

# TRAVEL



RICARDO RAMIREZ BUXEDA • Orlando Sentinel

## Afloat in Old Florida

From Key West to Winter Park, boat tours serve up classic views of the state.

By BONNIE GROSS  
Sun Sentinel

**W**hen tourists came to Florida back in the days before Disney, they went on rides. But in Old Florida, those rides were boat tours, not roller coasters.

Seeing Florida by boat is still one of the best ways to enjoy all it offers.

On a floating getaway, you can reach places that are free of roads and glimpse rare views you can't see by car. Some of the boats themselves are one-of-a-kind attractions. Others are such classic Florida experiences that they have been carrying visitors on the same routes for more than 100 years.

There are dozens of boat tours in Florida, but here are seven — from St. Augustine to the Keys — that stand out for their history or the special experience they offer. They are listed from north to south. See **FLORIDA** on G4 ▶

Above, the Winter Park Scenic Boat Tour boat crosses the canal from Lake Osceola to Lake Virginia. Bring hats and sunscreen for the one-hour tour.

## Quebec, a world apart

Not far away, a Canadian province offers cultural immersion, French language and natural beauty.

By ANNE STEIN • Special to the Star Tribune

Inside the longhouse, all is quiet and dark, even at midday. My husband and I are sitting on a tree stump beside a fire, relishing the contemplative atmosphere — a relief after enduring the hustle and bustle of Chicago's O'Hare Airport just hours before.

That's one of the nice qualities of Quebec. It's nearby, yet the French-speaking Canadian province feels a world apart. With cobblestone streets and old churches, the capital, Quebec City, seems like an immersion in Europe. The section designated Old Quebec, which has buildings that date to the 1600s, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Quebec is also a region of First Nations people — the natives who were living here when the French and British arrived — and we wanted to understand their history. That is why we began our trip at this longhouse, a replica of a traditional communal home for the Huron-Wendat people — one of the 11 First Nations who lived in eastern Canada long before Europeans arrived. Our host is a young First Nation storyteller



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With cobblestone streets, Quebec City seems like an immersion in Europe.

who keeps our tea replenished and explains how the indigenous Wendat farmed, hunted and lived together in these bark-covered homes, where platform beds are covered with otter, beaver and other animal furs and women chiefs were the decisionmakers.

This particular structure, built of sticks and bark, stands next to the First Nations Hotel and Museum in Wendake, a First Nations reserve just outside Quebec City. The hotel, spa and museum on the banks of Aki-awenrahk River focuses on Huron-Wendat culture, and offers overnight stays on fur-draped bunks. It also offers tastes of First Nations cuisine at its restaurant, La Traite.

Nearby historic sites include Notre-Dame-de-Lorette church (built in 1730), Kabir Kouba Cliff and Waterfall, Tsawenhohi House (completed in 1820 and home to several Grand Chiefs), as well as the Huron Traditional Site, where First Nations guides wearing traditional clothing give tours. After touring these spots, we boarded a shuttle to Quebec City and in a half-hour, were dropped off in front of the city's landmark building, Le Château Frontenac, to begin our immersion

See **CANADA** on G5 ▶





Photos by ANNE STEIN • Special to the Star Tribune

A park in Quebec City highlights the raging beauty of Montmorency Falls. A suspension bridge straddles the river, and a staircase down a cliff leads to the base of the falls.

# Quebec City offers closer taste of Europe

◀ **CANADA** from G1  
in the European side of things.

Much of the city, which saw battles between the British, Americans and French, sits high above the St. Lawrence River. It boasts a working fort, La Citadelle de Quebec, along with three miles of ramparts and stone gates, making it the only fortified city north of Mexico.

## A walkable city

For its hills and cobbled streets, the walkability is hard to beat. Divided into the fortified Upper Town (Haute-Ville) and Lower Town (Basse-Ville), Old Quebec is filled with cafes, restaurants, museums and hotels of every type, from bed-and-breakfasts in historic residences to luxury hotels, and it's all easily accessible.

We stayed at Hôtel 71, down a steep hill in the quieter Old Port area. Like so many buildings here, this one has historic roots. The former headquarters of the National Bank of Canada, the neoclassical building sits just across the street from the Musée de la Civilisation (Museum of Civilization).

After checking in and putting on comfortable shoes (an essential for traversing this city), we walked around the Old Port area, passing art galleries, then stopping at a friendly cafe. I thrilled to

saying, "bonjour," and ordering "café et un croissant," although my American accent must have been obvious. The cheerful young man behind the counter answered in his equally limited English.

