

Fall Colors & More

- **Timeframe:** September 17 to October 19, 2019
- **Duration:** 33 days

Magnificent days filled with colors so vibrant ...it's breathtaking.

The northern winds are beckoning, and this caravan answers the call with a breathtaking fall sojourn! Unlike the birds trekking south for the winter, legions of Texas southerners are northward bound, seeking a kind respite from the heat that overstayed its welcome at home and a glimpse of the awe-inspiring sights of nature's autumn transformation. And, none are quite as spectacular as those found along our northern states and those of our bordering Canadian neighbor. Join our Fall Colors & More Tour for an uplifting excursion to the nature-blessed northern U.S. states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York, along with the natural splendor of Ontario and Quebec.

Our autumn pilgrimage begins in Stowe, Vermont, where we settle into a campsite nestled in the beautiful foothills of the Green Mountains. There, the Get Acquainted Party and Orientation gives us all a chance to eat, meet and greet our fellow adventurers before setting off to satiate our visual appetites, too, with some of Vermont's most scenic locations. We begin with a drive through Smuggler's Notch, and later, a Montpelier City Motorcoach Tour, with stops at the State Capitol Building, Ziemke Glassblowing Studio, and Morse Farm Sugar Works. Also on the agenda during our stay are visits to both the Cabot Cheese Annex and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory for an opportunity to sample some goods!

We set off on the second leg of its Vermont stop on another scenic ride to nearby Shelburne, a suburb of Burlington and the largest city in the state. Located along the shores of Lake Champlain, the picturesque town is proud of its awe-inspiring natural surroundings and touts its concentrated focus on ecological preservation with pride. These efforts take center-stage at Shelburne Farms, a National Historic Landmark, and one of our first stops. The non-profit and self-sustaining farm is dedicated to teaching sustainability to its hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. It is located on 1,400-acres of opulent forests, grasslands, and a mesmerizing backdrop, courtesy of the majestic Green Mountains.

The Shelburne Museum, another highlight, is a sight to behold in and of itself. Centrally located on its own 45 acres of lush greenery, pristine gardens, and landscaped grounds, it boasts 38 exhibition buildings, 25 of which are declared historical buildings in their own right. Relocated far and wide from their original sites onto museum grounds, these historical landmarks now house one of the finest museum collections of art, design, and Americana in the nation. The SS Ticonderoga, which also calls the Shelburne Museum home, is the nation's last remaining side-paddle-wheel passenger steamboat. Entering the grand vessel takes us back to a time long since over. Whispers of its storied history heard in every step, all while its interior splendor is

displayed in a showcase of restored rich woods, opulent details, and even some of its original furniture.

This is not over, yet. Not by a longshot. Touring stops at the Lake Champlain Chocolate Factory and the popular Teddy Bear Factory are also on the itinerary, along with a relaxing Sunset Dinner Cruise on Lake Champlain on the Spirit of Ethan Allen III rounding out our already robust agenda. Our visit to the gorgeous state of Vermont would not be complete without a stop to see the World's Tallest File Cabinet. If you doubt it, you surely haven't seen it! This roadside monolith and curiosity sitting in a weedy field in Burlington's South End, is a staple of the Blue Mountain State's folklore and cultural oddities. You will be surprised to learn of the uniquely unexpected history and hidden meaning of this pseudo government monument! Then, it's onward and upward we go, north of the Canadian border to make our way to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

This time, we hang our hats in the lap of luxury at the 5-star campground in St-Mathieu-de-Beloil, Montérégie, just 20 minutes from the hustle and bustle Montreal. Travelers from one extreme to the other share one thing in common here, an absolute love and appreciation for the breath-catching natural beauty of the colorful fall surroundings.

In the next few days, an impressive exploration of the vivacious and culturally eclectic Montreal awaits us. The tour covers a litany of sights and attractions the city is famous for, and a few surprises, too. Named after the mountain it is located on, Mount Royal Park is considered one of Montreal's largest green spaces, containing a virtual kaleidoscope of nature's colors and countless outdoor activities. Later, we pay a visit to Canada's largest church and national shrine, Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal. This Roman Catholic minor basilica boasts a historically diverse architecture; and its opulently grand church organ, considered to be among the top ten of the world's most prestigious, is a must-see. Mont Royal's most breathtaking surprise, however, is revealed once you make it to the top, its panoramic view of the city below, where we spend the next hour or two trying to coax ourselves back down and onward to the next experience.

