

The Foodie's Guide to Quebec City

Where locals actually eat

2026
EDITION

Skip the tourist traps

Built from 10+ years of local exploring





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	How to Eat Like a Local in Quebec City
03	What Makes Quebec City Food Culture Unique
05	Poutine 101: What You Actually Need to Know
09	Tipping Culture in Quebec City
11	Microbrewery Culture: Why Beer Is a Big Deal Here
13	French Menu Survival
15	Classic Home-Cooked Quebec Dishes
20	St-Roch: Where Young Chefs Come to Play
36	St-Sauveur: Working-Class Roots, Vibrant Future
45	Old Quebec: The Festive Heart
62	Montcalm: Where Locals Actually Live
73	Bon Appétit, and Safe Travels



HOW TO EAT LIKE A LOCAL IN QUEBEC CITY

Hey!

I'm Mélodie, and I've been living in Quebec City since 2011. That's over 14 years of exploring this city one bite at a time, and let me tell you, I've developed some pretty strong opinions about where to eat here.

I've always been a foodie at heart. Whether I was discovering street markets in Asia, tasting authentic curries in India, or getting lost in Parisian bistros, food has always been my favorite way to discover a place. And even traveling across Canada, I realize how unique our Quebec food culture really is - we have our own traditions, our own ways of doing things.

But here's the thing: as a traveler myself, I know the struggle.

You know that moment when you're staring at 47 restaurant options on Google, everything looks amazing, but how do you know which ones are actually loved by locals versus those that are just well-positioned to catch tourists? How do you distinguish the real hidden gems from the well-marketed tourist traps?

Even when I go to Montreal, and we're talking about a city just 3 hours away, I get completely overwhelmed by the options. Everything looks incredible online, but you want to maximize your money and time, so how do you make the right choices?

Here, it's different. Here, I know.

I worked in restaurants for over 10 years, so I understand the food scene from the inside: who's doing what, why certain places work and others don't, how to recognize authentic quality.

I've also worked in the tourism sector, and it breaks my heart every time I see tourists directed to ordinary, overpriced restaurants when there are so many extraordinary options just a few streets away.

My beautiful city deserves better than that.

Quebec City has an incredible culinary scene: passionate entrepreneurs creating unique experiences, chefs working with extraordinary local producers, little family spots that have been perfecting their recipes for decades. But these places aren't always easy to find if you don't know where to look.

So here's the deal: this guide is my way of sharing my 14+ years of discoveries with you. These aren't the places tourist guides send you, these are the spots where I go with my friends, where I take my family when they visit, where I choose to spend my own hard-earned money.

Some of these places, you might be the only tourist. Others are better known but truly deserve their reputation. They all have one thing in common: they represent the real taste of Quebec City.

Ready to eat like we locals do? Let's go.

WHAT MAKES QUEBEC CITY FOOD CULTURE UNIQUE

Look, I get it. You've probably heard about poutine. Maybe you've seen photos of sugar shacks. But here's what most people don't realize until they actually eat their way through Quebec City: our food scene is so much more complex and interesting than the stereotypes suggest.

We're Obsessed with Local & Seasonal Ingredients

Quebec chefs have a deep, almost instinctive connection to local terroir: wild mushrooms from the Laurentians, fiddleheads in spring, fish from the Gaspésie that arrived yesterday. This isn't a trendy farm-to-table movement; it's how we've always eaten. Winter forces creativity, and our chefs have turned seasonal constraints into an art form.

Comfort Food That Hugs You From the Inside

Our winters are brutal, like -25°C brutal, so yeah we've perfected comfort food. Think thick split pea soups, slow-simmered stews, and tourtière, our traditional meat pie. But even our comfort classics have gotten sophisticated. A tourtière at a good restaurant here means wild game, local spices, flaky crust made with Quebec butter, and house-made ketchup aux fruits. Traditional, but elevated.

Beyond the Poutine Stereotype

Here's what surprises most visitors: Quebec City's food scene is unexpectedly refined. People show up expecting heavy comfort food and stumble into places like Battuto, Arvi or Rioux et Pettigrew - creative, approachable restaurants where talented chefs decided to do their own thing.

Innovative tasting menus, homemade pasta that rivals Italy, neighborhood spots where exceptional quality comes without any pretension.

Unexpected Local Products

Here's where it gets fun. Quebec produces some ingredients and products that you literally cannot find anywhere else:

Ice cider (cidre de glace): Apples frozen on the tree, pressed into concentrated sweetness. It's like dessert wine, but Canadian and better with cheese. Yes, it's often recommended to tourists, but there's a reason - it's genuinely special.

Cassis products from Ferme Monna et Filles (Île d'Orléans): A family-run blackcurrant farm: their crème de cassis, liqueurs, syrups, and gourmet products are refined, balanced, and genuinely worth the stop. You can sample on site and enjoy the river views from the terrace.

Farmhouse cheeses: We have over 700 artisan cheeses produced in Quebec. Some of them have won international awards. The cheese culture here rivals France, and I will die on this hill.

Craft beers: Our microbrasserie scene is borderline obsessive. We'll talk more about this later, but just know that beer pairing is taken very seriously here.

Wild game: Caribou, bison, deer, wild boar - all raised or hunted locally, prepared by chefs who know what they're doing.

The Bottom Line

Quebec City's food scene punches way above its weight class for a city of 575,000 people. We have:

- Michelin-quality restaurants without the pretension (or the price tags)
- Traditional comfort food that's been refined over generations
- A genuine farm-to-table ethic that existed long before it became trendy
- Neighborhood spots where locals eat that tourists usually miss
- Unique regional ingredients you can't find anywhere else

And that's exactly why I created this guide - to help you skip the tourist traps and eat like someone who actually lives here. Because trust me, the difference is huge.

POUTINE 101: WHAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO KNOW

I know, I know. You're wondering about poutine. Here's the truth: poutine is everywhere in Quebec City. Like, literally everywhere. Gas stations, fancy restaurants, food trucks, diners - everyone serves it.

But before we talk about where to find good poutine, let's talk about what it actually is and where it came from.

Where Poutine Was Born

Poutine emerged in rural Quebec in the late 1950s, specifically in the Centre-du-Québec region. This wasn't Montreal or Quebec City creating something fancy, this was small-town casse-croûtes (snack bars) serving working-class people who wanted something cheap, filling, and satisfying.

There was a dairy surplus at the time, which meant an abundance of cheese curds left over after processing milk. These curds started appearing in snack bars as a snack all on their own, served in bags. To this day, fresh cheese curds are still sold by the bag across Quebec, in grocery and convenience stores throughout the province.

The Origin Stories (Because There Are Always Arguments)

Here's where it gets messy, literally and figuratively. Several restaurants in the Centre-du-Québec region claim to have invented poutine.

The most famous story? In 1957, at Café Ideal in Warwick, a regular customer named Eddy Laineasse asked owner Fernand Lachance to add cheese curds to his fries. Lachance reportedly replied, “Ça va te faire une maudite poutine!” — which roughly translates to “That’s going to make a damned mess!” At the time, in Quebec slang, “poutine” meant a mess or a messy mixture.

The combination became popular, and when customers complained that the fries grew cold too quickly on the plate, Lachance added gravy to keep everything warm. And there you have it - fries, cheese curds, gravy. **The trinity was complete.**

Meanwhile, Jean-Paul Roy of Le Roy Jucep in Drummondville claims he was the first to serve poutine as we know it today in 1964. His restaurant even registered the trademark "L'inventeur de la Poutine" (The Inventor of Poutine).

The truth? We'll probably never know for certain who was first. But what matters is that poutine was born from a simple request in a small-town casse-croûte. It wasn't created by a chef. It wasn't designed to be sophisticated. It was accidental comfort food that happened to be exactly what people wanted.

What Makes a Real Poutine

This is important: a real poutine has exactly three elements. Fries. Fresh cheese curds. Brown gravy. That's it. That's the foundation.

The Fries

Everyone has their preference here - some like them thick-cut and crispy, others prefer them softer, some want them super golden. There's no single "correct" fry for poutine, but they need to be substantial enough to hold up under all that gravy and cheese.

The Gravy

Traditionally, poutine uses brown gravy - usually a "sauce brune" made from a combination of chicken and beef stock. Over time, other sauces have become popular - BBQ sauce, spaghetti sauce, spicy variations. Preferences vary wildly.

The Cheese Curds (This Is Where Everyone Agrees)

Cheese curds are bits of curdled milk created as a by-product of the cheese-making process. They have a very specific taste and texture and are best consumed within hours of being made. This is the one non-negotiable element of good poutine.

The curds must squeak.

That's how you know they're fresh, if they squeak when you bite into them, they're good. That's why they're also called "squeaky cheese". If they don't squeak, if they've been refrigerated and gone rubbery, if they melt like mozzarella into a puddle, that's already a bad start.

The cheese curds should soften from the heat of the gravy but not disappear completely. You want that contrast of texture.

The Perfect Balance

A good poutine is all about balance:

- The fries maintain some crispness despite being covered in gravy
- The cheese curds start to soften but don't completely melt
- The gravy is hot enough to warm everything but doesn't turn the whole thing into soup
- Every bite contains all three elements

It's harder to achieve than it sounds.

When Quebecers Eat Poutine

Understanding when locals eat poutine helps explain what it is:

- After a late night out - The classic post-bar poutine run
- For a simple, affordable lunch with friends - No fuss, just good food
- Takeout on a lazy Sunday when you're tired and don't want to cook
- During a quick road stop when you only have 15 minutes to eat
- When you're craving something salty, rich, and deeply satisfying

This isn't a light meal. This isn't a health-conscious lunch. And that's completely fine, it's honest about what it is.

The Eternal Debate

And here's where it gets interesting: everyone has an opinion about who makes the best poutine. It's an eternal debate that will never be settled. Ask five locals and you'll get five different answers.

Who invented it? Which region? Who has the best gravy? Which restaurant serves the ultimate version? These arguments have been going on for decades and will continue forever.

The reality? You'll find good poutine all over Quebec City.

Tourist spots serve it, local spots serve it, and honestly, when it's executed well, the difference isn't as dramatic as you might think. The real skill is in the execution - fresh squeaky cheese curds, properly cooked fries, flavorful gravy. When those three elements come together perfectly, that's when poutine becomes transcendent.

Do know that since 2000, fancy versions have appeared everywhere - lobster poutine, duck confit poutine, truffle poutine. Those can be delicious in their own way, but they're not what poutine was originally about.

