



La Belle Province (The Beautiful Province)

Established 1867
1st Province

Did You Know?



- Québec gets its name from the Algonquin word *kebec*, meaning “the place where the river narrows.”
- Québec produces the majority of the world’s maple syrup!
- Montréal is the second-largest French-speaking city in the world, after Paris, France.
- Canada’s first ice hockey team—the Montréal Hockey Club—was formed in Montréal in 1877.
- Two Montréalers, Scott Abbott and Chris Haney, a sports reporter and a photographer, invented the game Trivial Pursuit in 1980.
- Québec is the only province in Canada where English is not an official language. French is the only official language.
- The white cross on Québec’s provincial flag was used by knights in the Third Crusade to recognize each other, while the *fleur-de-lis* (lily flower) symbol is associated with the French monarchy.
- Québec City is the only walled city north of Mexico. It was also the first city in North America to be named a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Laval University, founded in 1663, is the oldest centre of learning in Canada and was the first institution in North America to offer higher education in French.
- *Poutine* (french fries and cheese curds topped with gravy) is a classic and very popular Canadian dish that originally came from Québec.

Quick Facts



Capital city: Québec City

Population: 8,326,089

Total Area: 1,542,056 square kilometres (595,391 sq miles)

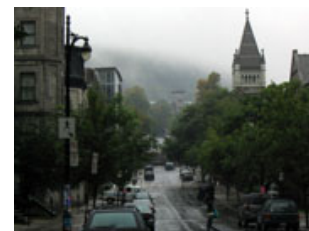
Population Density: 5.80 persons per square kilometre (15.00 per sq mile)

The Place



Climate

Québec has three different climates. Northern Québec has an arctic climate, with long winters that create *permafrost* (permanently frozen ground). Trees cannot grow in this climate. The mid- to southern half of Québec experiences a subarctic climate. These areas see long, cold winters, but they also have short, warm summers. Southern Québec has a humid *continental* climate, in which the temperature changes between seasons. Summers in this area are quite hot, and winters are cold and snowy. The average summer temperature in Montréal is 26°C (79°F). In comparison, northern region temperatures average 7°C (45°F) in summer.



Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

Spring: 7/-3°C

Summer: 22/11°C

Fall: 12/2°C

Winter: -6/-15°C

Geography

Three times larger than France, Québec covers an area of 1,542,056 square kilometres (595,391 sq miles). It is the largest province in Canada and is second in size only to the territory of Nunavut. The three main geographic regions in Québec are the St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Appalachian Highlands, and the Canadian Shield. The St. Lawrence Lowlands area is a strip of land stretching along the St. Lawrence River from the border with Ontario up to Québec City. This region is the smallest of the three regions, but it is home to the majority of the population as well as the best farmland in the province. The St. Lawrence River is one of the longest rivers in Canada and runs 1,300 kilometres (800 miles) through the entire province, connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean. The Appalachian Highlands are a series of low mountain ranges in southeastern Québec. This region includes the Magdalen Islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.



Most of the province is part of the Canadian Shield—an enormous *plateau* (high, flat area) of ancient rock, which has been worn away over the centuries by wind and water. The Shield covers the area of land from the St. Lawrence Lowlands north to Hudson and Ungava bays and includes the highest point in the province, Mount D'Iberville, and the largest lake in Québec, Lake Mistassini.

Wildlife

The forests of Québec are full of black bear, caribou, moose, and beaver. Polar bears roam around the Hudson Bay in northern Québec. Wolves are common in the north, while coyotes are found in the south of the province. Whales and a variety of seals swim in the provincial waters.



