



The Long Way Round

The sea touches much of Canada: the cities and villages — Montreal, Quebec City, Halifax, Argentina, St. John's, Port-Menier, the Magdalens, Joe Batt's Arm, Churchill, Tuktoyaktuk, Victoria and Vancouver; the royal islands — Prince Edward, the Queen Elizabeths, King William, Prince Patrick and the Queen Charlottes; and the pebble beaches, ice cliffs, coastal hills and rain forests.

A coast is seldom the shortest line between two points. Along the Atlantic there isn't a straight fifty miles from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, around New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the islands to the coast of Labrador. From Hudson Strait west to Mackenzie Bay is 2,100 miles, but the corresponding Arctic coast, in and around the bays and islands, is 37,000 miles long. The Pacific coast, from the Alaska Panhandle to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is just over 500 miles as the tern flies, but with dips, straits, capes and estuaries, it is ten times that.

Below we take a quick trip all the way around, from the bottom of Quebec to the bottom of British Columbia. Let us begin.

Top cover: Jacques Cartier arriving at Stadacona (Quebec City) in 1535. Bottom cover: Hearst Village, Nova Scotia. Page two: Fishermen cleaning the day's catch at Indian Harbour, Nova Scotia.

[MONTREAL]

In terms of the richness and variety of cosmopolitan life, Montreal is perhaps the second city of North America. At its founding in 1642, Father Vimont compared it to a grain of mustard seed. It has grown to a city of three million people and is bursting with productivity. It is first of all an ocean port, although it is 17 metres (58 feet) above the sea and a thousand miles from the Atlantic. It ships more wheat than any other port (23,000,000 bushels can be held in its elevators), and icebreakers keep its St. Lawrence channel open even when ice encases its wharves.

Montreal's modern core of magnificent hotels, halls and office buildings reaches deep in the earth, and on the lower floors the shops, theatres and restaurants are linked by underground promenades and the blue enamel, rubber-tired cars of the Metro.

Around the shining new buildings are old ones, seventeenth century walls and eighteenth century churches, great restaurants and huge markets with loaves of crusty bread, herbs, vegetables, fruits and seafood — clams, mussels, crabs, langouste, octopus, squid, red snapper, cod, salmon, dorée, char, sardines, perch and herring.