Where to Find Good Poutine in Quebec City

I'll point out solid poutine spots throughout this guide, organized by neighborhood. Each has something different to offer - whether it's their special gravy, their perfectly crispy fries, their authentic casse-croûte atmosphere, or their creative variations.

But I won't claim any of them is "THE best" - because that argument will never, ever be settled. And honestly? That's part of the fun.

TIPPING CULTURE IN QUEBEC CITY

Okay, let's talk about something that might feel uncomfortable if you're visiting from a country where tipping isn't the norm: **you're going to be expected to tip at restaurants here.**

I know. If you're coming from Europe, Australia, or parts of Asia where servers earn a full wage and tipping is just a nice bonus, the idea of leaving \$20, \$50, or even \$100+ to your server can feel excessive, strange, or even a bit insulting to the profession. Look, I know this can feel like a lot, especially if you're doing the math on every meal and realizing it adds up. But factor it into your dining budget from the start. think of menu prices as being about 15% higher than listed, and you won't be caught off guard.

Why Tipping Is Different Here

In Quebec, servers and bartenders are paid a lower minimum wage than other workers, specifically because the law assumes they'll be earning tips on top of their base pay.

This isn't me defending the system or saying it's perfect, it's just how it works here. When you don't tip, you're not only making a statement about service quality, you're directly impacting someone's income.

So while I completely understand if this feels weird or frustrating, especially if you're used to a different system back home, it's important to know that tipping here is deeply embedded in how servers earn their living.

The Basic Rules

Here's what you need to know to navigate tipping without overthinking it:

At Sit-Down Restaurants (with table service):

15% of your total bill = Standard tip

- This is what you give when the service was fine, good, or what you expected
- If you're not sure what to do, 15% is a safe choice that will be well-received
- This is the baseline in Quebec dining culture

Less than 15% = Signal that something was wrong

- Be aware that there's a high chance your server will interpret this as dissatisfaction with their service

More than 15% = Generous or exceptional experience

- 18-20% when the service or evening exceeded your expectations
- Some people tip higher when celebrating or when a server really went above and beyond

At Counter-Service Spots (cafés, coffee shops, bakeries):

The expectations are different here.

Tipping is less expected at counter-service places. However, it's appreciated and considered friendly to leave something:

- \$1 per drink/item is a common approach
- 10% if you're ordering multiple items or something more complex
- If you're just grabbing a coffee, even tossing in your spare change is appreciated

The tip jar is there, and locals do use it, but you won't get the same expectations as at a sit-down restaurant.

Where Does the Money Go?

In most restaurants, tips go directly to your server. However, in some places, tips are pooled and shared among all servers working that shift and sometimes even split with kitchen staff, hosts, or bussers.

You don't need to worry about this as a customer, just know that your tip might be supporting the whole team that made your meal happen.

MICROBREWERY CULTURE: WHY BEER IS A BIG DEAL HERE

Okay, so you might be wondering why there's a craft brewery on every other corner in Quebec City. And why locals get genuinely excited when a new one opens. And why your server will spend five minutes describing the difference between two IPAs.

Here's the thing: craft beer in Quebec isn't just a trend, it's part of our cultural identity.

I know that sounds dramatic for what is, technically, just beer. But let me explain why this matters here in a way it might not elsewhere.

We Like Doing Things Our Own Way

Quebecois have this deep appreciation for things that are homemade, made with heart. Whether it's cheese, maple syrup, gin, or beer, there's a strong attachment to local creation.

We want to know who made it, where it came from, and what makes it special.

Microbrasseries embody this perfectly. There are craft breweries throughout the province, each with its own personality and approach. It's seen as a way of reclaiming our culture and moving away from mass-produced industrial products. When you drink a local beer here, you're not just choosing a beverage, you're supporting a local artisan, a small business, a piece of the community.

We Were Pioneers (And We're Proud of It)

Back in the 1990s, Quebec was one of the first places in Canada to really develop the craft beer scene. Breweries like Unibroue, Dieu du Ciel!, and Le Trou du Diable built a real scene before the rest of the country caught on.

The result? Today, craft beer is deeply embedded in our culture, kind of like wine is in France. It's been part of how we socialize and celebrate for decades. We take pride in the fact that we were doing this before it was cool everywhere else. And that pride shows in how seriously we take our beer.

Local Ingredients, Creative Expression & Identity

Quebec microbrasseries increasingly use local ingredients that tell a story about where we live: wild blueberries from the boreal forest, maple syrup, camemise, local honey, balsam fir tips, sea buckthorn. Each beer becomes a creative expression, a way of capturing the taste of a place, a season, a landscape.

But it goes deeper than that. Quebec beers also blend Belgian styles — trappist ales, strong blondes, tripels — with North American influences and local creativity. It's exactly like Quebec itself: influenced by Europe, grounded in North America, but ultimately uniquely Quebecois. You'll find classic Belgian-style saisons brewed with Quebec maple syrup, IPAs with foraged spruce tips, stouts aged in ice cider barrels. Tradition meeting innovation, European technique meeting local terroir.

Brewers here approach beer-making almost like chefs approach cooking; it's an art form, a way to showcase both identity and terroir. It's not just about making beer. It's about telling Quebec's story, one batch at a time.

It's About Connection, Not Just Drinking

Here's what visitors sometimes miss: going to a microbrasserie in Quebec isn't primarily about getting drunk. It's about spending time with friends, playing cards, listening to a local band, chatting with the brewer about what they're working on.

There's a real culture of conviviality around beer here. Microbrasseries are gathering places, community hubs. You'll see families there in the afternoon, groups of friends on a Tuesday evening, couples on dates, coworkers catching up after work. It's social. It's warm. It's... very Quebec.

FRENCH MENU SURVIVAL

Let's talk about navigating French menus, whether you see it as a fun challenge or just want a straightforward solution.

Start Here: Just Ask

Here's the easiest solution: many restaurants in Quebec City have English menus. Before you pull out your phone or start pointing at random items, just ask your server: "Do you have an English menu?" or "Avez-vous un menu en anglais?" Many places will have one available. Problem solved.

Your Secret Weapon: Google Translate (Offline Mode)

If there's no English menu available, don't worry - technology has your back. **Google Translate will be your best friend.** And here's the game-changer: you can use it offline with your phone's camera to instantly translate the menu.

How to set it up before you arrive:

1. Open the Google Translate app
2. Go to Settings
3. Select "Offline translation"
4. Download French to your device

Once you've downloaded the language, you can use the app without an internet connection. No data, no wifi needed.

To use it at the restaurant:

Just point your phone's camera at the menu. The app will translate it in real-time, right on your screen. It's instant, it works offline, and it's honestly pretty magical.

The Backup Plan: Ask a Local

In situations where there's no English menu AND your phone isn't cooperating, here's what usually happens: you can find someone nearby who speaks English.

Asking a neighboring table or a regular at the bar for help often leads to genuine conversations with locals who can tell you what's actually good, what the chef does best, and share their personal favorites. People generally love to help, and you might end up with better recommendations than you'd get from just reading the menu yourself.

Bottom Line

Between English menus, Google Translate's camera function, and friendly locals who are usually happy to help, you'll have multiple options for navigating menus in Quebec City.

And honestly? Sometimes the most memorable meals come from a little improvisation, whether that's chatting with your server in broken French, getting recommendations from the table next to you, or ending up with a surprise dish that becomes your new favorite.

CLASSIC HOME-COOKED QUEBEC DISHES

If there's one thing Quebecois excel at, it's comfort food. We're talking hearty, soul-warming, stick-to-your-ribs dishes that were designed to get people through brutal winters and long work days.

Many of these specialties are rustic, old-fashioned classics that have been passed down through generations. They're not fancy, they're not trying to impress anyone, they're just genuinely good food that tells the story of how Quebecois have eaten for centuries.

A note on where you'll find these: These are dishes Quebecois typically make at home rather than order at restaurants.

You'll occasionally spot them on menus at traditional bistros, sugar shacks, or family-run diners, but don't expect to see all of them everywhere. When you do encounter them, you're getting a taste of authentic home cooking.

Here's what these classic dishes are and when locals eat them.

Tourtière (Meat Pie)

What it is: A traditional savory pie filled with ground meat - usually a mix of pork and beef, sometimes with veal or game meat added. Some recipes include warming spices like cinnamon, cloves, and allspice, which gives it a distinctive flavor. Every region and family has their own recipe and variation - the spice blend, meat ratio, and cooking method all vary.

When we eat it: This is THE Christmas and New Year's dish in Quebec. Every family has their own recipe, and people will argue passionately about whose grandmother made it best.

Context: It's comfort food at its finest - flaky pastry crust with rich, spiced meat filling. Often served with ketchup aux fruits (fruit ketchup) or pickled beets.

Pâté Chinois (Shepherd's Pie / Chinese Pie)

What it is: Layers of ground beef on the bottom, canned corn in the middle, mashed potatoes on top, baked until golden. Despite the name meaning "Chinese pie," it has nothing to do with China, the name's origin is debated, but it's pure Quebecois comfort food.

When we eat it: Weeknight family dinner classic. Budget-friendly, easy to make in big batches, and kids love it.

Context: This is Quebec's answer to shepherd's pie. Simple, filling, nostalgic. The kind of thing locals crave when they want to feel like a kid again.

Cretons (Pork Spread)

What it is: A seasoned pork pâté/spread made from ground pork cooked slowly with onions, spices, and sometimes breadcrumbs. Smooth, savory, slightly fatty.

When we eat it: Breakfast staple. Spread thick on toast with butter, often alongside eggs and coffee. Some people love adding mustard on top.

Context: You'll find it at breakfast spots and cafés throughout the city. It's a Quebec breakfast classic that locals grew up eating.

Soupe aux Pois (Split Pea Soup)

What it is: Thick, hearty split pea soup made with yellow split peas, ham hock or bacon, vegetables, and herbs. Cooked low and slow until it's thick and creamy.

When we eat it: Year-round, but especially beloved in winter. It's what locals order when they want something warming and satisfying.

Context: This is peasant food in the best way, simple ingredients transformed into something deeply comforting. Every grandmother has a version, and restaurants often have their own take on it.

Tourtière du Lac-Saint-Jean / Cipâte / Cipaille (Layered Meat Pie)

What it is: A deep-dish meat pie from the Lac-Saint-Jean region, made with layers of cubed meat (often a mix of game meats like rabbit, partridge, pork, and beef) and potatoes, all slow-cooked in a pastry crust.

