

## **“The World’s Coolest Carnival, Quebec”**

### **Ride the Rails Through Canada!**

**Feb 3-9, 2020**

*All Aboard, AFSers - Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec City await you! Talk about a unique and exciting winter vacay! Come join the fun festivities of the World’s Largest Winter Festival - attracting global visitors since 1894. Our totally new adventure starts in the regal capital of Ottawa, traversing via train to stylish Montreal with all things French and ending in the fairytale setting of Quebec City. Amid sparkling snowscapes and shimmering ice, Canadians celebrate winter best with heated outdoor venues and creative snow activities that are simply delightful.*

*Seeking fun? This visit to our northern neighbors is packed with special activities. Quebec’s Carnival de Quebec has huge outdoor events with vibrant fireworks, parades, concerts, crazy contests and insane ice sculptures. There’s horse drawn sleigh rides, snow baths, igloos, snow bikes, ice slides, BBQ in the Frost Garden, the Royal Court, Ice Village, and even snow zorbing! Enjoy cocktails in North America’s only ice hotel. Sample Canadian delicacies that will knock your wooly socks off. Maple syrup flows like champagne! Your best photos will be dogsledding behind our huskies and of sculptures at the International Ice Carving Competition!*

*There’s so much more that will give you chills. You’ll love touring historic old towns in 2 provinces. In Ottawa, taste your way through the incredible Byward Market and skate on the famous Rideau Canal. Charming French-speaking Montreal will have you convinced you are really in France. Tour the Notre Dame Basilica, Mount Royal and stroll the elegant boulevards or cobblestoned streets. Enjoy a Culinary Walking Tour in the eclectic and trendy Mile End neighborhood. Stunning Quebec City is a UNESCO site on its own. Shop... or snack your way along St. Paul Street and dive into the exciting nightlife of the province of Quebec. French Canadians can rival Europeans when it comes to partying, so be prepared!*

*We have an expert your director with us throughout to let us know what’s hot and what’s not. Our chariot on this adventure is the Canada’s VIA railway, speeding across the snow-covered landscape and allowing us to take in so much in this short amount of time. You’ll love our fine hotels – in the center of everything! Be sure to visit Canada’s new Thermal Spas that are popping up everywhere!*

*Understand that Canada is never cheap, but we’ve squeezed maple syrup from our Canadian team, to make this affordable for you with all entrance fees included. It’s the best value price you’ll find. For 2020 travelers, cool Canada is a HOT destination. And so easy for us to reach. So near, so exciting, and it won’t come round again. #FOMO Together, let’s celebrate the world’s largest winter carnival for a vacation beyond imagination.*

## **Our Glorious AFS Itinerary (Detailed Trip Tips coming soon)**

### **Day 1 - Mon, Feb. 3, 2020 Welcome to Ontario, Canada! D**

You'll arrive to Ottawa on your own and make your way to our fabulous hotel, the Radisson (402 Queen Street). Located on the bustling Parliament Hill, we are right in the heart of the city. You'll have free time in the afternoon to explore this stunning and vibrant city. Our tour manager will direct us on where to go. We will head to the nearby Byward Market, one of Canada's oldest and largest public markets Chockfull of shopping, restaurants and activities, the massive historic Marché (remember Canada has is dual language) stretches for blocks. Talk about sensory overload! There is craft stalls, artisan food stands, hip shops, farmers market, cool rustic taverns, even a spa. Sample the maple taffy and chocolates, Canadian cheeses and ice wines. This is Ottawa's #1 tourist attraction for 193 years.

In the evening, we'll celebrate with a Welcome Dinner at Tucker's Marketplace. A Canadian institution, Tucker's is known for its all-you-can-eat buffet with specialties from all around the world.

Overnight: Radisson (2 nights at the Raddison you'll love the heated indoor pool and high speed WiFi)

### **Day 2 - Tues, Feb. 4, 2020 - Ottawa Tour B**

We get to know this Canadian Capital with a city tour. Founded in 1826 when the Rideau Canal was inaugurated, Ottawa has been the political epicenter of the country since 1857. Visit Parliament hill, the Prime Minister's residence, the residence of the Governor General of Canada, the Ottawa locks and much more! The beautiful Rideau Canal is a true highlight and this time of year it is even more so because it is frozen over, making it the largest skateway in the world! Almost 5 miles of length, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll have some free time for lunch on our own downtown before heading to the Canadian Museum of History. It is self-guided so take your time to stroll through this modern museum devoted to the history of Canada from the prehistoric times on the continent to the modern era.

Your evening is free to enjoy Ottawa on your own. From comedy clubs to microbreweries to jazz clubs, there is plenty to do. Lace up your rental skates and lets join the locals for ice skating on the famous Canal Rideau.

Overnight: Radisson (2 nights)

### **Day 3 - Wed, Feb. 5, 2020 All Aboard to Montreal, Quebec! B**

If you are a fan of architecture, gastronomy and history – this is your place! Our VIA train adventure begins in the morning as we head to Montreal. Arrive in Montreal midday and we'll have time to grab some lunch on our own at the Montreal Central Station before we begin our City Tour.