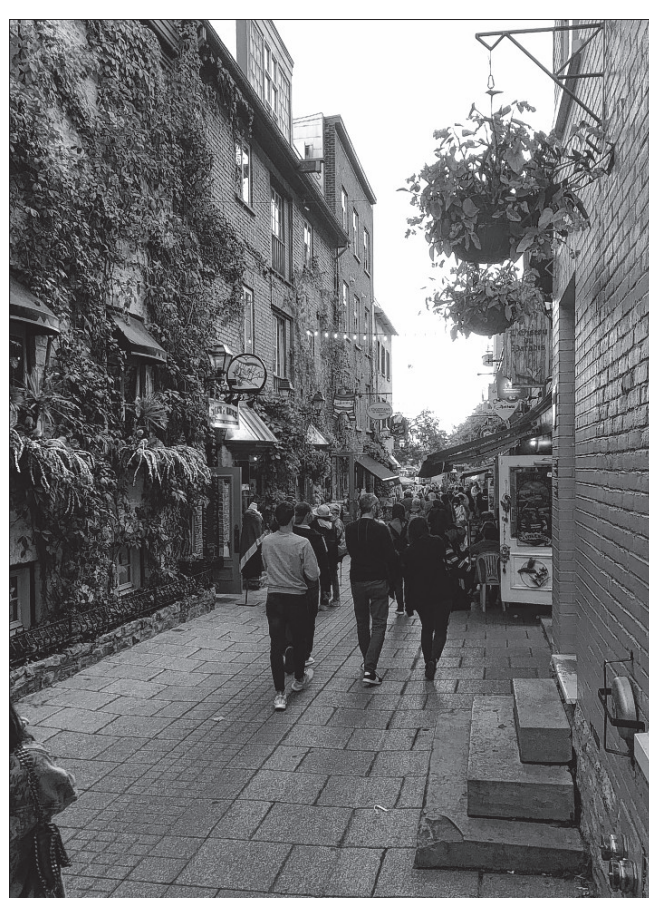
We passed city-sized cruise ships docked on the St. Lawrence River and continued to Lower Town, the oldest part of the city. We stopped at Place Royale, the heart of Old Quebec and the place where French explorer Samuel de Champlain settled after arriving in 1609 to establish New France. North America's oldest stone church, Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, built in 1688, stands on the cobblestone square.

Later, at pedestrian-only Rue du Petit-Champlain, we climbed into the city's famed funicular for a ride up a steep cliff to iconic hotel Château Frontenac.

Near the hotel, we walked down Promenade des Gouverneurs (Governors Walk), a boardwalk that offers views of the St. Lawrence River, the town and Laurentian Mountains across the river.

## A bike ride, of course

Though Quebec City is hilly, the surrounding areas are fairly flat, and Quebec has a network of well-marked bike paths that spread for miles. On our second morning in the city, we borrowed bikes, helmets and locks from our hotel and rode about eight miles on paths to Montmorency Falls Park.



People stroll along the charming, pedestrian-only Rue du Petit-Champlain in Old Quebec.

There, 275-foot-tall Montmorency Falls can be viewed via cable car and a suspension bridge, from a long set of

stairs — or for the very brave, via zipline that crosses in front of the falls. We walked to the base of the falls and enjoyed beautiful, close-up views — for free.

One day, we also boarded the Bus Rouge (Red Bus) for



Source: maps4news.com HERE

## IF YOU GO

**Wendake tourism:** [tourismewendake.ca/en](http://tourismewendake.ca/en)

**Quebec City tourism:** [quebec-cite.com/en](http://quebec-cite.com/en)

**Free walking tour of Québec:** [afreetourofquebec.com](http://afreetourofquebec.com)

a 90-minute hop-on, hop-off city tour that let us explore neighborhoods including hip Saint Roch and artsy Montcalm area. It also brought us through the Plains of Abraham and Battlefields Park, the site of the 1759 battle where the British defeated the French. Today the park hosts concerts and other events and is filled with gardens, nature paths, cross-country ski trails and a museum.

But for a deeper understanding of the city, we signed

up for a free tour on our last full day there. At the Tourny Fountain, a beauty that stands in front of the majestic 1866 Parliament Building, we met the No. 1-rated walking guide in the city, Samuel Dubois. He's a Quebec native — with bushy beard and red-and-black wool plaid shirt — with a wonderful sense of humor. Visitors are asked to pay what they'd like and to give him something from their city (we brought him a Chicago Bulls hat).

With his insider eye, our 90-minute tour included sites such as the Morrin Centre, a cultural headquarters that served as the city's first prison and still bears marks on stone window frames where bars once kept people in.

