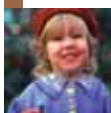


Québec

at a glance

Constance Lamoureux

Claude Bouchard



Québec 



Bombardier Transport

Québec's worldwide network



Three times the size of Spain.
Almost five times the size of Japan.
Larger than any American state.

Québec occupies a vast continental peninsula bordering the North Atlantic. Its landmass, half of which is covered with forest, covers close to 1.7 million square kilometres.

Dotted with a million lakes and rivers, Québec is bisected by the 1,200-kilometre-long St. Lawrence River. A hundred kilometres wide at its estuary, the St. Lawrence is one of North America's main rivers and among the world's largest inland waterways.

Area



C.Parent/P.Hurteau - TQ

Population

Québec is home to 7.5 million people, or close to a quarter of the Canadian population. It has a demographic density of 4.5 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Close to 80% of Quebecers live along the St. Lawrence River, in a continental-type temperate climate zone featuring four distinct seasons: a warm spring, hot summer, colourful fall and cold, snowy winter.

Just over 80,000 members of First Nations – ten Amerindian nations and one Inuit nation – account for approximately 1% of Québec's population.



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Did you know that . . . ?
Québec is the world's 18th largest state in terms of landmass.

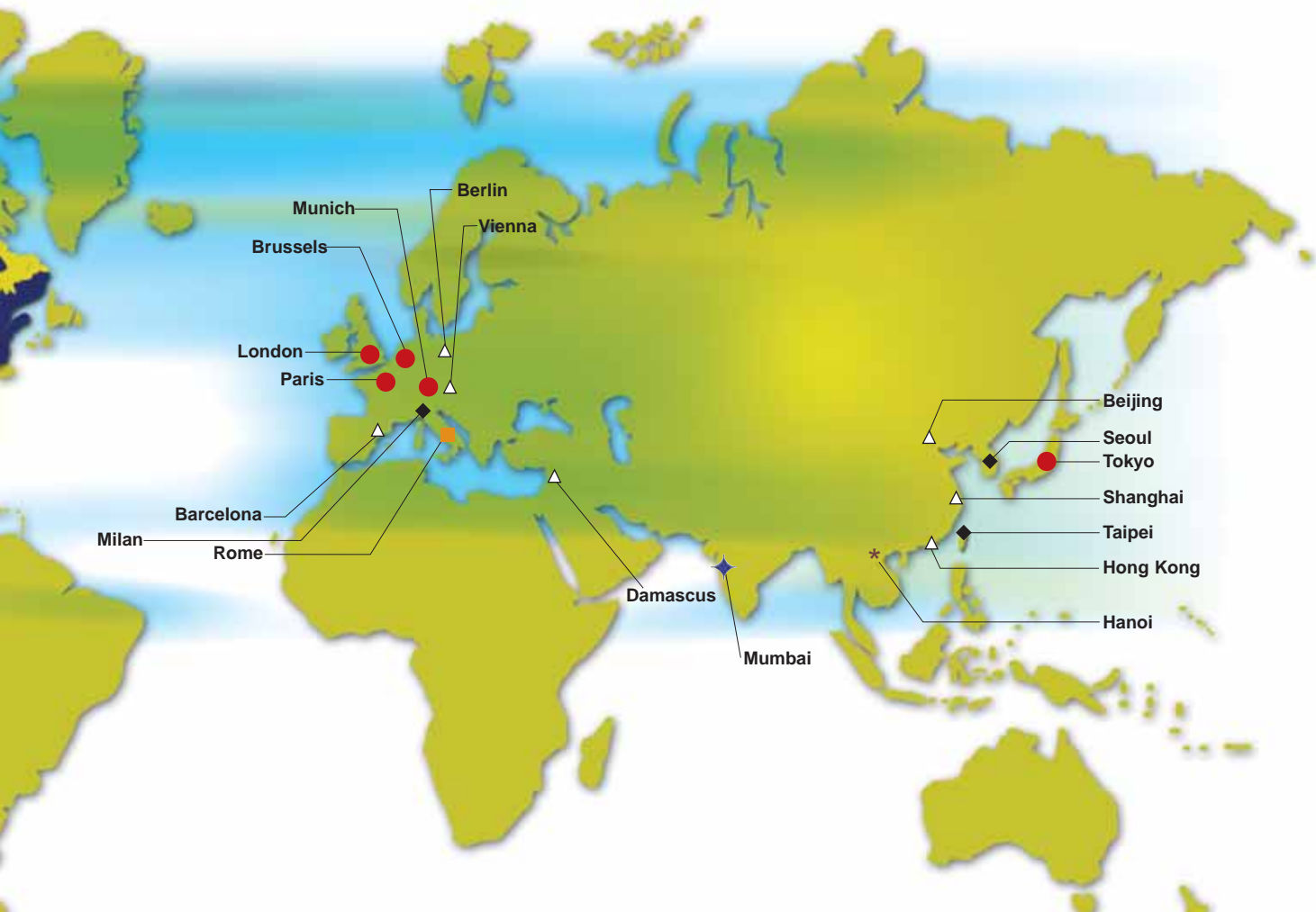


Did you know that . . . ?
Québec's fleur-de-lys flag was raised for the first time above the parliament building in Québec City on January 21, 1948.