Flora and Fauna

Common Animals

Beaver
 Black bear
 Blue jay
 Canada goose
 Cod
 Deer
 Eastern chipmunk
 Eastern grey squirrel
 Garter snake
 Hermit thrush
 Marten
 Mink
 Moose
 Otter
 Pike
 Red fox
 Ruffed goose
 Salmon

Common Plants

Maple
 Ash
 Oak
 Pine
 Balsam fir
 Daisy
 Goldenrod
 Fern
 Horsetail

Striped skunk
Warbler
Woodland caribou
Woodpecker

Endangered Animals

Barn owl
Beluga whale
Copper redhorse
Eskimo curlew
Loggerhead shrike
Maritime ringlet
Mountain dusky salamander
Piping plover
Roseate tern
Spotted turtle
Wolverine
Woodland caribou

Endangered Plants

American ginseng
Blunt-lobed woodsia
Butternut
False hop sedge
Forked three-awned grass
Spotted wintergreen

Environmental Issues

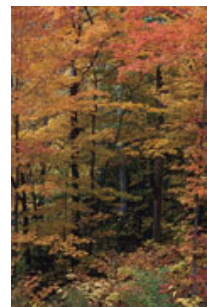
Pollution

The St. Lawrence River in Québec has many pollution problems. The fish that live in the river suffer from the pollution. *Urbanization* (the growth of cities) has had a negative effect on the St. Lawrence River because of the pollutants that come along with high populations and industry. Sewage and household products are a couple of examples of *toxins* (poisons) that are put into the river’s waters. Some pollutants are difficult to treat and can cause long-term damage. The government of Québec has outlawed the dumping of certain pollutants into the water, but researchers say that these pollutants may have settled in the sediment on the bottom of the river and could still be causing harm. The quality of the water and the health of fish and other aquatic life may still be recovered if the right steps are taken.



Forestry

In order to conserve forest areas, the government of Québec limits the amount of trees that can be cut down and used by the forestry industry. Companies are also required to go into areas that may not be easy to get to. The forestry industry in Québec has been declining, and sawmills across the province have closed, leaving many Quebecers without jobs. Companies are forced to close mills to stay in business. Quebecers are trying to find a way to conserve forests while maintaining the forestry industry. The government offers some support to the industry to help companies continue to produce wood products and employ workers.



Resources and Industries

Agriculture

Farming in Québec is centred in the St. Lawrence Lowlands, where the best soil is found. Dairy farms are the most common. Québec has the largest dairy industry in the country. Vegetables and grains, including potatoes, corn, hay, and oats, are grown around the Québec City and Montréal areas. Québec is also the world's largest producer of maple syrup.



Manufacturing

The pulp, paper, and lumber industries have long been important to the province. Factories employ thousands of workers, who make lumber into paper, furniture, newsprint, and other wood products. More recently, the aviation industry has taken over, particularly in Montréal. Aerospace companies manufacture aircrafts, jet engines, and flight simulators, making the province a worldwide centre for aviation and other transportation equipment.



Mining


Iron ore, gold, and copper are the most important minerals in the province. Most of the iron ore is mined in northeastern Québec, while gold and copper are mainly found in the northwest region of the province. Québec was also a major producer of asbestos, a heat resistant mineral used in fireproofing. But the mining of *asbestos* is now *banned* (outlawed) because of the health risks the mineral causes.



History



Time Line

4000 BC	
4000 BC	Native peoples settle in the St. Lawrence River Valley
AD 1500	
AD 1534	French explorer Jacque Cartier plants a flag at Gaspé to claim the area for France
1608	French explorer Samuel de Champlain founds Québec
	
1629	British forces capture Québec
1632	France regains the colony

1642 Montréal is founded

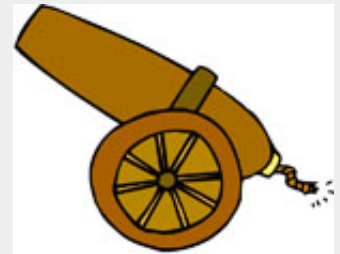


1667 The French and the Iroquois sign a peace treaty

1700

1713 France signs the Treaty of Utrecht, giving up all claim to mainland Acadia (including parts of eastern Québec)

1756 The Seven Years' War starts between Great Britain and France



1759 Québec surrenders to the British

1763 The Treaty of Paris makes Québec part of a British colony

1774 The Québec Act enlarges the colony's borders, guarantees religious freedom for Catholics, recognizes French civil law, and authorizes use of the French language

