Québec: Montréal & the Eastern Townships

Bike Vacation Only

Enjoy a slice of New England in Quebec. Join VBT in the bicycle-friendly Eastern Townships, just over the Vermont border. Here in Quebec's first wine-growing region, bucolic roadways lead to pristine lakes. And family-run vineyards and fertile farmlands contribute to a lively and creative gastronomy. Visit a Benedictine Abbey in an inspirational lakeside setting. Browse welcoming galleries showcasing local arts and tour a fragrant lavender farm. Take in the elegant stonework of small hamlets. And delight in Canada's best-kept secret: a rich and stunning canvas steeped in a unique Quebecois culture.

Cultural Highlights

Enjoy a tour, lunch and tasting at Domaine du Ridge in the heart of Quebec's first wine-producing region
Fuel up for your ride with a maple syrup pie in the beautiful village of Frelighsburg
Sample the Eastern Townships' organically grown products such as meat, cheese, fish, pasta, bread, pastry, chocolate, cider, wine and much more
Indulge in an ideal pace, with two nights in a charming 3-star country inn and three nights in a 5-star lakeside resort
Visit a lavender farm for a guided tour and bistro lunch amidst Fitch Bay's spectacular rolling countryside
Experience the calming atmosphere and beauty of lakeside Abbaye Saint Benoit-du-Lac with a tour and a tasting of the monks' famous cheese
Ride into the fascinating border village of Stanstead along the Tomifobia Nature Trail
Pedal through a region famous for its hospitality and warmth toward cyclists
Opt to visit the Colby-Curtis museum for insight into the region's link to New England Loyalists
Partake of a soothing treatment at your hotels' elegant spas

What to Expect

This tour offers options on easier terrain with occasional hills and the opportunity for some longer rides and moderate climbing. The majority of the rides are on quiet roads alongside traffic, some with designated bike routes, and some hard-packed gravel bike paths or roads. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available throughout the trip.

Tour Duration: 6 Days
Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 40
Average Cycling Time: 01:15 - 04:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 66º/46º, Jun 73º/54º, Jul 79º/61º, Aug 81º/57º, Sep 73º/48º

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 2.7, Jun 3.1, Jul 2.7, Aug 3.9, Sep 3.5

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins in Montreal / Transfer to St-Armand / Warm Up Ride

At 10:00 a.m., meet your VBT Trip Leaders and the rest of the group in the lobby of your Montreal hotel.

For tours starting on Monday, except for September 16, 2019, please meet at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Montreal; 475 Avenue du Président-Kennedy, Montreal, QC H3A 1J7, Canada, telephone +1 514-286-1986. Parking is available at Delta Hotels by Marriott Montreal for $26.50 CAD daily. Parking rates are set by the hotel and are subject to change.

For the tour starting on Monday, September 16, 2019, please meet at 10:00 a.m. at Hotel Le St-Martin Montreal; 980 Boul. De Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1M5, Canada, telephone +514-843-3000). Parking is available at Le St-Martin Montreal hotel for $27 CAD daily with valet service. Parking rates are set by the hotel and are subject to change.

Your VBT Trip Leaders will be holding a VBT sign and will be easy to recognize as they will be wearing VBT garments. Please come dressed for cycling (with your pedals or saddle if you use your own), as there will be no place to change into cycling clothes before today's bicycle ride. Your transfer from Montreal will depart promptly at 10:30 a.m. (approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes travel time) to the start of your bicycle ride.

If your arrival at the Montreal hotel is scheduled for later than 10:00 a.m., or if you are delayed, you must travel to our West Brome hotel, Auberge West Brome (128, route 139, West Brome Road, West Brome, Quebec J0E 2P0 Canada, telephone +450 266-7552), at your own expense. A taxi from downtown Montreal to Auberge West Brome costs about $190-$200 CAD per taxi, and takes approximately 80 minutes. Please contact Auberge West Brome to advise them of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your VBT Trip Leaders.

Your first destination is the fine winery of Domaine du Ridge, a delightful vineyard in a pastoral setting near the U.S. border. You may stretch your legs as you tour the facility, after which you will enjoy a light

lunch and a tasting. If you prefer, you may wait to sample the wines as a reward after your warm-up ride.