When we eat it: Special occasions, winter gatherings, and holiday celebrations. This is a more rustic, regional version of tourtière.

Context: This is serious comfort food, the kind of dish that takes hours to make and feeds a crowd. Less common in restaurants than regular tourtière, but when you see it, it's worth trying.

Fèves au Lard (Baked Beans)

What it is: White beans slow-cooked with pork fat, onions, molasses, and maple syrup. Sweet, savory, and rich - nothing like canned beans.

When we eat it: Traditional breakfast or brunch food, especially on weekends. Also served at sugar shacks during maple season.

Context: Another one of those nostalgic breakfast dishes. When made properly (slow-cooked for hours), they're sweet, smoky, and addictive.

Oreilles de Crisse (Crispy Pork Rinds / "Christ's Ears")

What it is: Thick strips of salted pork belly, deep-fried until incredibly crispy. The name literally translates to "Christ's ears" - Quebecois have a unique relationship with religious swear words.

When we eat it: Bar snack, sugar shack side dish, or appetizer. Often served with maple syrup for dipping (yes, really).

Context: Crispy, salty, fatty, and when dipped in maple syrup, somehow works perfectly. It's indulgent and unapologetically old-school Quebec.

Ragoût de Pattes (Meatball and Pork Hock Stew)

What it is: A rich stew made with pork hocks, meatballs, and sometimes potatoes, slow-cooked in a thick brown gravy. "Pattes" means feet/legs, but modern versions often use pork hocks instead.

When we eat it: Winter comfort food, holiday meals, family gatherings.

Context: This is the kind of dish your grandmother would make on a Sunday and serve with fresh bread to soak up the gravy. Rustic, hearty, and deeply satisfying.

Jambon à l'Érable (Maple-Glazed Ham)

What it is: Ham glazed with maple syrup, often baked until caramelized and sticky-sweet. Sometimes includes mustard or spices in the glaze.

When we eat it: Holiday meals, Easter dinner, special Sunday dinners.

Context: Because of course we put maple syrup on our ham. The combination of salty ham and sweet maple is quintessentially Québécois.

Pouding Chômeur (Poor Man's Pudding / Unemployment Pudding)

What it is: A cake-like dessert where batter is poured into a pan, then covered with hot maple syrup or brown sugar syrup before baking. As it bakes, the cake rises through the syrup, creating a gooey, sweet bottom layer.

When we eat it: Dessert after family meals, at sugar shacks, in traditional restaurants.

Context: Created during the Great Depression when ingredients were scarce - hence the name "unemployment pudding." It's become a Quebec classic. Served warm, often with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Tarte au Sucre (Sugar Pie)

What it is: A single-crust pie filled with a mixture of brown sugar, cream, butter, and sometimes maple syrup, creating a sweet, caramel-like filling.

When we eat it: Dessert, especially during holidays and at sugar shacks.

Context: Simple, sweet, rich. Another example of Quebec making something delicious from basic ingredients. The filling is dense and intensely sweet, a little goes a long way.

Sucre à la Crème (Maple Fudge)

What it is: Creamy maple fudge made with brown sugar, butter, cream, and often maple syrup. Smooth, sweet, melt-in-your-mouth texture.

When we eat it: Holidays, gifts, special occasions. Often homemade and given as presents during Christmas.

Context: This is Quebec's version of fudge - pure, sweet nostalgia in candy form. You'll find it at markets, specialty shops, and sugar shacks.

Where to Find These

You'll encounter these dishes at:

- Traditional Quebecois restaurants and bistros
- Sugar shacks (cabanes à sucre) during maple season
- Family-run diners and cafés
- Brunch spots (for cretons, fèves au lard)

Don't expect to find all of these at every restaurant, these are primarily home-cooked dishes. But when you see them on a menu, know that you're looking at genuine Quebec food history on a plate.

A few of these classics also show up in grocery stores. Cretons, tourtière, fèves au lard, and soupe aux pois are pretty easy to find at Metro or IGA - not quite the same as homemade, but a solid introduction and a great option if you're cooking for yourself.

ST-ROCH: WHERE YOUNG CHEFS COME TO PLAY

Like Griffintown in Montreal or Williamsburg in Brooklyn, within a few years, Saint-Roch went from a working-class neighbourhood to the place to be. This is the comeback story of Quebec City, a neighborhood that went from industrial decline to becoming the city's most exciting food destination.

Because there are so few locals living in the old part of the city, St-Roch is a great place to mingle with the locals. This is where actual Quebec City residents hang out, where young professionals and students meet for after-work drinks, where the energy feels genuinely urban and alive.

If Old Québec is a magnet for European gastronomy and fine dining, St-Roch is where the younger chefs are having the most fun; as a result, new spots are popping up all the time. This is the neighborhood where culinary creativity thrives, where experimental concepts launch, where the food scene pushes boundaries without losing its soul.

Rue Saint-Joseph is the main artery, from the mid-19th century to the 1960s, it was the main commercial street in Quebec City. Curated shops, third-wave cafés, trendy bistros, crowded microbreweries, and oyster bars are plentiful, creating a thriving, vibrant atmosphere.

All year round, you can tap into the neighbourhood's lively spirit both day and night thanks to the many bars and pubs where you can keep the night going after a concert or play. This neighborhood doesn't sleep, it evolves from coffee and brunch spots during the day to cocktail bars and late-night eateries as evening sets in. What makes St-Roch special is that it feels real. This isn't a neighborhood created for tourists (though visitors are absolutely welcome). These are restaurants that survive because locals keep coming back, week after week, year after year.

This is where I find myself eating most often when I'm not cooking at home. If you only have time for one neighborhood beyond Old Quebec, make it St-Roch.

BATTUTO

Italian-Inspired | Small Plates & Fresh Pasta

527 Boulevard Langelier

The Experience

Let me be honest with you: Battuto is one of my top 2 restaurants in all of Quebec City. But getting a table? That's its own adventure.

This is a tiny place, and I mean tiny. When you're seated, you feel genuinely privileged to have snagged one of the limited spots. The intimate size is part of what makes it special, but it also means reservations are... intense.

Here's the deal: reservations open at noon on the last Friday of the month before you want to go. And when I say you need to set an alarm and be ready with your finger hovering over the refresh button, I'm not exaggerating. I've had sweaty palms refreshing the webpage waiting for availability to appear.

But here's the good news: In summer, there's a terrace that operates on a first-come, first-served basis. No reservation stress, just show up.

Why It's Worth the Effort

If you manage to snag a reservation (or score a terrace spot), you're in for something special. Battuto does Italian-inspired cuisine with refinement but zero pretension. It's sophisticated food in a laid-back atmosphere.

The chef adapts dishes based on the seasons, what ingredients are available, and most importantly, where his inspiration takes him. This means every visit can be a completely different experience.

The food here has a delicacy to it that's remarkable. The menu features small sharing plates for starters, and they're always incredible discoveries prepared with a light touch. I once had zucchini blossoms stuffed with ricotta and lightly fried in tempura batter - delicate, crispy, perfect. Another time, there was halibut cooked so gently it literally melted in your mouth. Everything feels thoughtfully composed without being fussy.

For mains, they always offer three pasta options. Now, I'm not typically someone who orders pasta at restaurants, but Battuto is absolutely the exception to that rule. Their pasta is handmade, perfectly executed, and genuinely rivals anything I've had in Italy. Each dish showcases that same delicate precision - nothing heavy, nothing overwrought, just beautiful food.

The Vibe

People show up in everything from dressy outfits to simple t-shirts. At Battuto, you feel comfortable because you know it's not about what you're wearing, it's about the moment you're experiencing and the food you're discovering.

If you can only get seats at the bar, don't be disappointed. The bar overlooks the kitchen, and watching the chefs prepare dishes, trying to guess which one is yours, is part of the fun. The open kitchen energy adds to the intimate, welcoming feel.

Reservation Strategy: Set a reminder for the last Friday of the month at 11:55am. Have the reservation page ready. Be prepared to act fast. Or go for the summer terrace and skip the stress entirely.

Practical Notes

- Very small capacity - limited seating
- Reservations open last Friday of each month at noon (book for following month)
- Summer terrace available (first-come, first-served, no reservations)
- Menu changes constantly based on season and inspiration
- Michelin Bib Gourmand (2025)

BOLS ET POKÉ

Healthy Fast Food | Poke Bowls

555 Rue Saint-Joseph Est

The Healthier Fast Food

If you're a sushi lover looking for something fresh and modern during your Rue Saint-Joseph exploration, Bols et Poké is your spot.

Launched in 2016 with the concept of "fast food that's actually good for you," this is what healthy fast-casual done right looks like.

What Makes It Special

Poke bowls done right - fresh fish (their salmon is exceptional), sustainably sourced ingredients, and creative flavor combinations prepared with care.

The approach is modern and health-focused without sacrificing flavor. Well-balanced profiles, generous portions, and that commitment to quality ingredients you can taste in every bite.

With its remarkable quality-to-price ratio, it's become one of those places locals return to repeatedly. The kind of spot where you discover it, love it, and suddenly find yourself going back whenever you're in the neighborhood.

The Vibe

Casual, quick, and welcoming. You can grab-and-go, eat on-site, or get delivery. It's the kind of place that works whether you're exploring the neighborhood and need a quick healthy lunch, or you want to sit down for a proper meal that happens to be fast.

Practical Notes

- Counter service, eat-in or takeout
- Perfect stop during Rue Saint-Joseph walks
- Quick service without compromising quality
- Now has 5 locations across Quebec

CASSE-CROÛTE CHEZ GASTON

Authentic Quebec Snack Bar

332 Rue Dorchester



The Real Deal Since 2001

Chez Gaston is what a classic Quebec casse-croûte should be: small, unpretentious, and completely focused on doing simple things really well. This tiny spot, about the size of a bedroom with maybe a dozen seats, has been serving St-Roch since 2001.

The poutine here is legendary for a reason. Fresh-cut Quebec potatoes (you can watch them cutting them right there), squeaky-fresh cheese curds delivered daily, and a gravy that locals rave about. Simple, classic, executed perfectly.

The Authentic Experience

This is old-school casse-croûte culture that's becoming harder and harder to find. The menu is straightforward - poutine, burgers, hot dogs, club sandwiches - but everything is made fresh to order with genuine care.

The staff is friendly and welcoming, creating that neighborhood warmth where regulars and first-timers get the same genuine service. You'll hear good music playing, see locals streaming in and out, feel that community vibe that makes a place special.