1791 The Constitutional Act separates Québec into Upper Canada (what is now Ontario) and Lower Canada (what is now Québec)

1800

1837 Upper and Lower Canada rebel against British rule

1840 The Act of Union joins Upper Canada and Lower Canada to form the United Province of Canada

1867 Québec joins Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia to form the Dominion of Canada under the British North America Act



1891 Quebecer John Abbott becomes Canada's first native-born prime minister



1896 Quebecer Wilfrid Laurier becomes prime minister



1900

1911 Marie Gérin-Lajoie becomes the first Québec woman to earn a bachelor's degree

1912 The province's boundaries are set to their present limits

1918 *Anti-conscription* (required military service) riots break out




1922 French language radio begins broadcasting in Montréal

1940 Women win the right to vote in provincial elections



1948 Quebecer Louis Saint-Laurent becomes prime minister



1960	Liberal Jean Lesage becomes premier, and the <i>Quiet Revolution</i> (a series of social reforms) begins	
1963	Terrorist group <i>Front de Libération</i> (FLQ) sets off bombs in Montréal to draw attention to Québec sovereignty issues	
1967	Montréal hosts the World's Fair	
1968	Quebecer Pierre Trudeau becomes prime minister	
1970	The October Crisis is triggered when the FLQ kidnaps two government officials, murdering one; this leads to the only peacetime use of the War Measures Act in Canada	
1975	Inuit and Cree First Nations peoples sign the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement	
1976	Montréal hosts the Summer Olympics	
1977	French is declared the official language of Québec	
1980	Quebecers vote against independence from Canada	
1984	Quebecer Brian Mulroney becomes prime minister	

1990 Mohawk and government troops face off over land claims at Oka, Québec



1993 Quebecer Jean Chrétien becomes prime minister



1995 Quebecers again vote against independence by a narrow margin

2000

2003 Québec legalizes same-sex marriage

2008 Québec *bans* (outlaws) the use of cell phones while driving; the province celebrates its 400th anniversary

2012 Pauline Marois becomes the first female premier of Québec

PRESENT

Inuit, Algonquin, and Iroquois

About six thousand years ago, the ancestors of today’s First Nations peoples began settling what is now Québec. The Inuit lived in the area around Ungava and Hudson bays. They lived off the fish they caught and built long, skinny boats called *kayaks*. In their *kayaks*, they hunted whales and seals in the cold northern waters. During the winter, the Inuit lived in *igloos* (houses made of snow blocks), while in summertime, they built tents out of caribou hides stretched over wood poles.



The Algonquin people spread out across the land from the St. Lawrence River Valley over to James Bay. The different Algonquin *bands* (tribes) survived by gathering berries and roots and hunting herds of deer and moose. Because they moved often, the Algonquin lived in tents they could easily put up and take down as they needed.

The Iroquois moved into the St. Lawrence Lowlands area and began growing crops in the milder climate and rich soil. Since they were able to live off the squash, corn, and beans they grew, the Iroquois stayed in one place and built *longhouse* (a long, narrow home) villages to live in. These three main groups of *aboriginals* (natives) interacted and traded goods thousands of years before European explorers arrived.

In Search of Gold

In 1534, King Francis I of France sent explorer Jacques Cartier to the Gulf of St. Lawrence in search of gold. Cartier claimed the land for France and made several trips to and from Europe. He brought back what he thought was gold and diamonds, but which actually turned out to be *pyrite* (fool's gold) and quartz. France eventually gave up on finding riches, but French trappers soon realized that fur was the real treasure in the new land. By the early 1600s, the French trappers had started a highly successful fur-trading industry with the native *bands* (tribes) in the area. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain established a fort at a point on the St. Lawrence River where the river narrowed. The new settlement became known as Québec.



