



## Travel Information for September 2008 R8 Committee in Québec City

**Currency:** The Canadian Dollar is currently close in value to the US Dollar. Canadian bank note denominations are similar to the US Dollar ones, but each value is colour coded for easier recognition rather than all being a shade of green. Available for 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 dollars. Coins are similar to US ones in size and appearance, except that there is an 11-sided \$1 coin called a Loonie (because a design from 1987 has a picture of a loon bird) and a \$2 coin called a Toonie.



**Language:** Canada is officially bi-lingual, but in Québec Province, the French language dominates. There are some differences in vocabulary and pronunciation compared to the French heard in Paris, the local dialect being called 'joual'. For example, instead of "Quelle heure est-il?" you may hear "Y'est quelle heure?"

**Hotels:** The three recommended hotels for the IEEE meeting participants are:

**Hilton Québec**, 1100 Boulevard René Lévesque Est, ☎: (418) 647 2477 (connected directly to Québec City Convention Centre at 1000 René Lévesque Est)

**Loews Le Concorde**, 1225 Cours de General de Montcalm, ☎: (418) 647 2222  
0.4 km walk to Convention Centre and Hilton

**Château Laurier**, 1220 Place George V Ouest, ☎: (800) 463 4453  
0.3 km walk to Convention Centre and Hilton.

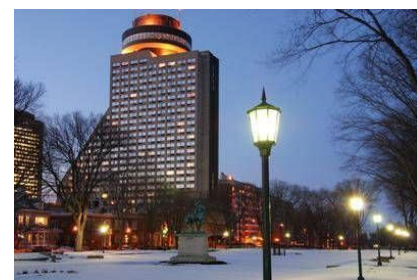
Le Concorde and Château Laurier are next to the "Plains of Abraham" and Battlefields Park (*Parc des Champs-de-Bataille*).



Château Laurier



Hilton Québec



Loews Le Concorde

**Travel from the Québec City Airport:** The airport (Jean Lesage International Airport, code YQB) has been refurbished for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Québec City. There are few direct international flights, and international connections are dominated by Air Canada, with stops via Ottawa, Toronto or Montréal. Free wi-fi access is provided throughout the terminal building. It is ~20 km West of the city.

There is *no* public transportation to the city and *no* hotel buses or other shuttle buses. Taxi fares to the city are fixed at \$30 - but caution is advisable as with all taxis. Car Rental might be worth considering for a group of several people if you expect to do also do some travel outside Québec City, but bear in mind that the downtown hotels generally do not provide free parking for their guests.

If you expect to arrive very late, you might consider staying overnight at an airport hotel, and travelling in to the city early the following morning. For example, the Super 8 Airport Motel charges about \$125 CAN + tax per night.

**Montréal Airport:** There are far more international flights to Montréal (Pierre Elliott Trudeau international airport, code YUL), than to YQB, and this may therefore be a better choice from some places, either because of lower price or more convenience.

From Montréal Airport, there are some buses (Orleans Express, phone 1-888-999-3977, toll free in Canada) to Québec City. One way fare from airport is ~\$47 and return fare ~\$76, and journey time 4¼ hours. Tickets can be purchased from L'Aerobus counter in the airport. (Alternatively, it is said that the Orleans Express Company will sell you one of their old buses for about \$250000.)

Orleans Express Bus departure times to Québec City: 1100, 1400, 1700, 2000, 2130.

The buses all go via Montréal Downtown, from where there is a more frequent service to Québec City (at least every hour) with a one way fare of \$46, taking 3¼ hours. To get to the Montréal downtown departure place (Station Centrale d'autobus de Montréal) the local service of L'Aerobus may be used (bus every half hour, journey time half an hour, fare ~\$12). Note that all these fares are subject to an additional tax of 12.5%

There is also a good train service from Montréal to Québec City, with a 24 hour free bus shuttle to the VIA Rail station.

#204 Est bus from the airport goes to the bus-transfer station '*Gare de Dorval*' train station, where #211 Est bus takes you to the metro station Lionel-Groulx for metro trains to downtown Montréal. This is the cheapest route to downtown.