Montreal is the second most populated French-speaking city in the world after Paris and is the financial capital of the province of Quebec. The original French architecture is very much evident, especially in the historic neighborhoods. We visit Mount Royal, the ancient volcano at the heart of the city and then explore the shrine which is the Saint-Joseph Oratory. Have your mind blown at the famed shopping Mecca that is the underground city and visit the Olympic Stadium built for the Summer Olympics of 1976!

The best part is we are staying in charming Old Montreal at the Place d'Armes Hotel. It's so close to everything, including the massive gothic Notre-Dame-de-Montreal Basilica where we will take a self-guided tour. The hotel is also near Montreal's Old Port on the St. Lawrence Seaway. It's a perfect location for you to spend your free evening and discover just how magical Montreal is by night. Remember, too, that Montreal is home to the celebrated "Just for Laughs" festival in the summer so comedy reigns king here and comedy clubs are a fun evening option.

Overnight: Place d'Armes Hotel (2 nights – lucks boutique hotel in the heart of old Montreal is award-winning with its Rain Spa)

#### **Day 4 - Thurs, Feb. 6, 2020 - Food Tour of Montreal    B L**

You'll be given a 1-day unlimited pass for public transport at the beginning of the day and be prepared to make the most of it! Montreal is an island and the modern mass transit system is the perfect way to explore. We'll use it to head to the Plateau Mont-Royal for a guided tour. Once on the Plateau, we begin a Culinary Walking Tour in the area known as the Mile-End, considered Canada's most creative neighborhood. Here you find two completely different worlds living in parallel - the traditional Jewish culture and a growing presence of young hipsters drawn to the trendy, artsy vibe and multicultural roots. Our tour will take us to a half a dozen stops with food from almost any ethnicity imaginable. The eclectic Mile End neighborhood is just one of the reasons know why Montreal is a foodie's paradise. In the afternoon, take advantage of your transport pass to explore Montreal on your own. The Jardin Botanique de Montreal (Botanical Garden) is spectacular at any time of year. There are countless museums including specialties such as the Greven Wax Museum or a museum dedicated to Barbie! Or you can make your way to Rue de Saint Denis, lined by an array of bars and restaurants

Overnight: Place d'Armes Hotel (2 nights)

#### **Day 5 - Fri, Feb. 7, 2020 - Quebec City    B D**

All aboard in the morning for spectacular Quebec City, Canada's only walled city, arriving at midday. Historic Quebec City is enchanting and becomes even more so as the whole city comes alive with *Carnaval de Québec*. We'll be right in the middle of the celebration! Lunch is on your own in the picturesque Old Port along historic St. Paul Street. St. Paul is home to art galleries, historical monuments and countless restaurants offering various types of cuisine and now all decorated for the festivities. Old Quebec is a UNESCO World Heritage site and we'll be staying at its heart at the Delta Hotel. Nearby are the National Assembly of Quebec, the Tourny Fountain and the famous Frontenac Castle, the most photographed hotel in the world. Free time to shop. Old Town is bursting with unique shops and specialty products.

In late afternoon we take a guided tour of the stunning Hotel de Glace of Québec! Each year, a new ice hotel is built with a new design. It is only open in the winter and every year it has a different design with as many as 50 rooms as well as a chapel for weddings. Admire the ice sculptures and sip a cocktail in the iconic ice glasses.

We wrap the day with a Quebecois tradition - dinner in a local Sugar Shack complete with music, dance and a sweet menu featuring traditional maple ham and sausages, chicken, and yummy maple syrup crepes for dessert.

Overnight: Delta Hotel (2 nights)

### **Day 6 - SAT, Feb. 8, 2020 - Quebec Winter Carnival B**

Today is a free day to take in all that is available with the Quebec Winter Carnival. A yearly celebration in Quebec City since 1894, the Winter Carnival is the biggest and oldest winter carnival in the world! The city is filled with winter enthusiasts ready to celebrate the snowy season. Go sledding, snowshoeing, or zorbing. Take in the amazing ice carving competition and the Ice Palace. And of course sample the foods and drinks that have become winter carnival staples, like poutine, a Beavertail Pastry, maple taffy or the liquor drink Caribou. Take advantage of our optional dogsledding excursion...mush! Celebrate winter behind a team of huskies that whisk you across gorgeous landscape, you'll get great pictures of this Nordic pleasure (85\$).

At the end of the day is the not-to-be-missed parade!!! The streets of the Old City come alive our last night of our tour with the Carnival's celebrated parade. The energy hits a crescendo as musicians, cirquesters and many more perform along the route through these sparkling historic streets. We'll be dancing in the streets right along with them in this colorful celebration.

Overnight: Delta Hotel (2 nights)

### **Day 7 - SUN, Feb. 9, 2020 - Back to US B**

After breakfast it's time to say goodbye to this charming northern city and winter wonderland. We head to the airport with memories of a trip well never forget.