Claire Mille

Did you know that . . . ?
Québec's national holiday is celebrated on June 24.



Language



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Québec is an overwhelmingly Francophone society and has made French its official language. French is thus the language used by the government and the normal and everyday language of work, education, communication, commerce and business.

The majority of Quebecers (83%) speak French at home, while 10% speak English and 6% speak another language. Over 40% of Quebecers speak both French and English.

Since the start of the 20th century, some 700,000 immigrants from Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia have put down new roots in Québec. Today, Québec welcomes an average of 35,000 newcomers every year. The resulting mix of cultures has changed the face of Québec society, particularly in Montréal, the largest French-speaking city in the Americas.



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Did you know that . . . ?

Québec has adopted legislation governing access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information.



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Did you know that . . . ?

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), young people in Québec are the most educated in North America and are among the best in the world in science and mathematics.

Québec is one of the ten provinces that make up the Canadian federation.

National Assembly

Created in 1792, the parliament of Québec is one of the oldest in the world. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly. Elected by universal suffrage, each of the National Assembly's 125 members represents an electoral riding. By tradition, the head of the political party that wins the most seats becomes Premier and forms a government.

A general election is held in Québec at least once every five years. Voters in each riding cast their ballot for the candidate of their choice, under what is often referred to as the "first-past-the-post" system. All Canadian citizens aged 18 and over who have lived in Québec for at least six months are entitled to vote.

Québec has adopted strict, progressive legislation in the area of political party funding. Only individuals are allowed to contribute financially to political parties, and their donations cannot exceed a maximum amount.

Current leaders of Québec political parties

Premier

Jean Charest
Québec Liberal Party



Jean Charest

Leader of the Official Opposition

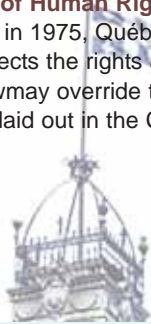
André Boisclair
Parti québécois

Leader of the third party with elected members

Mario Dumont
Action démocratique du Québec

Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms

Adopted in 1975, Québec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms asserts and protects the rights and freedoms of all people who live in Québec. No other law may override the fundamental rights, political rights and right to equality laid out in the Charter.



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Institutions

Health and social services



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Civil Code

The Civil Code of Québec, which is based on French law, governs civil rights, relations between citizens and property.

The other Canadian provinces are governed by common law in these areas. French-inspired private law and British-inspired public law coexist in Québec.

Universal and free

Québec's health and social services system is known for its extensive range of services, its accessibility and the fact that it is free of charge.

In addition to access to free hospital services, Quebecers can obtain free medical services in public and private clinics. Under a prescription drug insurance program introduced several years ago, all Quebecers enjoy basic coverage regardless of their income or state of health.

The infant mortality rate in Québec is 4.6 per 1,000 live births. Life expectancy at birth is 81.9 years for women and 76.3 years for men.



C.Parent/P.Hurteau - TQ

Did you know that . . . ?

The annual reviews of 200 cities by Mercer Human Resource Consulting consistently rank Montréal near the top in terms of quality of life.



FAPAQ

Did you know that . . . ?

Québec's emblems are the snowy owl, yellow birch and wild blue iris.



The first people arrived in what is now Québec about 10,000 years ago.

- 1534 Jacques Cartier lands at the eastern tip of Québec.
- 1608 Samuel de Champlain founds Québec City.
- 1642 Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve founds Ville-Marie, which later becomes Montréal.
- 1663 Louis XIV grants New France the status of royal province.
- 1701 The Great Peace of Montréal is signed with 39 First Nations.
- 1759 French troops are defeated in battle on the Plains of Abraham.
- 1763 The Treaty of Paris cedes New France to the English crown.
- 1774 The Québec Act allows citizens to practise the Catholic religion and use French and civil law in Québec.
- 1791 The Constitutional Act creates two provinces: Upper Canada and Lower Canada.
- 1840 The Act of Union unites Upper and Lower Canada into a single province called Canada.
- 1867 The British North America Act uniting the provinces of Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into a federation called Canada comes into force.
- 1940 Women win the right to vote in provincial elections.
- 1944 Hydro-Québec is created.
- 1960 The "Quiet Revolution," a period of major social reforms, begins.