New France

Though fur traders did very well in the new colony, few other French people wanted to leave their homes for a new land that was not as good for farming. To encourage more farmers to move to New France, the government set up the Company of One Hundred Associates. This company gave portions of land to *seigneurs* (agents or landlords). The *seigneurs* promised to divide up their land between farmers, who would pay them a fee in exchange for the right to work and live on the land. There were many more men than women living in the colony, so the king sent hundreds of single women to New France as brides for the soldiers, traders, and farmers living there. These women were known as *filles du roi* (daughters of the king), and as they married and started families, the population of New France soared.



Lower Canada

Life was not easy in New France, and the French traders were constantly warring with the Iroquois people over control of the fur trade. The British Hudson's Bay Company was also trying to control the fur trade. France and Great Britain fought a series of wars throughout the 1700s. In 1713, France signed the Treaty of Utrecht and gave much of its land to Britain, including the huge Hudson's Bay Territory. By 1763, the British had captured Québec City and taken control of New France. Despite the British government's efforts to make Québec a British colony, the residents managed to keep their French roots, laws, and customs. They did not always get along with the new British settlers, so to please both groups the government passed the Constitutional Act of 1791. The act separated Québec into two colonies: Upper and Lower Canada. Upper Canada (what is now Ontario) was mostly British, while Lower Canada (what is now Québec) was home to the French Canadians.



Self-Government

In the mid-1830s, both Upper and Lower Canada rebelled against Great Britain. Unhappy with the way their colonies were being run, British and French Canadians alike wanted to be able to govern themselves. In 1840, Great Britain passed the Act of Union, which united the two colonies under the name the United Province of Canada. Britain hoped the union would settle the differences between the French and British Canadians and stop further war. Both groups were given equal representation in the government, but English was declared the official language of the province. It wasn't long before reformers from both sides went to the British officials demanding self-government. The province achieved self-government in 1848 and helped found the Dominion of Canada in 1867. The British portion of the province became Ontario and the French portion became Québec.



The Quiet Revolution

During the 1960s, the province of Québec saw a series of social reforms that became known as the Quiet Revolution. The Liberal party was in control at the time, and the government took a more active role in the lives of Quebecers, investing more money in education and health care. The Catholic Church historically controlled the education system in the province, but during the revolution the provincial government took over that role, making it required (and free) for children to attend school until they reached 16 years old. While these social changes were taking place, Quebecers began feeling a sense of unity and loyalty to their province. French-speaking residents became known as *Québécois* and had a strong interest in keeping their unique culture alive within the nation as a whole.



The Question of Sovereignty

The changes of the Quiet Revolution sparked an independence movement in Québec. Soon a political party dedicated to a free Québec came into being—the *Parti Québécois* (PQ). In 1977, French was declared the only official language of the province, and in 1980, the PQ presented voters with the Québec Referendum. The *referendum* (direct vote) would decide whether Québec should take steps to separate itself from Canada and become a *sovereign state*, free from outside control. Residents voted against the *referendum*, but the PQ stayed in power and a second *referendum* was proposed in 1995. Voter turnout was huge, and voters once again decided against independence, but this time it was by a much smaller margin. A tiny majority, 50.6 percent of Quebecers, voted no, while 49.4 percent voted in favour of sovereignty. Québec was recognized as a distinct society in a resolution the Parliament of Canada passed in 1995. The question of Québec's role in relation to Canada will no doubt continue to be a key issue both in the province and in the nation as a whole.



