

Québec: Montréal & the Eastern Townships

Bike Vacation Only

Pedal across patchworks of land and lakes during VBT's riveting Eastern Quebec bike tour. Here in Quebec's first wine-growing region, you'll traverse quiet roads and forested slopes. Cycle into charming villages along old nature trails. Hop off your bike to your bike to browse art galleries and boutiques. Enjoy a fragrant tour of a lavender farm, where you'll learn how this flower is harvested and processed. In Stanstead, just outside of Vermont, visit the world's friendliest border. Throughout your biking adventure, pause to savor local delicacies like gourmet cheese and maple syrup pie. Here, delight in Canada's best-kept secret: a rich and stunning canvas steeped in a unique Quebecois culture.

Cultural Highlights

Lunch at Le Old Mill 1849, located next to the Missisquoi Museum, which features the historic development of Missisquoi County

Enjoy a 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

Rejuvenate in tranquil accommodations, 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 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 66°/46°, Jun 73°/54°, Jul 79°/61°, Aug 81°/57°, Sep 73°/48°

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 Stanbridge East / Warm Up Ride

At 9:30 a.m., meet your VBT trip leaders and the rest of the group in the lobby of your Montreal hotel.

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 \$27 CAD daily. 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 10:00 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 9:30 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.

Hotel: Auberge West Brome

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Domaine du Ridge Warm-Up: 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect: Your first spin gives you the opportunity to fit your bike, shift the gears and practice riding. After a light lunch at Le Old Mill 1849, cycle gently rolling terrain to Frelighsburg, a picturesque village of charming buildings. After savoring a piece of maple syrup pie, follow country roads (one long, gradual hill leaving the village) to the Guthrie Covered Bridge and head to Domaine du Ridge for a wine tasting followed by tour transfer to your hotel (30-minutes).

DAY 2: Knowlton / Brome Lake / Explore Sutton

After a hearty country Quebecois breakfast, the second day of your tour takes you out onto scenic roads, to the Victorian village of Knowlton, sometimes called Brome Lake for the water on which it sits. En route, stop at a Brome Lake Ducks to learn about the region's 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*. 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: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 15 – 48 km (9 – 29 miles)

Morning

West Brome to Knowlton: 32 km (20 miles)

Afternoon

Knowlton to West Brome: 15 km (9 miles)

Knowlton to West Brome Plus: 16 km (10 miles)

What to Expect: Follow a scenic paved route, to Knowlton. Return to West Brome after lunch by bike or shuttle. This afternoon, 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.

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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 19 – 46 km (12 – 29 miles)

Morning

Mansonville to Abbaye: 27 km (17 miles)

Abbaye to Magog: 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: Ride along peaceful back roads overlooking Lake Memphremagog and Owl's Head ski area. Arrive at the Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-Lac for a picnic lunch and tour, then continue your reel to Magog. You will shuttle to your hotel from Magog's lakeside pub. 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.

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

Awake to the calm of Lake Massawippi—one of the most beautiful lakes you'll see on your tour. 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.

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.

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: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 20 – 56 km (12 – 36 miles)

Morning

Ayer's Cliff to Stanstead: 28 km (18 miles)

Afternoon

Stanstead via Main Road to Ripplecove: 20 km (12 miles)

Stanstead to Ripplecove: 28 km (18 miles)

What to Expect: Our morning ride follows the quiet, hard-packed trail along the Tomifobia River to Stanstead. Then cycle along a picturesque road to Ayer's Cliff and the inn. This afternoon's ride traverses moderate and rolling terrain along Lake Massawippi to charming, lakeside North Hatley. Our route out of North Hatley features a climb and rolling countryside.

DAY 5: Fitch Bay / Bleu Lavande / North Hatley

Today's final day of your Quebec bike tour takes you along a patchwork of agricultural land. 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 you shuttle back to the inn.

This afternoon's optional route follows an easy route, mix of paved and gravel road, to the north end of Lake Massawippi to the village of 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. Explore the town before a shuttle back to the inn. Or, continue cycling around Lake Massawippi on moderate and rolling terrain, on a mix of paved and gravel roads, back to the inn.

Tonight, you gather for our special farewell dinner at our hotel's superb restaurant Le Riverain.

Hotel: Ripplecove Resort & Spa

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Range: 18 – 55 km (11 – 40 miles)

Morning

Ayer's Cliff to Bleu Lavande: 27 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Ripplecove to North Hatley: 18 km (11 miles)

Ripplecove to North Hatley (extra): 37 km (23 miles)

What to Expect: Ride out of Ayer's Cliff on a busy road with wide shoulder then through a patchwork of agricultural land following a tranquil road to Fitch Bay and Bleu Lavande. After lunch, shuttle back to the inn. Stay at the inn to relax or cycle to North Hatley on a quiet secondary paved road then on a gravel country road to the village of North Hatley. From here, either shuttle back to the inn or continue on the moderate and hilly ride back to the inn mainly on gravel roads.

DAY 6: VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

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).

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

Meals: Breakfast

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 property's 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 property's 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.