Montreal's Biodome reveals first-hand why it is a nature-lover's dream. This man-made ecological wonder combines the features of an indoor zoo, an aquarium, and a botanical garden to recreate the varying eco systems of the America's. Each showcases the animals, botanical elements, as well as the climate conditions indigenous to a particular area, within the exhibit's enclosed space. Visitors are virtually transported to experience these differing regions first-hand. It is the only place in the world where each of our four seasons are actually replicated in enclosed areas, all under one roof. We also explore the five eco-systems on permanent display, including the Tropical Rainforests of the Americas, Laurentian Maple Forest, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Sub-Arctic Labrador Coast, and the Sub-Antarctic Islands. Rounding our Montreal experience are visits to the Olympic Tower, the tallest inclined tower in the world and a guided Montreal City Motorcoach Tour. Lastly and mostly, we head off on a virtual time-travel experience to discover the history of Old Montreal.

We need but to scratch the surface of Old Montreal to unearth its old world charm. With its old, narrow, winding streets, and historic buildings from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, it is like

stepping back into the era of its founding in 1642. Situated between the St. Lawrence River and the looming skyscrapers of downtown Montreal, the Historic City Centre, offers an abundance of activities for visitors, tourists and residents alike. Museums, art galleries, boutiques, restaurants and sidewalk cafes are found at every turn, all furtive tell-tale signs of our current modern age. Best explored on foot, its must-see historic sites, streets, and landmarks include the luminescence of the Notre-Dame Basilica, and a guided tour of Point-à-Callière, the “cradle of Montreal city”, where the Musee d’archeologie et d’histoire presents the city’s historical founding by way of a trip underground to view the remains that document the 1642 event. We then reluctantly bid farewell to Montreal for the yet undiscovered adventure of Quebec City.

The capital of Quebec Province awaits us as we head along the scenic route of the St. Lawrence River. As we find ourselves slowly immersed in surroundings reminiscent of Europe’s 17th century, we realize that we have arrived. And, exploring Old Quebec City is first on our short-list of must-do’s. Considered the crown jewel of French Canada, the area is unlike any other. We wander through its narrow cobbled streets, and like a time passage, we are led onto the streets of an old European city. Passing the 17th and 18th century houses is a veritable lesson in history, and its quaint park displaying a collection of 18th century canons and a 17th century plaza, only reinforce the feeling. Old Quebec City offers many other attractions worthy of more than a glance, including the shops along Rue St-Jean, the rich, green knolls found in the Plains of Abraham, as well as the Victorian waterfront. But, it is the Fortifications of Quebec, the pristinely kept walls that surround Upper Town, that resonate history. It is the only remaining walled city in our Northern American continent, and has deservedly been recognized as an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

As a key feature, the well-known Notre Dame Basilica does not escape our wonder while in Old Montreal. The historic site, known as Ville-Marie when it was founded in 1642, had its first wooden chapel on the site of today’s archaeological museum. We learn the varied history of this famous basilica, its transformation from a small chapel to the grand church structure we know today, to why its location was changed, and how its architecture continuously transformed through the years from its 17th century Baroque style to its Gothic Revival style in the 19th century. We also learn of the fire that ravaged parts of the church in the 20th century and about its consequent and most recent renovation. The stop at Notre Dame Basilica with its storied history and spectacular structure does not disappoint.

Just a short drive from Old Quebec city sits the Beaufort Coast, a history-rich region offering an abundance of activities and places to visit. The region’s attractions include museums, bike paths, waterfalls, spas, golf courses, hiking trails, a gourmet route laden with wonderful restaurants and eateries, and hotels, cottages, and beds-and-breakfasts, an abundance of choices for where to rest a weary head after a long day traversing the city.

In the heart of the shopping district and adjacent to an artisan’s market, the Notre Dame Cathedral regally looms for all to see. Its ecclesiastical architecture displays heavy accents of old Europe, and its spectacular interior is one of ornate detail, showcasing gold leafing, intricate golden statues, a chancel lamp, paintings, and stained glass. The beauty of Montmorency Falls also impresses. This natural wonder sits 30 m higher than Niagara Falls and offers gondola rides, hiking circuits and zip-lining. Other activities scheduled in enchanting

Quebec City include a guided Quebec Motorcoach Tour and a visit to Albert Giles Copper Works, also, the “place of miracles” Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre Shrine, with its awe-inspiring stained-glass windows and works of art on display for everyone.