Late Night Hero

Open until 4am on Fridays and Saturdays, Chez Gaston is there when you need it most, whether you're ending a night out or starting your day very, very early. The kind of place that's seen countless late-night cravings satisfied over two decades.

Why It Works

No frills, just really good classic Quebec comfort food at reasonable prices. Generous portions. Fresh ingredients. Staff who genuinely care. The fundamentals done right, every single time.

This is the kind of authentic local spot that reminds you why simple food, made well, never needs to be complicated.

Practical Notes

- Tiny space (very limited seating)
- Perfect for takeout
- Open late (until 4am on Fridays & Saturdays)
- Classic casse-croûte menu

MAELSTRØM SAINT-ROCH

Specialty Café | Cocktail Bar | Evening Buvette

181 Rue Saint-Vallier Est

The All-Day Meeting Point

Maelstrøm is that rare place that works from early morning until late at night - specialty café by day, cocktail bar and buvette by evening. It's a mix of all three rolled into one welcoming space in the heart of St-Roch.

The vibe here is **laid-back** - mismatched chairs and tables, warm lighting, and that effortlessly cool atmosphere where you feel comfortable whether you're rolling in for morning coffee in your pajamas or meeting friends for evening cocktails in something a bit nicer.

No Reservations, No Problem

Here's what I love: **no reservations needed**. Ever. It's first-come, first-served, which celebrates spontaneity in the best way. Show up for an impromptu brunch, a spontaneous apéro, or let an evening stretch into the wee hours - the philosophy here is all about keeping things flexible and welcoming.

The staff is known for being warm, inclusive, and genuinely attentive. This is a true neighborhood spot where regulars and first-timers get the same friendly welcome.

The Food: Simple Meets Creative

Daily brunch served all week - and here's the genius part: they serve it in smaller sharing plates. This means you can discover multiple dishes instead of committing to one big plate, perfect for sharing as a couple or if you have a smaller appetite and want to save room for other food discoveries later in the day. Simple but creative preparations using ingredients from local suppliers they work with directly.

Think gourmet plates with seasonal flavors and that touch of creativity that makes you want to try everything. Mediterranean influences meet Quebecois sensibility. Nothing overly complicated, just thoughtful food that tastes fresh and clean.

Evening brings a **buvette-style menu**, shareable plates (or not) designed for grazing while you enjoy drinks. Market cuisine that changes based on what's available and in season.

The Cocktails: Playful Names, Serious Craft

While the food is delicious, Maelstrøm is **particularly known for their creative cocktails**. The names are whimsical and evocative - these drinks are thoughtfully crafted and seriously good. Each drink feels considered, balanced, and designed to surprise you in the best way. They also offer a curated selection of privately imported wines and microbrewery beers.

The Atmosphere

This is **decontracté** (relaxed) in the truest sense. No dress code, no attitude, no stress about reservations. Just good food, creative drinks, and a space that feels welcoming from the moment you walk in.

People come here to linger. To have that second coffee, that third cocktail, to let conversations stretch longer than planned. It's that kind of place.

Practical Notes

- No reservations - first come, first served
- Capacity: 55 people
- Daily brunch available
- Evening buvette menu
- Good vegetarian options

TORII IZAKAYA

Japanese Buvette | Elevated Japanese-French Fusion

771 Rue Saint-Joseph Est

Elevated Japanese Meets French Finesse

Torii Izakaya is an elegant Japanese buvette that does something really special, it blends Japanese izakaya traditions with refined French techniques and sensibilities. This isn't your traditional Japanese tavern, and it's not trying to be. It's **modern bistronomy** with a Japanese soul.

Located at one end of Rue Saint-Joseph, it's the perfect spot to start or end your St-Roch neighborhood exploration.

The Space

Long, narrow, intimate - the restaurant has a cozy, almost cave-like feel with black walls accented by vibrant fluorescent Japanese-inspired street art. The atmosphere manages to be both warm and festive, lively yet refined. Window seats are perfect for soaking in the street life, the long bar is ideal if you want a front-row seat to the cocktail magic, and the back tables put you right next to the buzz of the kitchen.

The Food: A Feast for Eyes and Mouth

This is where Torii really shines. The menu is built around sharing plates - Japanese tapas-style dishes with that elevated French touch. The regular menu is worthy of modern bistronomy, and there's a seasonal chalkboard that changes based on what's fresh and inspiring the chef.

The dumplings - I'm not exaggerating when I say they'll make you want to lick the plate. I speak from experience here. Each bite is layered, complex, and utterly craveable.

The presentation is stunning - every plate is a discovery for your eyes as much as your palate. Thoughtful plating, unexpected ingredient combinations, and sauces that are especially well-crafted.

Don't go expecting traditional, by-the-book Japanese food. Go expecting Japanese flavors reimaged through a French lens with Quebec ingredients. That's where the magic is.

The Drinks: Sake & Signature Cocktails

Come to **taste sake** - Torii has an impressive selection of privately imported sakes (8+ options that rotate constantly). The staff can guide you through the selection, and sake pairings with the food are exceptionally well thought out.

If you're into cocktails, you're in the right place. The creations are original, beautifully executed, and far from generic. This is a bar program with real craft and intention.

Why It's Worth It

Michelin Bib Gourmand designation (2025) - recognized for excellent quality at reasonable prices. The food is sophisticated but portions are generous for tapas-style. The flavors are bold, unexpected, and memorable.

Practical Notes

- Reservations strongly recommended (especially weekends)
- Sharing plates format - order multiple dishes
- Good vegetarian options available
- Can get lively/noisy when busy (part of the festive atmosphere)
- Michelin Bib Gourmand (2025)

HONŌ IZAKAYA

Japanese Tavern | Japanese-Quebec Fusion

670 Rue Saint-Joseph Est

A Different Kind of Izakaya

Despite the similar name, Honō Izakaya is quite different from Torii Izakaya. Where Torii Izakaya leans elegant and refined, Honō is more **festive, more energetic, more decontracté**.

Honō - which means "flame" in Japanese - is all about the **grill and the vibe**. This is a lively Japanese tavern with a buzzing Saturday night energy even on a Monday. Packed tables, animated conversations, that kind of celebratory atmosphere where you can feel the neighborhood's heartbeat.

The Space

The space is minimalist, warmed up with pale wood and an intentionally unfussy design. Low and high communal tables keep things social. No over-the-top decor, just a welcoming room where the focus stays on the food and the vibe.

The restaurant can feel crowded when busy, but that adds to the convivial tavern atmosphere. The open kitchen and grill are focal points, you can watch the yakitori being grilled over flame, which adds to the experience.

The Food: Japanese-Quebec Fusion

This is where Honō shines with its unique approach. The menu focuses on **yakitori (grilled skewers)** as the house specialty: miso-marinated salmon, house-made chicken sausage, confit duck heart and multiple vegetarian options. The grill reigns supreme here. But don't expect strictly traditional Japanese. Honō does **Japanese-Quebec fusion** with playfulness and creativity.

The okonomiyaki - I highly recommend it. It's incredibly tasty and satisfying, the kind of dish that fills you up in the best way.

Everything is served in small **plates meant for sharing**. Order multiple dishes, pass them around, discover flavors together. You'll leave with a very full belly, guaranteed.

Small Plates, Small Prices

Wallet-friendly prices for the quality you're getting. Honō earned its **Michelin Bib Gourmand** designation (2025) for "exceptionally good food at moderate prices," and that recognition is well-deserved.

The New York Times recommended visiting Honō in their Quebec City travel guide. Eater listed it among the "28 Best Restaurants in Quebec City." CBC described it as "accessible and unpretentious" - exactly right.

The Energy

This place gets **very busy**, especially weekends. Reservations are highly recommended. When it's packed, service can feel a bit rushed and tables are close together, but that's part of the izakaya tavern experience. It's lively, not leisurely. Some people love the buzzing energy, others find it a bit much. Know what you're walking into: festive, animated, communal dining rather than quiet romantic dinner.

Practical Notes

- Reservations strongly recommended
- Small sharing plates format - order multiple dishes
- Good vegetarian options
- Perfect for groups who want to share and discover
- Michelin Bib Gourmand (2025)

JJACQUES

Speakeasy | Oyster Bar | Cocktail Lounge

341 Rue Notre-Dame-des-Anges

Finding the Hidden Door

Here's the thing about JJacques: **you have to find it first.** And that's part of the fun.

Walk down the alleyway off Rue Saint-Joseph (Notre-Dame-des-Anges) and look for an unmarked heavy metal door with just a buzzer and hours posted. No sign. No indication of what's inside. From the outside, nothing suggests the classy, elegant world hidden behind that door.

Ring the buzzer. The door opens. And suddenly you're transported somewhere else entirely.

The Speakeasy Experience

The moment you step inside, you enter a dreamlike, out-of-time space that feels disconnected from the outside world. The design evokes the golden age of travel - think Orient Express dining cars, luxury ocean liners, sophisticated train cabins. Colors, textures, rich materials, and theatrical lighting create an intimate yet vibrant atmosphere.

The main room wraps around a long bar where you can watch bartenders craft drinks with precision and flair. The whole space manages to be both **elegant and festive**, refined without being stuffy.

On weekends, the energy turns more vibrant and buzzing. This is one of the rare Quebec City spots that stays open late, so it attracts off-duty chefs and sommeliers after their shifts end.

The Cocktails: Award-Winning Craft

JJacques has been named one of **Canada's 50 Best Bars since 2022** and holds the **Wine Spectator Award of Excellence.**

The cocktail recognition is well-deserved.

The travel-themed cocktail menu is organized as a map - drinks are categorized by taste profiles making it easy to navigate based on what you're craving.

Bartenders are knowledgeable and happy to customize drinks based on your preferences. The craft and attention to detail show in every sip.

The Food: Oysters & Seafood Towers

Oyster lovers and seafood enthusiasts will be in heaven here. This is part oyster bar, part seafood restaurant, and the quality is exceptional.

The seafood towers are legendary - two or three tiers featuring fresh oysters, razor clam ceviche, huge shrimp, mussels, lobster tail, Matane Nordic shrimp, all locally sourced. It's impressive both in presentation and flavor.

Beyond seafood, the menu features small shareable plates with creativity and impeccable execution - scallops, beef carpaccio, creative potato dishes, risotto, pasta, and whole fried fish options. The offerings change but the quality and presentation remain consistently excellent.

