



# MONTREAL

## CANADA'S NAUGHTIEST CITY KEEPS IT HOT WITH DANCE CLUBS, HIP-HOP, AND SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL

**M**ontreal is a bit bipolar, with winter being the "polar" part. Quebecers (or rather, *les Québécois*—the French majority) have been agitating for secession for decades, claiming they're a distinct society. As if to prove it, they spend more per capita on beer, cigarettes, weed, porn, CDs and lotto tickets than any other Canadians. Throughout the summer, tourists flock to Montreal to indulge likewise.

### DANCE CLUBS

For festivals, electronic-music-heads have the **Montreal Electronic Groove** in October and the **MUTEK** festival in June. For the after-hours scene check out **Gravity** (30 Ste-Catherine W, 879-0009), **Aria** (1280 St-Denis, 987-6712), **Circus** (915 Ste-Catherine E., 844-0188) and **Red Lite** up in Laval (1755 de Lierre, 450-967-3057). **Stereo** (858 Ste-Catherine E., 286-0300), with its precise sound system, has maintained an international rep. Smaller spaces that keep regular hours (3 a.m. closing) abound. Rolling up "the Main," meaning the central Boulevard St-Laurent, you'll pass such cozy joints as **Upper Club** (3519 St-Laurent, 285-4464), **A Gogo Lounge** (3682 St-Laurent, 286-0882), **Saphir** (3699A St-Laurent, 284-5093), **Tokyo Bar** (3709 St-Laurent, 842-6838), **Blizzarts** (3956A St-Laurent, 843-4860) and **Blue Dog** (3958 St-Laurent, 848-7006).

### HIP-HOP AND GRAF

In addition to an annual DMC championship, there's Sneak Beats & Life nights with Kid KICKS and Al Bundy, Thursdays at **Jello Bar**

(151 Ontario E., 285-2621), and Back 2 Basics every Saturday at **Blue Dog**, hosted by DR One and Grand Theft. The after-hours spots all have hip-hop rooms, and soul, funk, breaks, drum 'n' bass, and dub also get repped at nights at **Kunta Lounge** (2021 St-Denis, 842-9223), **Luba Lounge** (2109 Bleury, 288-5822), **Blizzarts** and more. The city's graf scene is all about taking it further. For proof, check the live painting sessions of the Heavyweight Production House in filmmaker Pablo Aravena's very thorough, nearly complete documentary *Next: A Primer On Urban Painting*, and the annual, midsummer **Urban X-Pressions Graffiti Convention**. Graf-oriented shoppers can drop by **Turf Gallery** (410 St-Pierre, 845-5559), a shoe/import toy/graf art boutique in classy Old Montreal, or the **Sub-V gallery** (5666 Sherbrooke W., 485-4489).

### ROCK AND PUNK

**The Pop Montreal fest** in September is overtaking the moribund CMJ in NYC. Montreal's anglo indie scene—the Arcade Fire, the Dears, the Stills—is blowing up. For metal and punk, the longstanding **Foufounes Électriques** (87 Ste-Catherine E., 844-5539), remains Montreal's center of hard riffs, piercings and spikes, while the nearby **Medley** (1170 St-Denis, 842-6557), **Le Spectrum** (318 Ste-Catherine W, 844-3500), **Metropolis** (59 Ste-Catherine E., 866-908-9090) and **Club Soda** (1225 St-Laurent, 286-1010) host larger, louder shows.

### RESTAURANTS

Wiser souls avoid what's considered the national cuisine of Quebec. *Poutine*—fries and curd cheese smothered in gravy—is heart-attack fuel but a great hangover killer. Korean

restaurants have supplanted Thai as the big Asian thing, so tasty bulgogi joints are popping up en masse. **Bar Terrasse la Cabane** (3872 St-Laurent, 843-7283) can't be beat for great food (game meats, Portuguese grills), big portions and great prices. Belgian-style fries can be had at any of several **Frite Alors!** outlets, where the decor is based on the popular *Tintin* comic books (Montreal loves comic books too). Celebrity spotters will want to check out **Buona Notte** (3518 St-Laurent, 848-0644).

### DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Decriminalization of marijuana (meaning a fine, not jail, for possession) is a hot topic, and the fiercest support comes from Montreal's Bloc Pot political party. Quebec also grows some of the best weed in Canada, the notorious lime-green, indoor "hydro" stuff. As it stands, Montreal cops are pretty good at looking the other way, especially if they don't want to crawl out of their comfy cruisers. The legal drinking age is 18.

### SEX

Strip clubs are lax, as their \$10 *danses-contact* attest (like a lap dance except hands-on). A huge porn industry has earned Quebec a rep as the Silicone Valley of the East. Visitors routinely point out how hot Montreal women are, and they're right. Maybe it's the French, Catholic thing, but the ladies in Montreal know they're sexy, indulge it and enjoy it. The classic disco come-on "Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir" is tired—savvy gents will work the local flavor of "T'es cute, toé."

*All area codes 514 unless noted otherwise.*