Sam also brought us by the house where Alfred Hitchcock filmed his 1953 movie "I Confess," about a man who confesses a murder to a local priest, who is then accused of the crime. In heavily Catholic Quebec, the script turned out to be scandalous, angering the famous filmmaker who vowed never to return to the city.

There's more to do in Quebec. Parc National de la Jacques-Cartier is fairly close to the city, for instance. But we'll save that for our next trip just across the U.S. border.

Writer Anne Stein lives in Evanston, Ill.

# Why your next vacation should be in Colombia

An essential overview of what to see, eat, buy, say (or not say) and more.

By ANDREA SACHS  
Washington Post

## Where:

**When to go:** June to September and December to February, for consecutive days of sunshine.

**Why to go:** Colombia is the only South American country with coastlines on the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It also has the world's highest number of bird species, clocking in at nearly 2,000.

**Logistics:** El Dorado International Airport in Bogotá is the main airport and offers the most frequent service from the United States. International passengers can also fly into Medellín, Cartagena and Cali (Spirit Airlines offers the most affordable one-stop service from Minneapolis to all four cities). For domestic travel, you can fly, drive or catch a bus, but there are no trains. Road conditions are adequate in the major cities, but prepare for white-knuckle traffic. Avoid roads in rural areas.

**Money:** The currency is the Colombian peso. The bigger cities accept credit cards, but you will need cash in smaller towns. ATMs are pervasive in the more populated areas, but be careful of rigged machines and loitering scammers.

**Paperwork:** No tourist visa is required for stays of 90 days or less.

**Language:** You should learn some basic Spanish phrases to get around (see Reading List, below), but you will typically

find English speakers in more touristy areas, such as Cartagena and Bogotá.

**Health:** The U.S. Embassy in Colombia recommends travelers between the ages of 1 and 60 receive a yellow fever vaccine at least 10 days before traveling to high-risk spots; some airlines and national parks may request proof of vaccination. Tap water is safe to drink in the Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta areas and major cities. In more rural environments, use a water filtration system or buy bottled water. The country is experiencing a dengue outbreak, so coat yourself in bug repellent spray and sleep under mosquito netting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends vaccinations for hepatitis A and typhoid, in case you are exposed to contaminated food or water.

**Prevailing myth:** As soon as you leave the airport, you will be kidnapped, mugged or murdered, or will bump into a cocaine dealer. The reality: Security has significantly improved since the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed a peace accord in 2016. Nearly 3.8 million people visited in 2018, a 1.6 million increase from 2012.

**Itinerary for first-timers:** Start with the cities: Bogotá, known as the Athens of South America, and Cartagena, a UNESCO World Heritage site on the Caribbean coast. And, of course, when in Colombia, you must drink coffee. Sip it straight from the source in the Coffee Triangle, the coffee production region in Pereira, Manizales and Arme-



FERNANDO VERGARA • Associated Press

Dancers of the Carnival of Riosucio (Carnival of the Devil) performed in Bogotá, Colombia.

nia departments.

**Itinerary for repeat visitors:** For monkeys, pink dol-

phins and petroglyphs, head to Guaviare, an emerging tourist destination between the plains

and the Amazon. Experience a Colombian safari with giant anteaters and crocodiles, plus cowboy culture, in Casanare.

**Eat this:** Bandeja paisa, a traditional lunch of rice, beans, fried egg, avocado, pig belly, beef and chorizo; the Pacific and Andean cuisines in Popayan, UNESCO's first Creative City of Gastronomy; and West African-influenced dishes of the Palenque people in San Basilio de Palenque, the first free-slave town in the Americas.

**Reading list:** "My Cocaine Museum," by Michael Taussig; "Colombia a Comedy of Errors," by Victoria Kellaway and Sergio J. Lievano; "The Robber of Memories," by Michael Jacobs; and "Colombian Spanish: Phrases, Expressions and

Tips to Help You Speak Like a Local," by Peter Low.

**Playlist:** "Sunshine" (Alejo García & Elkin Robinson, from Providencia), "Mi medio queso de luna" (Cholo Valderama, from the Llanos), "Malvada" (Canalón De Timbiquí, from the Pacific) and "Dame la Mano Juanchito" (La Jagua, from the Pacific; Caribbean fusion).

**Cultural sensitivities:** Use the correct vowel: It's Colombia, not Columbia. Don't crack jokes about Pablo Escobar or drugs. The country wants to move past its dark history from the 1980s and '90s.

**Souvenirs:** Coffee; sombrero vueltiao, the palm hats that are a national symbol; and Wayuu bags, or mochilas, which are woven by women from the Wayuu tribe.

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