Perfect for Couples

This is an ideal spot for a romantic evening, whether you're coming just for drinks and oysters or settling in for a full dinner. The intimate atmosphere, dim lighting, and sophisticated vibe make it perfect for date nights, anniversaries, or special celebrations.

The format encourages sharing, lingering, savoring the experience together.

Practical Notes

- Reservations highly recommended (especially weekends)
- Hidden entrance in alley - look for heavy metal door with buzzer
- Open late every night
- Three-in-one: cocktail bar, oyster bar, restaurant
- Small plates/sharing format
- Classy dress suggested but not required

LA BARBERIE

Cooperative Microbrewery

310 rue St-Roch

Quebec's First Cooperative Brewery

La Barberie, Quebec's first worker cooperative microbrewery, has been established in the St-Roch neighborhood since 1997. This isn't just another brewery, it's a different kind of operation entirely. There's no boss here. Around 11 co-op workers run the place, and you can feel their passion in every beer they pour.

The project was born in the corridors of Laval University in 1997, when three bearded students launched themselves into the fascinating world of beer at a time when Quebec's microbreweries were still in their infancy. The quirky name "La Barberie" is actually a play on words about those beards ("barbe" in French).

The Beer Is the Star

Let me be clear: if you're a beer lover, this is a must-visit. La Barberie has taken up residence in the Saint-Roch district, and the co-op members quickly became attached to the neighborhood and the friendly people who lived there. St-Roch is recognized by beer enthusiasts across Quebec because it hosts La Barberie.

La Barberie has combined the expertise of a dedicated team with a passion for beer and social commitment, producing original and distinctive recipes with the aim of democratizing beer and developing a sense of community. The selection is diverse - classic favorites, signature wood-aged brews, stouts (including amazing chocolate stouts), sours, and more. They offer a tasting carousel ("carrousel de galopins") with 8 different 5oz pours so you can explore their full range.

That Legendary Terrace

The main appeal is La Barberie's vast outside patio where up to 150 beer enthusiasts can sit, drink beer and just relax under a huge green canopy of trees.

This is the kind of terrace that makes you want to order one more round just to stay longer. The trees provide natural shade in summer, protecting you from sunburn while you enjoy your beer. This terrace is a place of choice for taking life on the good side.

Family-Friendly & Welcoming

Family is an essential and important element for them. This is genuinely family-friendly, kids are welcome, and the relaxed atmosphere works for everyone. The vibe is neighborhood pub meets community gathering space.

The interior is charming with a rustic look, bright and cheerful. But most people gravitate to that famous terrace.

The Food

This is designed around the beer experience, with tempting nibbles and small plates to match your beer selections. Perfect portions for grazing while you work your way through the beer menu.

Why Beer Lovers Come Here

The staff is friendly and knowledgeable, happy to guide you through the selection even if your French is rusty. The cooperative model creates a different energy, people who genuinely care about what they're brewing and serving. And the variety is impressive, with something for every palate from traditional styles to experimental brews.

This is the kind of place where you arrive for one beer and suddenly realize three hours have passed and you're still there, perfectly content under those trees.

Practical Notes

- Extensive beer selection on tap
- Tasting carousel available (8 x 5oz pours)
- Massive shaded terrace (up to 150 people)
- Small plates and snacks menu
- Family-friendly atmosphere

ST-SAUVEUR: WORKING-CLASS ROOTS, VIBRANT FUTURE

In the middle of the 19th century, French Canadian labourers working in Saint-Roch settled in Saint-Sauveur. For a long time, it remained a residential and working-class district just outside the inner city walls. This is a neighborhood with deep working-class roots that doesn't try to be anything it's not.

Saint-Sô, as its residents affectionately call it, has been welcoming an increasing number of young families and professionals looking for a genuine community spirit over the last few years.

In order to discover all the little treasures hidden throughout Saint-Sauveur, you need to take rue Saint-Vallier Ouest, the main commercial corridor. At every step, you'll find nice neighbourhood restaurants with unbeatable value for money, a café, a bakery, pubs, bars, great independent shops.

The strong community spirit that binds Saint-Sauveur residents can be felt in its events, which aim to bring together locals as well as anyone else who wishes to take in the festive atmosphere. You can't pay a visit to Saint-Sauveur without making new friends, that's for sure.

The food scene here is diverse and exciting without being trendy for trend's sake. You've got refined French cuisine sharing a street with casual sandwich counters and festive Southeast Asian bars. It's a neighborhood where different worlds collide in the best way possible. What makes this neighborhood special isn't just the individual restaurants, it's how they coexist with genuine authenticity.

St-Sauveur feels like the version of Quebec City that exists beyond the tourist zones, where people have built something genuine and lasting.

MELBA

French-Inspired | Sharing Plates

398 Rue St-Vallier Ouest

The Sister Restaurant to Battuto

If you've heard about Battuto's impossible reservations and felt your stress levels rising, let me introduce you to Melba, from the same owners, but with significantly less sweaty palms required.

Melba opened as the second venture from the same owners, and while it shares the same exceptional quality as Battuto, getting a table here won't require setting alarms or frantically refreshing webpages. It's still popular and reservations are recommended, but it's actually... achievable.

What Makes It Special

This is another one of my top 2 restaurants in Quebec City. And yes, I know that means my two top restaurants are from the same owners, but that should tell you everything you need to know about their talent.

Melba does French-inspired cuisine, but not like any French restaurant you've eaten at before. The same delicacy and precision you find at Battuto is here - that light touch, that careful composition, nothing heavy or overwrought.

The format is all about sharing: small plates for starters and mains designed to be passed around the table. This means you get to discover multiple dishes throughout the evening, which is pure joy when everything is this good.

The menu changes regularly based on what's in season and what products are available at the moment. The chef lets the ingredients and seasons guide the menu, so every visit offers something new to discover.

The Space

Melba is intimate with only 36 seats, housed in a beautiful art deco-inspired space. The atmosphere is warm and inviting without any stuffiness. Like Battuto, it's refined food in a relaxed setting where you can show up in whatever makes you comfortable.

The restaurant earned a **Michelin Bib Gourmand** designation (recognizing excellent quality at good value), but don't let that intimidate you, the vibe is approachable and welcoming.

Why You Should Go

If you're the type of person who loves discovering multiple dishes in one meal, Melba is perfect for you. The sharing plate format encourages exploration and conversation.

Reservation Tip: Book ahead, but breathe easy knowing you won't need military-level precision timing like Battuto requires. A week or two in advance notice should do it, depending on the season.

Practical Notes

- Reservations highly recommended
- Sharing plates format - order multiple dishes
- Michelin Bib Gourmand (2025)

CHEZ TAO

Southeast Asian Street Food | Tropical Cocktails

104 Rue Saint-Vallier Ouest

The Vibe

This is where you go when you want to have FUN. Like, genuinely festive, laughing-around-the-table-with-friends kind of fun.

Chez Tao is ultra convivial - scratch that, it's downright **festive**. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming, with dim lighting that creates an intimate, energetic vibe. This is the neighborhood restaurant-bar that stays open late and keeps the good times rolling all night.

The Food

Southeast Asian street food with explosive flavors - think Thai and Vietnamese dishes designed for sharing. The food here is genuinely exciting and fun, the kind that makes you want to order one more plate just to see what happens.

Plates are sized between appetizers and mains, making it perfect for the sharing format. You can mix and match, try different things, build your own feast with options for carnivores and vegans alike.

The food has a creative, original touch that makes it feel like a little adventure. You're transported somewhere else for the evening, somewhere tropical and vibrant.

The Cocktails

The cocktail menu is where things get really exciting. Fresh tropical cocktails, revisited rum classics, and original creations that are just... fun to drink. These aren't your standard bar cocktails - there's a playful creativity here that matches the food.

Chez Tao was named **#31 on Canada's Best 100 Bars list in 2025**, so yeah, they know what they're doing behind the bar.

Why You'll Love It

Affordable prices for the quality and creativity you're getting. The perfect spot for a dinner with friends where you want to linger, laugh, maybe have a few rounds of cocktails, and stay until late.

This is the kind of place where the energy builds as the evening goes on. Start with dinner, transition to cocktails, and suddenly it's midnight and you're having the best time.

What to Order: Go for variety. Order several sharing plates so you can taste different flavors. And definitely explore the cocktail menu - it's half the experience.

Practical Notes

- Kitchen open until closing (rare and wonderful)
- Sharing plates format - order multiple dishes
- Cocktail-focused - come thirsty
- Late-night friendly atmosphere

LA BARAQUE À FRITES

Fried Chicken & Poutine

334 Rue Marie-de-l'Incarnation



The Hidden Gem with Stolen-Thunder Poutine

La Baraque à Frites is famous for their fried chicken - and it's genuinely some of the best in the city. Juicy, crispy, perfectly seasoned. But here's the thing: their poutine regularly steals the show.

The gravy here is something special. Rich, flavorful, with just the right balance - not too salty, not too bland. Fresh-cut fries that stay crispy even under all that gravy and cheese curds. And the cheese? Generous portions of squeaky fresh curds delivered daily from a local fromagerie.

The Vibe

This is a **tiny spot** - only about a dozen seats at the counter - with that **authentic casse-croûte** (snack bar) atmosphere that's become rare to find. The exterior might not look like much, but don't let that stop you. The food speaks for itself.

The staff is genuinely friendly and welcoming, creating that neighborhood feel where you're treated like a regular even on your first visit. You can watch them prepare everything right in front of you - fresh potatoes being cut, chicken being fried, poutine being assembled with care.

Perfect for Families

The menu is simple and approachable - burgers, hot dogs, poutine, fried chicken - exactly what you want from a classic Quebec casse-croûte.

Generous portions at reasonable prices make it easy to feed the whole family without breaking the bank. This is comfort food done right. The kind of place that reminds you why simple, well-executed classics never go out of style.

Practical Notes

- Very small space (counter seating only)
- Perfect for takeout
- Family-friendly menu
- Reasonable prices for quality

FRANKY JOHNNY

Gourmet Sandwiches

208 Rue Saint-Vallier Ouest

Don't Judge a Sandwich by Its Counter

When you first walk into Franky Johnny, you might wonder if you're in the wrong place. It's a tiny counter tucked inside a shared space with Cantook café and bakery. It looks like... nothing special. Unassuming doesn't even begin to cover it.

And then you taste the sandwich.

The Sandwich Revolution

Jonathan Marcoux and François Borderon created what locals call a "sandwich revolution" in St-Sauveur. These aren't your average deli sandwiches, these are gourmet creations that happen to be served from a humble counter.