The People

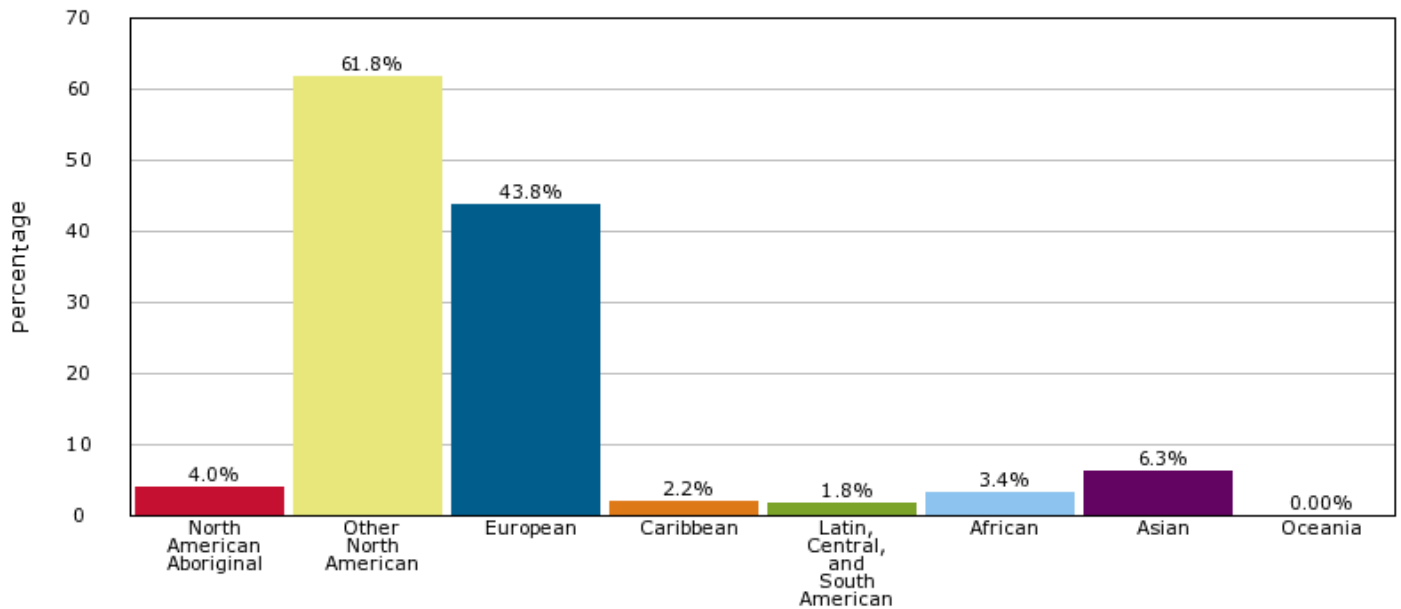


Population

Québec is the second most populous province in Canada, after Ontario. About a quarter of Canada's total population lives in Québec. The majority of Quebecers speak French as their first language; one-third of them are *Québécois*, meaning they are of French origin. Many of the *Québécois* are descendants of the original French settlers.

About half the population lives in and around Montréal, while another million live in the Québec City area. Very few people live in northern Québec. There are large populations of Irish and Italian Canadians, as well as many other ethnic groups, particularly in the Montréal area. The majority of *Anglophones* (English speakers) live in Montréal as well, while *Francophones* (French speakers) are centred in Québec City and throughout the province. *Aboriginal* (native) groups in the province make up a small percentage of the population. Most First Nations peoples speak their own native languages and then French or English as a second language.

Total Population: 7,903,001



Canadians may belong to more than one group. Totals may not equal 100%.

Government

Federal

Senators: 24

Liberals: 6

Conservatives: 10

Independents: 2

Vacant: 6



Members of Parliament: 78

Liberals: 40

Conservatives: 12

Bloc Québécois: 10

New Democratic Party: 16

In Canada, members of Parliament are elected from across the country. The leader of the party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons becomes the prime minister. The prime minister is the head of government in Canada. The monarch (today, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom) is leader in name only. She appoints a

governor-general to be her representative in Canada. The role of this governor-general is largely ceremonial. In Canada, there are two separate lawmaking bodies, the House of Commons, which is made up of elected members, and the Senate, whose members are appointed by the governor-general under the advice of the prime minister. The House of Commons debates and votes on *bills* (proposed laws). The Senate carefully examines the *bills* and decides whether to approve, change, or reject them. For a *bill* to become law, it must be passed by both the House of Commons and the Senate and be given *royal assent* (approval) by the governor-general.

