirs. Les Délices de l'Erable, a maple boutique and mini-museum on Rue St. Paul in the Old City, is a good place for maple souvenirs year-round.

WORK IT OFF

Enough about food. In fact, at this point you probably want to burn off all the delicious calories you've consumed. Montreal and the surrounding areas provide a lot more workout options than simply walking up and down [Mount Royal](#) all day.

To start with, Montreal was one of the first cities to get a bike-share program. Bixi Bikes has over 5000 bicycles throughout the city, and over 400 stations to rent and return them to. "You can pretty much ride around the whole island," says Dr. Deckelbaum. "It's a beautiful ride. . . or walk or run. You'd need to be in

really good shape to get all the way around, but you can do a decent segment of it, or the downtown core, in a very relaxed half day."

For less urban pursuits, the Laurentian mountains are an easy drive away; the resort town of [Mont Tremblant](#) is less than two hours away by car. This pedestrian village feels like a Swiss ski town, with narrow cobblestone streets, numerous shops, and endless places to snack or dine. You can ski right into some of the hotels, then relax in a sauna or swim in an outdoor pool. [Mont Tremblant](#) is a lovely destination in the summer, too. Active travelers can hike and climb, swim, boat, or play tennis, while those who just prefer to relax can visit one of the many spas or shop the village streets. Among the various hotels, condos, and resorts to stay in, two that stand out are the Fairmont Tremblant and the Westin Resort and Spa Tremblant.

For a city spa, [Bota Bota](#)—in a ferryboat anchored in the Old Port on the St. Lawrence River—

"NO ONE SHOULD LEAVE QUEBEC WITHOUT HAVING TRIED POUTINE," SAYS DR. DAN DECKELBAUM, A MONTREAL SURGEON. "IT'S AMAZING, ESPECIALLY IN WINTER."

offers a unique experience. "You can sit there in the hot tub, looking over the city, when it's minus 30 degrees [Celsius] outside. It's a pretty surreal experience," says Dr. Deckelbaum.

Yes, the freezing winter is "character-building," as one current resident puts it. But the elaborate underground city means you can do a lot of shopping and sightseeing without emerging above ground. And you shouldn't need the excuse of a strong U.S. dollar to go shopping. Besides endless varieties of maple syrup and other products, good souvenirs include: ➤ Ice wine—a dessert wine produced from grapes that have been allowed to freeze on the vine.

➤ Hudson's Bay point blankets—

striped wool blankets modeled after those traded with the First Nations (Native Americans) for beaver pelts in the 18th and 19th centuries. The blankets—and coats, totes, backpacks, and more—are sold in the Hudson's Bay department stores, known as The Bay or La Baie.

➤ First Nations and Inuit art—prints, carvings, baskets, glasswork, jewelry and masks crafted by the native people who inhabit Canada's north.

Last but not least, if you're planning your trip, don't forget your passport. It's been over a decade since Americans could cross the border—in either direction—with just a driver's license and birth certificate. **P**

Clockwise from top left: Fresh-baked bagels at the famous Fairmount Bakery in the Plateau district; the Monument George-Étienne-Cartier, known as the "angel statue" on Mount Royal; a profusion of flowers for sale at the city's Atwater Market; fresh local produce at the Jean-Talon market in the Little Italy district.