The star of the show: The pork belly sandwich. We're talking 48-hour confit Quebec pork belly tucked into pillowy focaccia bread with lightly fermented veggies, homemade mayo, and BBQ sauce. It's inspired by the banh mi, but it's its own beautiful thing - generous, comforting, and absolutely worth seeking out.

Every sandwich here is built with care: fresh, high-quality ingredients, house-made sauces, and that perfect balance of textures and flavors. The portions are huge, the focaccia is fluffy yet crispy, and everything tastes like someone who genuinely cares made it.

But these are not just for Carnivores: While the pork belly gets all the glory (rightfully so), there are excellent options for vegetarians too.

The Perfect Picnic Spot

Here's the local move: grab your sandwich from Franky Johnny and head to Parc Victoria just a few blocks away. Find a nice spot, unwrap your sandwich, and enjoy one of the best casual meals you'll have in Quebec City.

There are a few seats inside if you want to eat there, but this is really grab-and-go perfection. The kind of place where you order at the counter, watch them assemble your sandwich with focus and precision, and walk away with something that's going to make your day better.

Why Locals Love It

This is neighborhood sandwich perfection - no frills, no pretension, just really good food made by people who know what they're doing. The staff is friendly and helpful (even if you don't speak French), and the whole operation has that authentic, local vibe that you can't fake.

Pro tip: They also have house-made kombucha that pairs perfectly with the sandwiches. And since they share space with Cantook, you can grab excellent coffee and pastries too.

Practical Notes

- Counter service, mostly takeout
- Gets busy at lunch - come early or be patient
- Perfect for picnics in Parc Victoria
- Also has a second location in Limoilou.

OLD QUEBEC: THE FESTIVE HEART

Here's the thing about Old Quebec: this is where the tourist experience and authentic local life intersect in the most beautiful way possible.

Originally a faubourg of Old Québec from the 17th century, this area has always been a working-class district, inhabited by craftsmen and merchants. Community spirit picked up again in the 1970s and is still alive and well today in many different ways. Despite the tourist traffic flowing through daily, this remains a real neighborhood where locals actually live, work, and eat.

Rue St-Jean is the backbone of it all. A leisurely stroll down Rue Saint-Jean outside the old walls is always delightful. This bustling shopping street is steeped in history and has no shortage of charm. It is culturally diverse, both simple and sophisticated, lively, and a favourite with foodies. The street stretches from the gates of Old Quebec all the way through the neighborhood - in summer, a portion converts into a pedestrian-only street.

This is THE neighborhood where visitors spend most of their time in Quebec City, and for good reason. You'll find everything here: from Quebec's only two-Michelin-star restaurant hidden in historic vaults, to the best pizza I've ever eaten, to a French pastry shop that's become a neighborhood obsession practically overnight. The neighborhood has perfect walkability, you can stroll from one end of rue St-Jean to the other, ducking into side streets, discovering hidden gems.

This is where you'll probably spend a good chunk of your Quebec City visit. So let's make sure you eat well while you're here.

TANIÈRE³

Fine Dining | Immersive Culinary Journey

7 Rue du Don-de-Dieu

Quebec's Only Two-Michelin-Star Restaurant

Let me be clear: Tanière³ is **more expensive than everything else** in this guide. Significantly so. But if you have the budget? **I strongly encourage you to live this experience.**

Because that's exactly what it is — an experience, not just dinner. I had the privilege of eating here before they even got their Michelin stars, and I can tell you: nothing I've experienced since has come close.

Finding the Hidden Entrance

Here's your first clue that this is something special: **there's no sign.**

When you book, you receive a passcode. You'll walk through Old Quebec searching for a small, unmarked door that looks like nothing — just another historic entrance.

Enter the code.

The door opens.

And on the other side? **Something extraordinary.**

The Space: A Journey Through Time

Tanière³ is housed in 17th-century vaulted stone cellars beneath Maison Leber and Charest, between the St. Lawrence River and Place Royale. These ancestral vaults have witnessed centuries of Quebec history.

But this isn't a museum. Over the course of the evening, you move through three distinct rooms, each with its own atmosphere and energy.

One setting overlooks the brigade at work. The Chef's Counter surrounds the open kitchen, placing you inches from culinary artistry. Artwork, hidden drawers with poetry, theatrical details everywhere, every element is designed to transport you.

The Food: Culinary Art You Didn't Know Existed

This is where words struggle.

Chef François-Emmanuel Nicol's cuisine is described by Michelin as a “gastronomic research laboratory.” The blind tasting menu evolves with the seasons and availability, featuring dishes you didn't know could exist.

Everything is sourced exclusively from Quebec. The chef works with regional foragers for wild plants, mushrooms, herbs, and roots. Vegetables come from a childhood friend with whom he selects seeds each winter. Meats are chosen from farms committed to animal welfare.

The flavors are extraordinary. The presentation is stunning. Every plate arrives as a work of art — surprising, intentional, unforgettable.

The Experience: Every Detail Matters

What truly sets Tanière³ apart is the choreography.

The movement between rooms.

The storytelling behind each course and its connection to Quebec terroir.

It feels like theater and gastronomy woven together seamlessly.

Three hours pass and you barely notice.

My Take

If this is the trip where you allow yourself one transcendent meal, this is it.

You'll leave full (despite the delicate portions), deeply satisfied, and with a dining memory that will stay with you for life.

Practical Notes

- Reservations absolutely essential (book months in advance)
- Only restaurant in Quebec with two Michelin stars (2025)
- Ranked #5 in North America's 50 Best Restaurants
- Dress nicely (this is fine dining)

NINA PIZZA

Neapolitan-Style Pizza

Two locations: 410 Rue St-Anselme (St-Roch) & 764 Rue Saint-Jean (Old Quebec)

The Declaration

These are the best pizzas I've ever eaten. Period. I know that's a big statement, but I stand by it. Nina Pizza has ruined me for other pizza, in the best way possible.

What Makes It Special

The moment you walk in, you'll see their wood-fired oven doing its magic. The pizzas that come out of it are enormous, they literally hide the plate underneath. We're talking proper Neapolitan-style pies with that perfect char on the crust, chewy texture, and fresh toppings that sing.

And here's the best part: the quality-to-price ratio is exceptional. You're getting genuinely outstanding pizza at prices that won't make your wallet cry. The menu is always a delicious dilemma because choosing just one pizza feels impossible. My strategy? I love browsing the "extras" section and customizing my pizza with my own personal touch. Want to add burrata? Iberico chorizo? Fresh arugula after it comes out of the oven? Go for it.

The Atmosphere

Nina is warm, simple, and focused on what matters: incredible pizza. Just good food and good vibes. You'll see office workers grabbing lunch with colleagues at midday, friends meeting up for casual dinners, couples on low-key date nights. It's convivial and unpretentious, the kind of place where everyone feels at home.

Practical Notes

With two locations (St-Roch and Old Quebec), Nina is more accessible than some other spots in this guide. The pizzas are big enough to share if you're getting multiple dishes, or perfectly sized for one person with a good appetite.

Fair warning: once you've had Nina's pizza, you'll find yourself craving it regularly. Don't say I didn't warn you.

CHEZ VICTOR

Gourmet Burgers

145 rue St-Jean (and other locations including 300 rue St-Paul)

The Burger Revolution Since 1991

For gourmet burgers that actually deserve the word "gourmet," Chez Victor is where you need to go. They've been around since 1991, and there's a reason they've lasted this long in a city where mediocre places don't survive. What I love about Chez Victor is that they completely destroy the idea that burgers are just beef patties between buns.

The menu is wildly creative - different meats, proper vegetarian options that aren't an afterthought, even vegan choices that carnivores actually enjoy. Their homemade veggie patty with merguez spices? I've seen meat-eaters order it on purpose.

Two Strategic Locations

There are several locations around Quebec City, but two are particularly convenient if you're exploring the city. The St-Paul location sits right next to Gare du Palais, perfect timing if you're checking out the Old Port area. It's spacious and airy, great when you want room to breathe after walking around outside. The St-Jean location is more intimate, tucked at one end of rue St-Jean, just steps from rue Cartier.

The Vibe

This is the kind of place you're grateful to find when your feet are tired and your stomach is not patient: **casual, friendly, and zero fuss**. You can show up in whatever you're wearing and feel completely comfortable. Works equally well for lunch or dinner. **Even the non-burger fans will appreciate this meal.**

What Makes It Special

Chez Victor does something most burger spots don't: they take their mayos seriously.

Instead of the standard side dip, you'll find a selection of house-made mayonnaises and you get to choose which one comes with your fries. It sounds simple, but it completely changes the experience. The flavors are bold, well-balanced, and genuinely worth paying attention to.

They use local ingredients where they can, and you'll find Quebec microbrewery beers on the menu too if you want to complete the local experience. The price is fair for what you're getting, this is quality food, not fast food.

My Recommendation

Get your burger with fries and choose a mayo you wouldn't normally order. That's part of the fun.

If you want to go full Quebec, switch your fries for a poutine.

And if you're hesitating on the mayo: my personal favorites are the Cajun and the maple rosemary. Both are packed with flavor and once you try them, plain mayo just won't cut it anymore.

Practical Notes

- Excellent value for quality
- Family friendly
- Vegetarian and vegan options available
- Local ingredients and microbrewery beers
- Casual, no-fuss atmosphere

RIOUX & PETTIGREW

Seasonal Quebec Cuisine

160 rue Saint-Paul

Where History Meets Your Plate

There's something special about eating in a place that has been about food since 1860. The building once housed Narcisse Rioux's wholesale grocery, which became one of the most important food suppliers in Quebec City. Old photos still hang on the walls and if those stone walls could talk, they'd have delicious stories to tell.

The Space

The decor hits that perfect balance of rustic Quebec charm without feeling like a theme park. Wooden floorboards, exposed brick and stone walls, antique preserve tins on the shelves, it all recreates the feeling of that old general store, but in a way that feels authentic because it actually is.

The windows look out onto rue Saint-Paul, giving you those classic Old Quebec views. The atmosphere manages to feel both refined and comfortable, you're in Old Quebec, you're eating elevated cuisine, but nobody's making you feel like you need to be fancy.

The Food: Seasonal Quebec at Its Best

What makes the food here special is the seasonal approach, the chef is inspired by seasonal arrivals and the expertise of local producers to create each plate with precision. The menu descriptions genuinely make your mouth water, and then the food actually lives up to them. Everything is rooted in Quebec terroir but with creative touches that keep it interesting.