History

- 1974 French is made the official language of Québec.
- 1980 In a referendum vote, Quebecers reject a proposal to negotiate sovereignty-association between Québec and the rest of Canada.
- 1982 The Government of Canada patriates the Canadian constitution from the United Kingdom without Québec's assent.
- 1992 The majority of voters in a referendum reject a proposal to reform the Canadian constitution.
- 1995 The majority of voters in a referendum reject a proposal for Québec sovereignty paired with an offer of a partnership with the rest of Canada.
- 2002 The Government of Québec and the Cree Nation sign the "Peace of the Brave."

Among world's top 20 according to OECD

A changing economy

Québec's economy has evolved considerably over the past few decades. Long known for its natural resources, Québec now boasts a service sector that accounts for over 70% of its gross domestic product.

High-tech industries are becoming increasingly bigger players, so much so that Montréal is ranked fourth among North America's major metropolitan areas in terms of jobs per capita in this sector.

Pharmaceutical industry

Québec is home to six of Canada's seven multinational pharmaceutical research centres, including facilities operated by Merck Frosst, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Wyeth, along with the Biotechnology Research Institute, Canada's biggest centre in this field. Montréal is ranked eighth among North America's major metropolitan areas in terms of jobs per capita in this sector.

Aerospace

Québec is ranked sixth in the world for the manufacture of aircraft, helicopters, satellites and aircraft components. The industry comprises some 260 companies, which export 80% of their production.



Economy





Information technology

Over 70% of the information technology sector's production is exported. A variety of software and multimedia firms are known for their creativity and expertise. Montréal is home to a critical mass of IT companies, including a number of leading manufacturing and research firms in the wireless telecommunications niche.

Natural resources

Québec is blessed with abundant and varied natural resources. Its huge forests cover close to half of its territory. Its lumber and pulp and paper industries are thus key players in the manufacturing sector. Québec is the world's leading exporter of newsprint.

Ranked third in the world for its mining potential, Québec is the world's fourth-largest aluminum producer and possesses 3% of the world's freshwater reserves. Its public power utility, Hydro-Québec, has world-renowned expertise in hydroelectric production and high-voltage power transmission.

An open economy

Québec exports 54% of its GDP, which totals CAN\$267 billion. Over 80% of its exports go to the United States. Thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Québec has easy access to over 400 million consumers, nearly 30% of whom are located within a 1,000 kilometre radius of Montréal.

Investissement Québec



Education



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Focus on innovation

The ever-growing share of Québec's GDP devoted to R&D is higher than the OECD, G8 and European Union averages.

A competitive economy

Corporate set-up and operating costs in Québec are among the lowest in the industrialized world, and Québec's tax system is competitive. Québec's other comparative advantages include a low cost of living, a high quality of life, a highly qualified and educated labour force and excellent universities and research centres.

Tourism

Québec is an increasingly popular international tourist destination, thanks in particular to its rich history, varied geography, beautiful landscapes, Montréal's lively cultural scene, the charm of Old Québec and its many festivals. In 1985, the historic area of Québec City – the only fortified city north of Mexico – became the first urban area in North America to be added to UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List.

Accessible education

Close to 40% of Quebecers between the ages of 25 and 64 have studied at the postsecondary level – one of the highest rates in the world according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Québec is one of the societies that invests the most in education. Its system is made up of public and private institutions. In the public sector, education is free through to the end of secondary school, while tuition fees for postsecondary and university studies are the lowest in Canada and the United States.

© Aerial Hoop - Costume: Françoise Barbeau -
Photo: Al Seb - Cirque du Soleil Inc.



Work by Jean-Paul Riopelle, L'Homage à Rosa Luxemburg (detail), 1992 © Succession Jean-Paul Riopelle/SODRAC (2006) - Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec - Photo: Kedi

Culture

A bridge between Europe and the Americas

Québec society, which draws inspiration from both European and Anglo/American culture, is known for its artistic vitality and remarkable creative potential.

Overwhelmingly French-speaking and proud of their creative talent, Quebecers have built an original and dynamic culture that is both open and inclusive. Accessible to all and permeable to upcoming generations and their aspirations, this culture is one of the cornerstones of the population's identity.

Culture, communications and the arts are key aspects of Québec's economy, generating over 175,000 direct jobs and accounting for over CAN\$12 billion of the province's GDP. Thanks to the excellence of Québec productions, many Québec artists and performers are extremely successful internationally. Québec's high-profile "cultural ambassadors" include Céline Dion, Cirque du Soleil, Robert Lepage, Denys

Arcand, Michel Tremblay, Nicole Brossard, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Les Violons du Roy, La La La Human Steps and Leonard Cohen.

Firmly convinced that states and governments have to retain the right to adopt cultural policies and measures, the Government of Québec vigorously defends cultural diversity around the world. Indeed, Québec was the first government to ratify UNESCO's Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions.