*An excursion of the Isle of Orleans concludes our trajectory in Quebec City. The island, seemingly frozen in time, portrays, still, the pristine beauty of Quebec’s 19th century countryside. Visiting the historic farms, churches, and heritage homes peppered along its landscape, is like stepping into van Gogh’s *A Meadow in the Mountains*, serenely beautiful. And, the idyllic time languishes as we make our way through villages, visiting the farm stalls and artisan displays lined along the route. The island also offers freshly baked bread, wines, ice ciders, blackcurrant liqueurs, and, when in season, its famous apples and strawberries are also a must to experience.*

After bidding a sad farewell to Quebec City, we’ve come full circle as we surround ourselves with the splendor of the state of New Hampshire, once again. Our return to the Blue Mountain state is action-and-fun-packed with an array of activities and scenic sites, like exploring the diverse beauty of its White Mountains region. We stop in enchanting Littleton to take in some spectacular sites, and lovely precursor for lies ahead. We make it to the Mt. Washington’s Grand Hotel, where a lovely luncheon welcomes us, effectively replenishing our much needed energy resources for the following Cog Railway Trip up Mt. Washington, the range’s highest and most majestic mountain.

There is a lot to see while in the White Mountains region, including Cannon Mountain in Franconia National Park, where we hop an aerial gondola ride up to its summit and back. We also make our way to the base of Mt. Liberty, where there is no rushing through our tour of the Flume Gorge. Here, we make our way along a natural chasm by way of wide gravel paths and wooden walkways through covered bridges, past scenic pools and breathtaking mountain views lining the 800 ft. long gorge. It is a stunning sight, with its walls of granite towering to heights of 70 to 90 feet, and its expanse disturbed only by the gorgeous waterfalls, glacial boulders, and forest foliage.

We set our feet once again onto terra firma in the quaint community of Sugar Hill where a visit to the Sugar Hill Sampler & Family Museum and another to Harman’s Famous Cheese & Country Store is on the agenda for some small town fun facts and more delectable sampling. And, before our days in the area come to an end, we are off to visit the Rocks Christmas Tree Farm in Bath, NH, before heading upward, toward the clouds.

A visit to the Castle in the Clouds is a capstone destination on our itinerary. The 16-room mansion sits on 5,500 acres of mountaintop real estate in Moultonborough, NH. The tree-lined road to the carriage house, found just inside the entrance to the estate, is serene and secluded, and a short walk from a gorgeous waterfall. Once at the carriage house, which houses both the restaurant and art gallery, it is a short trolley ride to the castle itself, which is a splendid sight. Manicured lawns and voluptuous gardens extend the expanse of the mansions site, and inside it offers a breathtaking view of Lake Winnepesaukee and the Ossipee Mountains from its various balconies and verandas. Guests are welcomed to tour de mansion independently, with most every room open for exploration.

Horseback riding, a popular activity with guests, is also available, along with guided trail rides, pony rides, and rides on horse-drawn carriages. But, it is the 28-mile network of hiking trails that attracts most, because once you enter, the natural beauty contained within seems to draw you deeper and deeper into its fold. Waterfalls of varying sizes, rich, lush trees and foliage, as well as boulders and the trails themselves can be found at every turn. It is truly a tour of fantastic proportions.

We begin the last week in Cooperstown, New York, where we get our sports on at the Baseball Hall of Fame, where we find player biographies, historical stats and records on display, and memorabilia from our favorite players throughout the year. Additional stops at the Farmers Museum and Fennimore Art Museum are on the agenda, too, before we head out again. This time we head to Corning for a couple of relaxing days, featuring a guided tour of Corning Glass Works, the Glenn Curtiss Museum, and a little chance to whet our whistles at the Pleasant Valley Winery for a tour and some sampling!

Alas, all good things must come to an end, as our final destination together leads us to Niagara Falls, Ontario. We say goodbye to relaxation for the next few days to get our fill of everything Niagara before heading home. Itinerary highlights include two exciting days of Motorcoach tours which include stops at some of the most popular attractions in the area, including the beautiful Horseshoe Falls, a Journey Behind the Falls, followed by a Horn-blower Niagara Cruise, a visit to the Upper Niagara River and Control Dam, a stop at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and a tour of Welland Canal Locks. We also hop on an exciting Incline Railway Ride before taking in a visit to Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, and hopping on a People Mover Niagara Falls Bus Tour, featuring stops at the Butterfly Conservatory, the Floral Clock and Pickard's Peanuts, and the list actually goes on.

This four-week adventure finally comes to a close, and to mark the occasion, we gather for a Farewell Dinner Party at the Skylon Revolving Tower. At the restaurant, which overlooks the majesty of Niagara Falls, we dine, drink, and start the reminiscing before calling it a night for a well-deserved rest. In the morning we bid our farewells over a continental breakfast, hitch-up the RV's and head for... home, sweet home.