They have what they call a "secret menu" option where you trust the kitchen to take you on a journey through whatever's best that day. If you're the adventurous type, it's worth considering - you're putting your appetite in very capable hands.

Why Locals Love It

The service is genuinely welcoming and their brunch is considered one of the best in Old Quebec. They even brew their own beer, Narcisse Rioux, a Rye IPA named after the building's founder.

When to Go

Perfect for a romantic dinner, a celebration, or simply when you want a beautiful setting and a truly good meal.

Practical Notes

- Reservations recommended (popular spot, especially dinner)
- Brunch highly regarded
- "Secret menu" tasting option available

COCHON DINGUE

Hearty Quebec Classics

1014 rue Saint-Jean & 46 Boulevard Champlain (and multiple other locations)

The Reliable Crowd-Pleaser

Since 1979, Cochon Dingue has been a Quebec City institution. Yes, it's a local chain, less intimate than some spots in this guide, but that's exactly why it works. It's the place you go when you need something that keeps everyone happy.

Traveling with kids? In a larger group with different tastes? Just want a solid, no-risk meal? This is your spot.

What Makes It Work

The menu covers all bases: light salads, hearty mains, vegetarian options, meat-forward plates.

I also appreciate their commitment to local products, menu items featuring Quebec ingredients are clearly marked, making it easy to eat local without overthinking it. It's a thoughtful touch for a larger-scale operation.

The Sweet Reputation

They're known for generous breakfasts and indulgent desserts. Brunch here is reliable and filling, exactly what you want before a full day of exploring. Dessert is also a big reason locals keep coming back. Rich, nostalgic, and unapologetically satisfying. They've earned a reputation for homemade vinaigrettes, jams, sauces, and famous sugar pie.

The Location

The St-Jean location sits right on one of the city's most iconic streets, perfect before or after wandering the neighborhood. With room for 115 guests, waits move fairly quickly.

The Petit-Champlain location is ideally positioned in the heart of the old port area, right in the most touristy part of Quebec City. After exploring the charming narrow streets and boutiques of Petit-Champlain, it's a convenient spot to refuel without venturing far. The terrace offers beautiful views, making it perfect for a relaxed meal in one of the city's most picturesque areas.

Both locations offer a kids' menu, making it truly family-friendly without feeling like a "kids' restaurant."

Why It's a Safe Bet

You won't find cutting-edge gastronomy here, but you will get a genuinely good meal in a lively, welcoming atmosphere at a fair price. Service is warm and multilingual, and because it works for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, it's there whenever hunger hits.

Practical Notes

- Two key locations: St-Jean & Petit-Champlain
- Excellent for brunch
- Family-friendly with kids' menu
- Menu items marked with Quebec product icons



POUTINEVILLE

Build-Your-Own Poutine

810 Boulevard Honoré-Mercier (near Old-Québec) & 735 Rue Saint-Joseph E (St-Roch)

Choose Your Own Adventure

Poutineville does something unique in Quebec City: they let you build your own poutine from scratch. And I mean truly from scratch - choose your potato type, your cheese, your sauce, and then pile on whatever toppings call to you from their list of over 40 ingredients. This is poutine democracy at its finest.

The Poutineville Approach

Here's what makes this place work: despite all the customization options, the fundamentals are rock solid. Fresh-cut fries prepared daily. Cheese curds delivered fresh every morning from a local fromagerie. Quality ingredients across the board, whether you're going classic or getting creative.

They also offer signature poutines if you don't want to design your own - including their namesake "Poutineville" with cheese curds, mozzarella, braised beef, and red wine gravy. It's both traditional and inventive.

For Every Diet

Vegetarian? Vegan? Gluten-intolerant? Following keto? Poutineville has options for all of these. They've thought through how to make poutine accessible to different dietary needs without compromising on flavor.

The Experience

The restaurants are spacious and welcoming - good for families, groups of friends, or solo poutine adventures. Table service, full bar with Quebec microbrewery beers and cocktails, and that casual-comfortable atmosphere where you can linger as long as you want.

The variety here means everyone at your table can get exactly what they want, which makes it perfect for groups with different preferences.

Practical Notes

- Build-your-own poutine with 40+ ingredients
- Two Quebec City locations
- Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and keto options
- Full bar with Quebec microbrewery beers
- Family-friendly atmosphere

CAFÉ LA MAISON SMITH

Coffee, Pastries & Light Meals

Multiple locations in Old Quebec (including 1141 rue Saint-Jean, 23 rue Notre-Dame at Place Royale, 9 rue des Jardins)

Your Reliable Break Spot

La Maison Smith has multiple locations across Quebec City, including three in Old Quebec, which means no matter where you are in your Old Quebec wandering, you're just steps away from a good coffee break. This is intentional convenience at its best.

For years when I worked in restaurants in Old Quebec, this was my go-to spot for grabbing an iced coffee before my shift. It became part of my routine, and I wasn't alone, you'll find both tourists and locals stopping by throughout the day.

Summer Lifesaver, Winter Warmer

In the summer, you can enjoy a cool drink on the patio where you can chat with friends or watch people stroll by in Place-Royale. In the winter, warm up with one of their specialty coffees or a hot cocoa after spending a chilly day exploring Old Quebec.

More Than Just Coffee

Coffee enthusiasts will be happy here, they roast their own coffee fresh, but here's what I appreciate: there's something for everyone, even people who aren't coffee drinkers. The menu accommodates the whole family. These aren't pretentious coffee temples, they're friendly neighborhood spots that happen to be strategically located for visitors.

Beyond beverages, they offer sandwiches, salads, soups, pastries, and always a few indulgent dessert options. Perfect for a quick lunch when you don't want to commit to a full sit-down meal. And here's a fun detail: you can add a shot of alcohol to your drinks if you're feeling festive. Because why not?

Location Notes

The Place Royale location is incredibly well-situated, you couldn't ask for better positioning for exploring that area. But here's the catch: there's very little indoor seating. If your goal is to warm up and sit for a while, one of the other locations might serve you better.

In summer, they add a few outdoor tables which helps, but winter seating is limited. The other locations have a bit more indoor seating, making them better options if you want to settle in for a bit.

Practical Notes

- Three locations in Old Quebec
- Perfect for quick breaks while exploring
- Food and drinks to go or eat in
- Family-friendly with options for non-coffee drinkers

PÂTISSERIE CHOUQUETTE

French Pastries with Quebec Soul

778 rue Saint-Jean

Where French Technique Meets Quebec Terroir

Founded in fall 2022 by pastry chefs Rachel Parenteau and Olivier Verdot, Pâtisserie Chouquette sits just a block from Place d'Youville, on the edge of Old Quebec. One look at the display counter and you'll understand — these pastries are delicate, precise, almost too beautiful to eat. Almost.

The Specialty: Chouquettes

Their signature? Chouquettes — airy choux pastry puffs dusted with pearl sugar. You can order them plain, but the filled versions are where the magic happens. Flavors change with the owners' inspiration, though salted caramel is almost always there (for good reason).

They're two bites each, which means you can try several without overdoing it. My recommendation? Ask for a mixed box. It's the best way to experience what they do best.

Quebec Products, French Soul

They revisit French pastry classics using Quebec ingredients, a true blending of cultures. Maple, sea buckthorn, haskap, plum, sweet clover. In season, fruits from Île d'Orléans shine: strawberries, rhubarb, and other local treasures. Even the viennoiseries are made with Quebec butter, they deliberately skip French laminating butter.

The Space

The shop is small, with just a few seats and a view into the kitchen where you can watch the bakers at work. It smells like warm chocolate and butter. Everything is handmade with care and precision. It's the kind of place that reminds you why small, craft-driven businesses matter

When to Go

Perfect for a coffee to go before exploring Place d'Youville. It's also two doors down from Nina Pizza, an ideal dessert stop after one of the best pizzas in town. Arrive early: they sell out quickly, and there's often a line. But everything here is worth the wait.

Practical Notes

- Ask for a mixed chouquette box to try multiple flavors
- A few seats inside for coffee
- Perfect pre-exploration coffee stop (Place d'Youville is steps away)
- Ideal dessert stop after Nina Pizza (2 doors down)
- Uses Île d'Orléans and Quebec seasonal products

MONTCALM: WHERE LOCALS ACTUALLY LIVE

Montcalm is a residential neighborhood with tree-lined streets, beautiful heritage homes, and that quieter, more refined energy that comes from being just slightly removed from the main tourist flow.

Avenue Cartier is the heart of it all. On Cartier Avenue, paintings even end up on street lamps, whose monumental lampshades are decorated with reproductions of works from the MNBAQ collection. These 34 giant lampshades have become the neighborhood's signature, renewed each year in collaboration with the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

The avenue itself is a pleasure to walk. It's a mecca for foodies with bistros, cafés, pizza parlours, and in summer, amazing urban terraces are a hit. The street connects naturally to the Plains of Abraham and sits close enough to Old Quebec that you can easily incorporate it into your daily wanderings.

What I love about Montcalm is how comfortable it feels. The food scene reflects this neighborhood sensibility: creative sushi that locals have been ordering for over 25 years, a tiny glacier that's been a summer tradition since 1991, craft beer in a space that feels like your favorite local hangout, and chocolate treats that Quebecers have grown up loving. These are established spots that have proven themselves over time, not flashy newcomers chasing trends.

There's no pressure here, no sense that you need to rush from one attraction to the next, just quality food and drinks in welcoming spaces where you feel like a regular even on your first visit.

SUSHI TAXI

Creative Sushi

813 Avenue Cartier (and other locations across Quebec City)

Not Your Traditional Sushi

For over 25 years, Sushi Taxi has been creating sushi with delicacy and boldness. This is a local chain with several locations across Quebec City, but if you're sticking to the recommended areas around Old Quebec, the Cartier location is your closest option.

Here's what you need to know: the Cartier location is tiny, only three tables. It's a Sushi Taxi Express format, smaller than their other locations.

Creative, Not Classic

These aren't traditional Japanese sushi in the purest sense. Think bold flavors, creative combinations, flavorful sauces and mayos, fresh fruit pieces mixed in, it's a fusion of Japanese and international flavors. The menu gets adventurous. Makis like the Corail featuring rice paper, scallop ceviche, strawberry, and mint, or sushi pizzas with cream cheese, cranberry-onion confit, smoked salmon, apple and honey. It's inventive and actually delicious. They have options for everyone - vegetarians, pregnant women (they even have a specific pregnancy-safe box), and kids. The attention to detail is genuine.