After lunch, meet your Trip Leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by an easy ride on quiet roads to Stanbridge East, a charming old mill village that ended the 18th-century policy of “no settlements along the frontier” when it was established in 1792. Continue through the gently rolling terrain of vineyard country and into the village of Frelighsburg, nestled in a valley of orchards. Like neighboring Vermont, just 2.5 miles away, it is renowned for its maple syrup. You can sample a delicious maple syrup pie as you pass through. Continue riding along quiet country roads and over a covered bridge back to the vineyard. From here, you shuttle about 30 minutes to the inn.

Tonight, enjoy a welcome reception, followed by dinner at your inn’s charming restaurant, Bistro West Brome.

Hotel: Auberge West Brome
Meals: B (for Air Package guests only), L, D
Daily Options: 21 miles (34.5 km)

DAY 2: Knowlton / Brome Lake / Explore Sutton

After a hearty country Quebecois breakfast, you will head out onto scenic roads, to the Victorian village of Knowlton, sometimes called Brome Lake for the water on which it sits. En route, stop it a Brome Lake Ducks to learn about the regions famous Pekin ducks or at Douglas Beach for a swim in the lake.

For lunch, you may choose from a variety of restaurants in Knowlton, a seasonal residence for many wealthy Montrealers and current home of Canadian author Louise Penny whose mystery novels are centered on the fictional character of Chief Inspector Gamache. Discover the setting for Penny’s Three Pines. For advanced reservations of a walking tour in Knowlton, please visit www.threepinestours.com .There’ll also be time to browse the art galleries and boutiques brimming with handicrafts and folksy works of art. During your visit, you will witness the Loyalist and New England influences in the colonnaded buildings and luxurious homes on the lakeshore. The town was founded by United Empire Loyalists in 1802 and tangible signs of the prosperity they created are everywhere.

You may shuttle back or continue cycling to the auberge. The afternoon’s rides are either back via the main road or through a mix of hard-gravel and paved roads past the small village of Brome along rolling hills.

This afternoon, relax poolside or enjoy an optional spa treatment (advanced reservations recommended) before dinner on your own. Your Trip Leaders will offer a shuttle to the nearby town of Sutton (10 minutes' travel time), where you can choose from the microbrewery, bistro, or café.

Hotel: Auberge West Brome
Meals: B
Daily Options: 20 miles (32.2 km) or 9 miles (14.7 km); additional 9.8 miles (15.9 km)

DAY 3: Shuttle to Mansonville / Lake Memphremagog / Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-Lac / Magog / Ayer's Cliff

After breakfast at your auberge, you shuttle through the scenic Missisquoi River Valley, named by a First Nations Abenaki tribe of Quebec and northern Vermont. Today's ride begins in Mansonville, a rural community whose Owl's Head ski resort lures outdoor lovers. Enjoy views of this mountain as you cycle toward Lake Memphremagog, a 32-mile-long lake that straddles Vermont and Quebec. Your morning ride past forested slopes and vast stretches of farmland leads to Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-Lac, where Benedictine monks practice a life of contemplation based in prayer and farm work. You pause here to for a guided tour and a tasting of their famous cheese.

Enjoy a picnic lunch before cycling on to Magog on the northern shore of Lake Memphremagog. Founded by Loyalists in 1776, Magog enjoys a lively craft beer scene; you can enjoy some of the brews before you shuttle to Ayer's Cliff and your home for the next three nights, Ripplecove Resort and Spa. Tonight, dinner is at your lakeside hotel.

Please Note: On this day of the tour, when there are more than 10 guests in the group, there will be two support vans operated by your Trip Leaders. This may result in a van only sweep of the route instead of a biking leader.

Hotel: Ripplecove Resort & Spa
Meals: B, L, D
Daily Options: 16 miles (27 km) and/or 11 miles (19 km)

DAY 4: Cycle Tomifobia Nature Trail / Stanstead / North Hatley

Awake to the calm of Lake Massawippi. Considered one of the ten most beautiful lakes in Quebec, Lake Massawippi, which means "the great deep lake" in Abenaki, is just under nine miles long, a little over one mile wide and reaches depths of up to 282 feet. The lake was for centuries a prime area of hunting and

fishing for many native tribes.

After breakfast, you cycle from the inn to the village of Ayer's Cliff, where the Tomifobia Nature Trail begins. This tranquil pathway follows the old route of a Canadian Pacific railway, tracing the west bank of the Tomifobia River against its current. Your southward ride delivers you to the village of Stanstead.