Itinerary

Stowe, VT

- Get Acquainted Party & Orientation
 - Welcome Lunch at Sunset Grille
 - Scenic Drive thru Smuggler's Notch
 - Montpelier City Motor Coach Tour
 - Morse Farm Sugar Works Tour
- Day 1 - 4**
- State Capitol Building
 - Lunch at Local Restaurant
 - Rock of Ages Tour
 - Cold Hollow Cider Mill Tour
 - Ziemke Glassblowing Studio
 - Cabot Cheese Annex (samples & tastings)

- Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory Tour (Includes Samples)

Shelburne, VT

- Echo Lake Aquarium
- Lake Champlain Chocolate Tour
- See the World's Tallest File Cabinet
- Teddy Bear Factory Tour
- Shelburne Museum Tour
- SS *Ticonderoga* Tour
- Shelburne Farms Tour
- Wagon Ride at Shelburne Farms
- Sunset Dinner Cruise aboard the *Spirit of Ethan Allen III on Lake Champlain*

Day 5 - 8

St. Mathieu de Beloeil, Quebec

- Olympic Tower Visit (Tallest Inclined Tower in World)
- Biodome Visit
- St. Joseph's Oratory
- The Islands & Old Montreal
- Mount Royal
- The Biosphere (Photo Op)
- Notre Dame Basilica
- Guided Point-a-Calliere Tour
- Guided Montreal City Motor Coach Tour

Day 9 - 11

Ste-Foy, QC

- Guided Quebec Motor Coach Tour
- Old Quebec City & North America's Only Walled City
- Notre Dame Cathedral
- Majestic Beupre Coast
- Montmorency Falls
- Lunch at Montmorency Falls Restaurant
- Albert Giles Copper Works
- Sainte-Anne Beupre Basilica
- Isle of Orleans
- Dinner at Ciel Bistro Bar (Voted Best Revolving Restaurant)

Day 12 - 14

Twin Mountains, NH

- Visit Littleton, NH
- Tour & Luncheon at the Mt. Washington Grand Hotel
- Cog Railway Trip up Mt. Washington
- Aerial Gondola Ride to Top of Cannon Mountain
- The Flume Gorge
- Breakfast at Polly's Pancake Parlor
- Sugar Hill Sampler & Family Museum
- Harman's Famous Cheese & Country Store
- Visit Bath, NH
- The Rocks Christmas Tree Farm

Day 15 - 18

Glen, NH

- **First Class Domed Scenic Railroad Ride**

Day 19 - 21

– through Crawford Notch & White Mountains (includes lunch)

Ashland, NH

- Guided Squam Lake Boat Cruise
- *(From the Movie ‘On Golden Pond’)*
- Day 22 - 24 ● Lunch at ‘Walter’s Basin’ Restaurant
- Squam Lakes Natural Science Center Tour
- Castle In The Clouds

Cooperstown, NY

- Day 25 - 27 ● Baseball Hall of Fame
- Farmers Museum
- Fenimore Art Museum

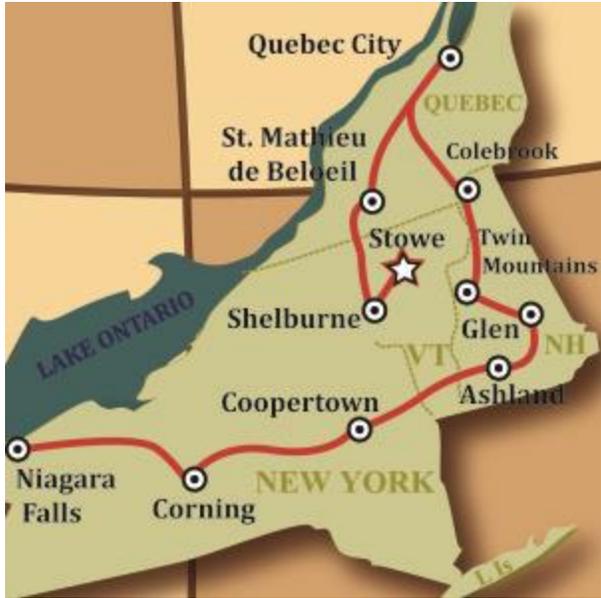
Corning, NY

- Day 28 - 29 ● Guided Corning Glass Works Guided Tour
- Glenn Curtiss Museum
- Pleasant Valley Winery Tour & Tasting

Niagara Falls, ON

- Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show
- Guided Niagara Falls Area Motor Coach Tour
- Upper Niagara River & Control Dam
- Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre
- Niagara-on-the- Lake
- Wine Tasting at Local Winery
- Pickard’s Peanuts
- Welland Canal Locks Tour
- Day 30 - 33 ● People Mover Niagara Falls Bus Tour
- Butterfly Conservatory
- Floral Clock
- White Water Walk
- Horseshoe Falls
- **Hornblower Niagara Cruise**
- Journey Behind the Falls
- Incline Railway Ride
- Skylon Revolving Tower Farewell Dinner Party
- Hitch-up Continental Breakfast
- Hugs & Good-byes

Tour Route





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