The Convenient Option

What makes Sushi Taxi perfect for travelers is the flexibility. The presentation is stunning, and you can easily order through Uber Eats or directly on their website for pickup after you've explored Avenue Cartier.

The Cartier location is perfectly positioned if you're walking that area. Grab your order and take it back to your hotel, or enjoy it at one of the few tables if timing works out.

Fair warning: wait times can be long during rush hours (around 1.5 hours from order to pickup) because it's a small space handling lots of orders. If you're ordering for pickup, call ahead or order online early.

Why I Keep Coming Back

When I want sushi, this is where I order from. The flavors are bold and genuinely delicious, the presentation always impresses, and the creativity keeps it interesting. It's not trying to be authentic Japanese sushi, it's doing its own Quebec thing, and doing it well.

Practical Notes

- Very small location (only 3 tables)
- Best for takeout/delivery
- Order via website, Uber Eats, or call ahead
- Vegetarian, vegan, and pregnancy-safe options
- Can be busy during peak hours - order early

CHOCOLATS FAVORIS

Ice Cream & Everything Chocolate

65 Boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest (corner of Avenue Cartier)

Your Chocolate Headquarters

Chocolats Favoris has been a tradition since 1979, and this is your go-to spot for everything chocolate. When I say everything, I mean it - chocolate fondues, caramel fondues, chocolate assortments, chocolate bars, chocolate-covered nuts and fruits, gift baskets, and more. This is **chocolate lover heaven**.

The Cartier location is perfectly positioned for a sweet break during your Avenue Cartier exploration, whether you're craving something cold in summer or need to warm up in winter.

The Complete Experience: "Éclaté"

Here's what makes Chocolats Favoris special: the ice cream coatings are all made with real chocolate. This isn't your standard soft-serve dipped in thin coating. The chocolate is genuinely thick and rich.

Try their "éclaté" version for the full experience, it's a spectacular presentation that's become their signature. The famous real chocolate coatings come in twelve unique flavours. Watch the employees prepare your ice cream and dip it right in front of you, there's something satisfying about seeing it all come together.

Year-Round Delights

While the dipped ice cream is the star in summer, they also offer ice cream sandwiches, vegan sorbets made with real fruits, and beverages including their Chouchou made with real chocolate. In winter, they have a full selection of hot chocolates for when you need something warm after walking through the snow.

And here's my personal favorite: their mini chocolate fondues in cans that you just heat up. The hazelnut chocolate one is my guaranteed go-to. It's the kind of thing I keep stocked at home.

Perfect for Souvenirs

This is also an ideal spot for picking up edible souvenirs for the sweet-toothed folks back home. Everything from chocolate bars to gift baskets, all beautifully packaged and travel-friendly. Each product is meticulously crafted with top-quality chocolate at their factory in Quebec.

The Whimsical Factor

The atmosphere is whimsical and visually delightful, perfect for families. The menu appeals to kids and adults alike. Kids love watching their ice cream get the chocolate treatment, and honestly, adults do too. It's that kind of place that makes you smile just being there. Lines can be long but they move quickly, and the wait is worth it when you're biting into that thick chocolate shell.

Practical Notes

- Summer: dipped ice cream & cold treats
- Winter: hot chocolate selection
- Wide selection of chocolate products for gifts
- Family-friendly atmosphere
- Expect lines during peak times (they move fast)

GLACIER ABERDEEN

Ice Cream & Frozen Treats

90 rue Aberdeen (corner of Avenue Cartier)

The Charming Summer Hideaway

A true local institution since 1991, Glacier Aberdeen is tucked on a small perpendicular street just off Avenue Cartier. You'd walk right past it if you didn't know it was there, but that's part of the charm.

This is a seasonal spot, open from May to late September. Hours and opening dates vary each year depending on weather and the season, so check their Facebook page to confirm they're open before making our way there.

Summer Pleasures in the Smallest Package

This is a tiny operation, a charming little terrace that perfectly captures those sweet summer ice cream moments, the kind of spontaneous family stops where everyone gets a treat. In peak season, the terrace is brightened with flowers and a big tree covers the space with its leaves. It's as charming as it gets.

Fair warning: there are only a few seats on the terrace, but honestly, ice cream is meant to be eaten while you continue exploring anyway. The line sometimes stretches into the street, but that's normal and the staff moves quickly.

What Makes It Special

They use quality local products including pure maple butter from Beauce, real Belgian chocolate, and house-made sorbets and gelatos. The variety of flavors and types of frozen desserts is impressive - soft serve, hard ice cream, sorbets, and gelato all made on site. The menu includes vegan options, including vegan soft serve and natural slushies. They even have treats for dogs, which is a sweet touch.

My personal favorite? A float with natural slush and vanilla ice cream. But honestly, no choice is a bad one here - that's actually the challenge: deciding before your turn comes up.

The Local Experience

This place represents exactly what summer ice cream stops should be, the little indulgent pauses you make with family to treat yourselves. It's unpretentious, charming, and genuinely good. The kind of neighborhood spot that's been quietly delighting locals for over three decades

Practical Notes

- Seasonal operation: May to late September (dates vary)
- Check Facebook page for current hours and opening status
- Very limited seating on terrace
- Lines can form but move quickly



FRITE ALORS!

Belgian Fries & Poutine

122 Rue Crémazie Ouest

Belgian Fries with a Quebec Accent

Since 1991, Frite Alors! has been serving what they call "the real Belgian fries with a Quebec accent" - and that's exactly what you get. This is a chain, but the quality and consistency have kept them popular for over three decades.

The fries here are the star. Thick-cut Belgian-style, crispy on the outside, fluffy inside. They use local Quebec potatoes and cook them in beef fat, giving them that distinctive flavor that makes Belgian fries special.

The Poutine Experience

What sets Frite Alors! apart in the poutine game is their commitment to keeping those fries crispy. Fresh cheese curds, rich gravy that's generous without drowning everything, and fries that maintain their texture even in takeout, that's harder to achieve than it sounds.

The menu offers variety beyond just classic poutine - over a dozen different poutine options, from traditional to more creative combinations. There's also a weekly burger special if you want to mix things up.

The Space

The Crémazie location is charming from the outside - historic building, welcoming terrace in summer. Inside, it's casual and relaxed with an open kitchen concept so you can watch your food being prepared. Family-friendly without being a "kids' restaurant" - they have a children's menu.

The atmosphere is perfectly relaxed, ideal for a casual lunch before or after exploring Avenue Cartier, or a laid-back dinner when you want good food without any fuss.

Why Locals Keep Coming Back

Consistent quality at reasonable prices. Fast, friendly service. A varied menu that accommodates different tastes and dietary needs. It's the kind of reliable spot where you know exactly what you're getting, and it's going to be good.

Practical Notes

- Over a dozen poutine variations
- Family-friendly with kids' menu
- Casual, relaxed atmosphere
- Located steps from Avenue Cartier shopping
- Lovely terrasse in the summer

GRIENDEL - BRASSERIE ARTISANALE

Craft Beer & Bistro Fare

46 Boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest

Quebec Craft Beer at Its Best

Founded in 2015, Griendel is now located in Montcalm after moving from its original St-Sauveur location. The beers are brewed in St-Jacques-de-Leeds, and what makes this place special is their commitment to showcasing Quebec craft brewing at its finest. Griendel is known for crisp, refreshing beers including IPAs, lagers, and kölsch. They have 24 lines of craft beers on tap, which means you'll find something for every taste, from sessionable summer ales to more challenging experimental brews.

The Perfect Tasting Format

Here's what makes Griendel ideal for beer exploration: they offer 5oz pours, which means you can taste multiple beers without committing to full pints. This is perfect for discovering new flavors and finding what you really love. Some of their unique offerings have included Lime and Pepper White Ale and Mango and Passion Fruit ale, the kind of creative brewing that makes craft beer exciting.

More Than Just Beer

While the beer is definitely the star here, they work with local producers and transform ingredients in their kitchen, with a menu that adapts based on seasonal arrivals while offering a variety of quality snacks and dishes. The food is modern, seasonal pub fare - think burgers, poutine, charcuterie boards, and creative bistro options that complement the beer perfectly. They also serve cocktails and privately imported wines if beer isn't your thing, making it accommodating for groups with different preferences.

That Legendary Terrace

The summer terrace here is genuinely stunning, the kind of space that makes you want to order one more round just to stay a bit longer. It's a beautiful neighborhood setting that captures exactly what a warm evening should feel like. The terrace is heated for those cooler summer nights when you want to linger outside without shivering.

The Montcalm Location

The restaurant sits just two blocks from Avenue Cartier, making it an easy stop during your neighborhood exploration. The space has large windows that flood it with natural light, exposed red brick, and that comfortable lived-in feeling that makes you want to settle in for the evening.

Why Beer Lovers Come Here

The staff is knowledgeable and eager to recommend beers based on your preferences. The selection is thoughtfully curated, and the 5oz format encourages exploration without overwhelming you. This is the kind of place where you can settle in, try several different beers, share some good food, and actually learn something about Quebec craft brewing.

Practical Notes

- 24 craft beer lines on tap
- 5oz pours available for tasting
- Exceptional summer terrace (heated for cool evenings)
- Near Avenue Cartier
- Reservations recommended for weekends



BON APPÉTIT, AND SAFE TRAVELS

I hope this guide has been a good companion during your time in Quebec City - lighting the way to meals that made you stop mid-bite and say "wow," leading you to neighborhoods you might have otherwise missed, and helping you navigate this city's food scene with a little more confidence and a lot more excitement.

My biggest hope? That you discovered dishes that made you genuinely excited. That unexpected flavor combination that worked perfectly. That restaurant tucked on a side street where you had one of those meals you'll remember for years. Those moments when the food surprised you in the best possible way.

But beyond the food itself, I hope these meals gave you some good moments too. The kind where conversation flows easily, where you linger a bit longer than planned, where that spontaneous choice to try something new becomes a highlight of your trip. Good food has a way of making everything else feel a bit better, whether you're traveling solo, with friends, or with family.

I hope you're heading home with a full belly, happy memories, and maybe a few food stories you'll be telling for a while. And who knows? Maybe you'll find yourself craving that one dish from that one restaurant, planning your return trip before you've even left.

Thank you for trusting this guide. Thank you for exploring beyond the obvious tourist spots. And thank you for eating like a local, even if just for a little while. Safe travels, and I hope Quebec City exceeded your expectations in the best way possible.

Bon appétit, et à la prochaine!

Mélodie