Provincial

Capital: Québec City, population 765,706

Province Abbreviation: QC

Premier: Philippe Couillard (Liberal)

Lieutenant-Governor: J. Michel Doyon

Members of the National Assembly: 125

Female MNAs: 32

The lieutenant-governor of Québec represents the monarch (queen of the United Kingdom) and calls on the leader of the party with the most votes to be the premier. The premier chooses the members of the Cabinet from the elected Members of *L'Assemblée Nationale* (the National Assembly), who represent voters. These members are then appointed by the lieutenant-governor. Each is placed in charge of a department such as education, health, or aboriginal affairs. The Cabinet members advise the premier, while the National Assembly makes the laws.

Key Issues

Health Care

Since the healthcare system in Québec, as in all Canadian provinces, is *nationalized* (run by the government), it is unconstitutional to pay for private services. However, certain surgeries have long waiting lists in public hospitals, and people disagree over whether or not people should be allowed to buy private insurance coverage for certain procedures. Some think that allowing private healthcare services will not shorten waiting times and that Quebecers should focus on building up the public system that is already in place.

Language

Québec was originally settled by France, and today the official language is French. However, English also has a great influence on the province since all the surrounding areas speak English. The government made laws encouraging the use of French, limiting the use of English, and restricting access to English schools, in order to keep important cultural aspects of the area.

Complaints about language problems in the province are increasing. For example, some product labels have bad French translations that have been generated by computers. Some translations are so bad that the French cannot be understood, so Quebecers must read the English to figure out what is written. Larger problems exist as well, such as the fact that some immigrants choose to learn English instead of French. The official language remains a hot topic of debate in Québec.



First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal Peoples

There are 39 *bands* (tribes) of First Nations peoples in Québec. The major groups are the Mohawk, Cree, Montagnais, Algonquin, Attikamek, Mi'kmaq, Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, Malecite, and Naskapi. There are *Métis* (people with both European and native ancestry) and Inuit populations as well.

The Montagnais is the largest group in the province. Two-thirds of the Montagnais live on *reserves* (federal land set aside for native use) along the North Shore and around Lac Saint Jean. The Mohawk, the second-largest First Nations group, usually live on *reserves* around the Montréal area. Members of these First Nations peoples in Québec gather together periodically to elect a chief and several councillors, who help run their communities. The chiefs from different *bands* often work together on land claims with the federal government and on achieving the right to govern themselves.



Famous People



Céline Dion

- *Eva Avila* – Singer
- *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* – Seventh prime minister of Canada
- *Geneviève Bujold* – Actress
- *Leonard Cohen* – Musician
- *Sir John Abbott* – Third prime minister of Canada



William Shatner

- *Céline Dion* – Singer
- *Sylvain Grenier* – Professional wrestler
- *William Shatner* – Actor
- *Michel Tremblay* – Author
- *Pierre Trudeau* – 15th prime minister of Canada
- *Sidney Altman* – Molecular biologist
- *Marc Garneau* – Astronaut
- *Armand Bombardier* – Inventor of the snowmobile
- *Georges St. Pierre* – Martial arts champion
- *Louis Saint-Laurent* – 12th prime minister of Canada
- *Alexandre Despatie* – World champion diver
- *Mario Lemieux* – National Hockey League player
- *Guy Lafleur* – National Hockey League player
- *Brian Mulroney* – 18th prime minister of Canada
- *Eric Gagné* – Major League Baseball pitcher



Manon Rhéaume



Leonard Cohen

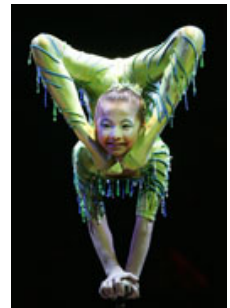
- *Oscar Peterson* – Jazz pianist
- *Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de La Vérendrye* – Explorer
- *Manon Rhéaume* – Olympic hockey player
- *Patrick Roy* – National Hockey League player
- *Jean Chrétien* – 20th prime minister of Canada
- *Louis Jolliet* – Explorer
- *Jacques Villeneuve* – Formula 1 race car driver
- *Naomi Klein* – Author

