

ICE HOTEL & QUÉBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

Celebrate winter in Québec City

February 9, 2024 – 7 Days

50th
ANNIVERSARY

WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience



Carnival is an outdoor festival that celebrates winter between late January and mid-February. In Québec City, the world's snow capital, the first major winter carnival made its debut in 1894. A population often faced with harsh winters decided to put on a snow festival to warm their hearts. Interrupted by two world wars and the depression years, the Carnival was revived in 1955 with Bonhomme as its mascot. Carnival became a must-attend event for the people of Québec City and the impetus behind the city's winter tourist activities. Today, the Carnival is undeniably a major winter event and continues to be a driving force in Québec's winter life. We stay 4 nights at the Hilton Hotel, enjoying the many activities of Carnival, then drive 40 minutes north to Valcartier for a unique experience staying a night at the famous Hôtel de Glace (Ice Hotel).



CANADIAN
TOUR



ACTIVITY LEVEL

▶ **10 Meals Included:**

5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners

▶ **Fares per person:**

from **\$4,535** double; **\$5,325** single – Standard 1 bed
from **\$4,595** double; **\$4,345** triple – Standard 2 beds
Other suites & categories are also available.
Please add 5% GST.

▶ **Early Booking Bonus:**

\$200 discount on first 12 seats; \$100 on next 8

▶ **Experience Points:** Earn 98 Experience Points

▶ **Departure from:** Victoria



Québec Winter Carnival

ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, February 9

A transfer is provided to Victoria Airport and we fly to Québec City. We stay four nights at the Hilton Hotel which has a great location near the walls of Old Québec.

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Québec City

Day 2: Saturday, February 10

The morning is free time. Follow your local guide off the beaten paths and be charmed by **Old Québec**, the only walled city in North America. In this UNESCO World Heritage site, fine old buildings and proud monuments line winding streets and picturesque places such as the National Assembly and Parliament Hill, the Battlefields Park, the Citadel, the Château Frontenac, Notre-Dame-de-Québec Basilica, and Place d'Armes. We stroll through **Place Royale**, the cradle of French civilization in North America, in the midst of the old Lower Town along the St. Lawrence riverfront. The afternoon is leisure time to take in the many activities of the **Québec Winter Carnival**. Tonight, we have VIP seats to watch the extravagant and colourful Ice Parade.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Québec City

Day 3: Sunday, February 11

Château Frontenac is the landmark of Québec City, perched on the bluff overlooking the St. Lawrence River. This Canadian icon was built in 1893 by the Canadian Pacific Railway and its architect included styles of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the British and French powers that have occupied Québec. A guided tour of this iconic hotel features history, famous visitors, and architecture. The Winter Carnival closes tonight, so you probably want to spend time today with some other activities or visiting the spectacular Ice Palace in front of the National Assembly.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Québec City

Day 4: Monday, February 12

First, we go to the **Observatoire de la Capitale**, the highest building in the city to admire a panoramic view. Our lunch is at **Le Parlementaire Restaurant**, located at the National Assembly. During the afternoon, you can choose to visit either

the Fine Arts Museum of Québec or the Civilization Museum. Tonight is a special treat with dinner and entertainment at the **Sugar Shack** l'Érablière du Lac-Beauport in the Laurentian Mountains. The traditional sugar bush meal is served (pea soup, omelet, maple ham, meat pie, and pancakes with maple syrup), accompanied by folk music and dancing, and finishing with maple taffy served on snow.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Québec City

Day 5: Tuesday, February 13

We explore the Côte-de-Beaupré region from Québec City to Mont-Ste-Anne along the St. Lawrence River. This historic road known as Route de la Nouvelle-France has many treasures including ancestral homes with a rich heritage and a view of Montmorency Falls. We stop at the wonderful Albert Gilles Copper Museum, full of handmade crafts, and enjoy teatime. Next is the **Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré Shrine**, oldest pilgrimage site in North America, with its commemorative chapel, Stations of the Cross and renowned basilica. Afterwards, we drive to Valcartier for an overnight stay in what can likely be called the world's strangest hotel, built entirely from ice – the **Ice Hotel or Hôtel de Glace**. Take a tour "behind the scenes" to learn about this unique structure and how it is built and preserved. Enjoy a complimentary drink in the Ice Bar and marvel at this hotel that will be gone two months later.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hôtel de Glace

Day 6: Wednesday, February 14

Leaving from the Ice Hotel in mid-morning, we drive through Trois Rivières to Montréal. A locally-guided tour explores this vibrant centre of French Canadian traditions including Mount Royal, Île Sainte-Hélène, downtown landmarks, and the imposing Notre Dame Basilica.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Delta Hotel Montréal

Day 7: Thursday, February 15

We fly from Montréal to Victoria. Transfers are provided to your pickup point.

QUÉBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

The Carnival had grown since 1955 into the largest winter festival in the world, but is now the largest in the Western Hemisphere after being supplanted by the Harbin Festival in China. Throughout the 10 days, the most popular attractions are the nighttime and daytime parades led by mascot Bonhomme Carnaval. The parades wind through the upper city, decorated for the occasion with lights and ice sculptures. Bonhomme – short for bonhomme de neige ("snowman") is the official ambassador of the festivities, the castle lord of the Ice Palace. Bonhomme is described as a seven-foot-tall, 400-pound snowman sporting a red cap, black buttons, and a ceinture fléchée that gives acknowledgement to French-Canadian and Métis style clothing. Red clothing, carnival songs, the arrow sash, Bonhomme's Effigy, and the caribou are all time-honoured traditions dating back to the origins of the Carnival.

ICE HOTEL

The first Ice hotel opened in 2001 and was located in Montmorency Falls Park. Since 2017, it has been in Valcartier, about 40 minutes north of Québec City in the Laurentian Mountains. It was the first and is still the only ice hotel in North America that is built each December for an opening date in early January. The hotel has a three-month lifespan each year before being brought down in April. It had only 11 double beds in 2001, but is now much larger with 51 double beds, all made of ice with a solid wood base and comfortable mattress. When bedtime comes, a cozy sleeping bag, an insulating bed sheet, and a pillow are delivered to your room.



Only the bathrooms are heated and located in a separate insulated structure. The Ice Hotel takes about 1½ months to build with 50 workers. The hotel makes its own snow using a special mixture to adjust the humidity. It is built with metal frames, then allowed to harden for a few days when the frames are removed. The hotel is made of 30,000 tons of snow and 500 tons of ice and the walls are up to four feet thick. The hotel is usually made in arches of 16 feet (5 m) over rooms, with larger and higher spaces for a grand hall, a chapel, a bar, and a grand ice slide. All furniture is made of ice. A sauna and outdoor hot tubs are close by. The bar serves drinks and cocktails in ice glasses. Our reservation includes a regular hotel room at the adjacent Hotel Valcartier, so if you are uncomfortable during the night, you can go back to a "normal" hotel.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to/from Victoria Airport
- Flight from Victoria to Québec City
- 5 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Transfer from Québec Airport to hotel
- Coach transportation for 5 days
- Local guide for 4 days in Québec City
- Sightseeing tour of Québec City
- 2 days admission to Winter Carnival
- VIP seating at the night parade
- Historic tour of Château Frontenac
- Observatoire de la Capitale
- Choice of Fine Arts Museum of Québec OR Civilization Museum
- Dinner and entertainment at Sugar Shack
- Albert Gilles Copper Museum
- Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré Shrine
- 1 night of Ice Hotel accommodation and taxes with backup regular hotel room at Valcartier
- "Behind the Scenes" tour of Ice Hotel
- Reception at the Ice Bar
- Flight from Montréal to Victoria
- Gratuities for local guides
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **10 meals:** 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners



Moderate activity including walking in snow at times. City streets are historic and narrow, so the coach may not be able to take you right to the door of some places. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. There can be longer walks in the airports.

Everybody participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 2. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some tour days.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due November 8, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person on credit cards).

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 12 seats and \$100 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after November 8, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to October 6, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From October 7 to November 8, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From November 9 to December 8, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From December 9, 2023 to January 8, 2024, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After January 8, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a tour component due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Flight seating: We are unable to take requests for window or aisle seating on the planes. The airline will not accept them, as group seating is assigned as a block. If this is important to you, we suggest you take the "No Flight" option with a fare reduction of \$1,095 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on the flights. Premium economy and business class may be available.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. (An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.)

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home Pickup: may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

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Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 98 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until November 8, 2023.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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