Enjoy lunch on your own in Stanstead. Magnificent 19th-century buildings and homes line Dufferin Street in Stanstead. The street leads to the world's friendliest border, where you will find Canusa (Canada-USA) Street. Remarkably, this is one of the only streets in the world where a national border corresponds to the street's center line, making literal neighbors out of Canadians and Americans. Elsewhere in town, the Haskell Free Library and Opera House was constructed to straddle the border. You will cycle past prestigious Stanstead College to the Colby-Curtis Museum for an optional visit of its history exhibits and Victorian Gardens.

After time to explore this fascinating town, continue cycling north on a picturesque road back to Ayer's Cliff and our inn. Enjoy time by the lake this afternoon.

Early this evening for dinner on your own, stroll into Ayer's Cliff or shuttle to the north end of the lake to the charming little town of North Hatley. Your Trip Leaders will be happy to help you with recommendations and directions. After dinner, return to your inn by shuttle.

Hotel: Ripplecove Resort & Spa
Meals: B
Daily Options: 17, 29, or 35 miles (28.1, 48.1, or 56.4, km)

DAY 5: Fitch Bay / Bleu Lavande / North Hatley

Today's scenic ride takes you along a patchwork of agricultural land en route. After this rewarding reel through more picturesque landscapes, you coast into Fitch Bay, stopping at the beloved Narrows Bridge on your way. Dating to 1881, this covered bridge is one of only two in Quebec province to cross part of a lake. You are invited to tour Bleu Lavande, an agri-tourism lavender farm where the plant is harvested and transformed into lovely fragrant products. Afterwards pause for lunch at the farm before your transfer back to the inn.

This afternoon's optional route follows moderate and rolling terrain around Lake Massawippi to North Hatley, a quaint lakeside village. Stop for a refreshment at the local pub or for gourmet chocolate at The

Sweet Café where everything is homemade with passion, offering glimpses of the water along the way.

Later, you continue cycling north toward the inn. Tonight, you gather for our special farewell dinner at our hotel's superb restaurant Le Riverain.

Hotel: Ripplecove Resort & Spa
Meals: B, L, D
Daily Options: 17, 28 or 40 miles (27.1, 45 or 64.4 km)

DAY 6: VBT Bicycle Vacation ends / Depart for Home or Begin your Post-Trip Extension in Quebec City

Enjoy a final breakfast at Ripplecove before your transfer to the Montreal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport (YUL), where you will arrive by 10:30 a.m. for your return flight. We recommend a flight out of Montreal no earlier than 12:00 p.m. (noon). If you parked your car at the start of the tour in Montreal, your transfer will continue to the Montreal downtown hotel arriving around 11:15 a.m.

* Please note: If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport is at your own expense.

Meals: B

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Auberge West Brome (Days: 1,2)

Located on 200 acres of picturesque farmland, this 3-star, 26-room country inn is situated just north of the town of West Brome. Surrounded by the glorious rolling hills of the Eastern Townships, the Auberge is close to Brome Lake, lush vineyards, and the Appalachian foothills. The propertys walking trails traverse magnificent surroundings. At mealtime, the bistro offers an informal country dining room and outdoor terrace, where you can enjoy a menu rich with sumptuous regional dishes made from the freshest local ingredients. Access to the Finnish sauna, gym, indoor heated pool, and outdoor hot tub are complimentary to guests. VBT guests enjoy a 10% discount at The Spa West Brome. For reservations (highly recommended) call directly at +450-266-5830 or email spa@awb.ca.

Ripplecove Hotel & Spa (Days: 3,4,5)

Opened in 1945 as a fishing resort by the Stafford family, this world-renowned 31-room resort offers all the comforts of a 5-star hotel in a cozy lakeside setting on a 12-acre peninsula. Since 1987, the Four-Diamond award-winning Le Riverain Restaurant has featured an evolving and creative local cuisine in a romantic and intimate atmosphere. You will have three nights to take advantage of the propertys tennis courts, outdoor swimming pool, and complimentary kayaks and canoes. Or indulge in the treatments of the Spa Arboressence, nestled in the ancestral pines. With its pastoral setting, this is a refreshing way to end each day of bicycle exploration in the Eastern Townships. The charming village of Ayers Rock is just a 10-minute walk away.