An advantage of both bus and train travel from Montréal is that they will take you to downtown Québec City and you will save the \$30 taxi fare from Québec City airport, so that will be a kind of discount on the bus or train fare.

The Trudeau international airport is at Dorval and was formerly called Dorval airport. It is on the Montréal island (*Île de Montréal*) in the St. Lawrence river (*Fleuve Saint Laurent*), and so is closer to Montréal than the newer Montréal Mirabel international airport (which was a failure and was abandoned for scheduled flights in 1997).

**Trains and long distance buses** arrive in the same part of Québec City (*Rue de la Gare du Palais*). The Rail Station is designated a "heritage railway station" because of its architectural and historical significance. It is about 1 km from the Québec Hilton hotel.

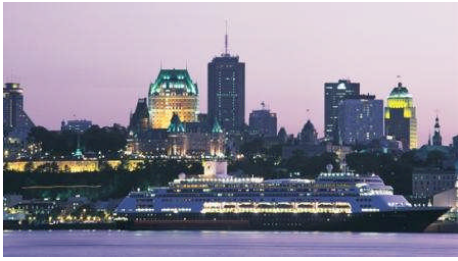
**Taxis** within the City should charge \$3.15 plus \$1.30 per km.

**Local Québec City public transport:** City buses require either a pre-paid ticket (\$2.35) or exact cash fare (\$2.50) to the driver per trip. [\$1.60 for Seniors (Aîné), 65 years of age or more]. Pre-purchased tickets are obtainable from news-stands and stores. Free transfers from driver if you need to change bus. Bus stops list the route numbers. A one-day bus pass costs \$6.15, and can be used for two people on Saturdays and Sundays. Look out for the 10-seater electric Écolobus, small enough to travel the narrow streets of the old town (see picture on next page).

**Services:** Tipping practice follows USA practice – e.g. ~15% expected in restaurants. Likewise, the mains supply is 110 V, 60 Hz, with the same plug designs as in USA.

Québec City is in the Eastern time zone (as for New York). Canada generally uses the metric system.

It is no longer possible for individual tourists visiting Canada to reclaim GST (Goods and Services Tax) paid on goods and accommodation on departure from Canada (Visitor Rebate Program) – this concession was removed in September 2006 by a change in the Federal law.



City skyline



Écolobus

**The City:** Québec City is celebrating its 400<sup>th</sup> year, considered to be founded by the explorer Samuel de Champlain. The name is derived from 'kebec', an Algonquian word, meaning a place where the river is narrow. There are said to be 11,000 hotel rooms in the city, but probably they will mostly be full, and the prices of most things will be increased because of the extra tourists.

'Vieux-Québec' is the only walled city in North America, and is the oldest except for Mexico City. It is dominated by the Château Frontenac with its green copper roof. Its name is from the Comte de Frontenac, who was responsible for the fortification of Québec City. This building is a luxury hotel, built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century for the Canadian Pacific Railway – but if you choose to stay there, be aware that the R8 Treasurer will NOT reimburse your costs! Expect a typical room cost to be ~\$500 per night.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Québec was the home of rich merchants dealing in the fur trade – who were often in conflict with the religious leadership because of their local power and influence. This was part of a French colony called New France, for which France claimed territory from Newfoundland to the Gulf of Mexico. Canada's greatest battle took place in 1759, between the French forces under Marquis de Montcalm and the British Forces under General James Wolfe. The battle took place on the Plains of Abraham (Heights of Abraham) above Québec City. There is no connection with the biblical Abraham, the place is called after a local person called Abraham Martin, who was a pilot on the river in ~1620. There was a large loss of life on both sides, both Montcalm and Wolfe were killed, and the battle led to the British taking control, agreed at the 1763 Treaty of Paris. It is said that Madame de Pompadour considered that this was no loss to France because she could still buy Canadian Furs.

The motto '*Je me souviens*' is on the car number plates of Québec Province, and has many possible interpretations.



Château Frontenac







- Hilton Québec*
- Château Laurier*
- Loews Le Concorde*
- Convention Centre (Centre des congrès de Québec)*
- Delta (overflow hotel for days the others are overbooked)*

*Logo of the 400 year anniversary :*



*Tony Davies*