Cultural Notes



Cirque du Soleil

In 1984, the government of Québec was in search of entertainment acts to celebrate the 450th anniversary of French explorer Jacques Cartier's arrival in Canada. In response to the search, two street entertainers, Guy Laliberté and Daniel Gauthier, founded the *Cirque du Soleil* (Circus of the Sun). *Cirque du Soleil* is made up of human performers, and each show tells a story accompanied by original music. Acrobats, trapeze artists, and jugglers are some of the artists involved. The performers are known for their unusual and creative acts such as bungee cord *aerial* (in the air) routines. The circus has permanent shows at resorts in Walt Disney World and Las Vegas. The company also tours around the world. *Cirque du Soleil* has become so popular that CDs and DVDs of their performances are for sale worldwide.



Sugar Houses

Quebecers know it's officially spring when the sap begins to flow in the maple trees. Every spring, many Quebecers travel into the countryside to visit a *cabane a sucre* (sugar house) for the traditional making of maple syrup. Families gather in late March or early April and feast together on a variety of foods made with maple syrup. Popular dishes include *oreilles de crisse* (fried strips of salt pork), sugar pie, omelettes, and *grands-pères* (dumplings), all made with sweet, homemade maple syrup. But the favourite treat for kids is *tire d'érable* (maple taffy). They go outside and pour globs of maple syrup on the snow and then roll the hardened treats up on little sticks. Families follow their feasts with traditional dances, music, and sleigh rides. Many towns in Québec hold maple festivals.



Fun Facts & Contacts



Official Emblems

Provincial Flower

Blue Flag Iris

This purple flower is native to Québec and blooms in the spring in the area from the St. Lawrence Valley up to James Bay.



Provincial Bird

Snowy Owl

This owl lives in the frozen north of the province and is unusual in that it hunts in the daytime as well as at night. Its main food is *lemmings* (small rodents). The older the snowy owl gets, the whiter its feathers become.



Provincial Tree

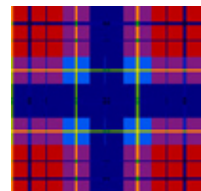
Yellow birch

This tree grows in the southern forests of Québec and has been a part of Quebecers' lives since the birth of the province. Its wood is used to make furniture, and its leaves turn a beautiful shade of orange in the fall.



Provincial Tartan

The colours of Québec's tartan come from elements on the provincial coat of arms. The blue stands for the *fleurs-de-lis* (lily flower) symbol. The green represents the maple leaves. The red is from the background of the centre band on the coat of arms, and the gold symbolizes the rearing lion and the crown. The white comes from the scroll and motto. While the tartan is registered in the official Scottish Register of Tartans, it is not officially recognized by the Province of Québec.



Provincial Coat of Arms

The royal crown represents the province's relationship with the United Kingdom. The *fleurs-de-lis* are traditional symbols of Québec. The lion stands for royalty, while the maple leaves symbolize Canada.



Major League Sports Teams

- Montréal Canadiens (NHL)
- Montréal Alouettes (CFL)
- Montréal Impact (MLS)

For More Information

To learn more about Québec, see www.gouv.qc.ca. Or contact Tourisme Québec, 1255 Rue Peel, Bureau 400, Montréal, QC, H3B 4V4; phone (514) 873-2015; web site www.quebecoriginal.com.

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Québec

EXTREMES

Lowest: The lowest point in the province is sea level.

Highest: Mont D'Iberville, also known as Mount Caubvik, is the highest point in both Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador, at 1,652 metres (5,420 ft).

Coldest: Québec got as cold as -54.4°C (-66°F) in Doucet on 5 February 1923.

Hottest: The highest recorded temperature was 40°C (104°F) at Ville-Marie on 6 July 1921.

