



fall cruising

by Janice Mucalov

A HISTORIC EASTERN CANADA CRUISE

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Sidewalk cafés serve tourtière (pork pies) and little bakeries sell bevertail-shaped pastries smothered with maple syrup. Horse-drawn carriages clip-clop past stately heritage homes on cobblestone streets. And musicians serenade passersby in quaint squares crammed with art galleries, boutiques and bistros.

Welcome to Québec City, capital of the French-speaking Canadian province of Quebec, where the charming Old City is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of only two urban UNESCO sites in North America; the other is Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

Both are visited by Holland America Line's New England and Eastern Canada cruises, usually on 7-night trips between Boston and Montreal, but longer itineraries are offered from May to October.

Autumn is witness to brilliant fall foliage—when the leaves of poplars, birches and maple trees burst into brilliant hues of pumpkin orange and gold and ruby red.

Two ships sail this route—the new 2,104-passenger *Eurodam*, and the classic 1,258 passenger *Maasdam*.

After leaving Boston on the *Maasdam*, our first stop was Bar Harbor, Maine. My husband and I biked “carriage trails” in nearby Acadia National Park on crushed-stone roads built in the 1900s by John D. Rockefeller Jr. Horse-drawn carriages carried visitors summering in the beautiful large mansions scattered about Bar Harbor.

Today, roads skirt serene lakes and wind through long stretches of woodland. Half the trees in Acadia National Park are deciduous (beech, oak, aspen and maple), and in fall, the leaves are ablaze in fiery colors.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, we visited Lunenburg. Established by the British in 1753, the colonial settlement became a famous fishing and shipbuilding port, and its Bluenose schooner reigned as the fastest sailing vessel in the Atlantic between 1921

and 1936. We strolled leafy streets rimmed with 18th- and 19th-century wooden houses, gaily painted in rainbow colors.

We relaxed onboard at our third port-of-call in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, the home of “Anne of Green Gables” author Lucy Maud, lured us ashore again. Visiting the green-and-white farmhouse that inspired the fictional Green Gables House is a popular excursion. Or you can stroll the seafront boardwalk to Government House, built in 1834, for a free tour of antique-filled rooms. A black-and-white photo in one room shows delegates from the colonies meeting in the house to sign the 1864 Confederation agreement that gave birth to Canada.

Next was Québec City, rated as one of the top cruise ports in the world.

Step off the ship and you're smack-dab in the historic section. Visitors can photograph 400-year-old buildings, take afternoon tea in the turreted castle-like Chateau Frontenac, visit the Museum of Civilization, browse North America's oldest shopping street (Rue Petit-Champlain), and sample local cassis and ice-wines on the little Island of Orleans.

We disembarked in Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world after Paris. There's plenty to explore here too—the grand Notre Dame Basilica (site of singer Celine Dion's wedding), espresso bars, the botanical gardens, and lively “Little Italy.”

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