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Travel

FOOD FINDS

Montreal, the ultimate food lovers' town

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NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Classic Poutine here has a wide variety of add-ons.

Mark Twain referred to Montreal as a city “where you couldn’t throw a brick without breaking a church window.” These days, that brick would hit a terrific place to eat. With so many intersecting culinary cultures — French, English, Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Irish, and more — and an emphasis on fresh, local

ingredients, Montreal is the ultimate food lovers' town.

Start your day at **Le Gros Jambon**, a retro diner at the edge of the Old Port district where it's hard to resist the fist-sized glazed doughnuts. Comfort food is the overarching theme here with several varieties of "macaroni au fromage," hot dogs, lobster rolls, and burgers with foie gras. (\$7-\$18, 286 Notre-Dame West, 514-508-3872, www.legrosjambon.com)

Have it your way at **Poutine-ville** where they serve this classic dish (french fries topped with cheese curd and brown gravy) with a seemingly endless variety of add-ons and sauces including mushrooms, grilled zucchini, braised beef, three-pepper sauce and, yes, corn dogs. (\$7-\$16, 1365 Ontario East, 514-419-5444, www.poutineville.com)

Sometimes the hype is right. At the acclaimed **Joe Beef** the focus is on Canadian food made with local ingredients served in a casual, welcoming, boisterous environment. If you can't get a reservation, try to squeeze in next door at sister restaurant **Liverpool House**. (\$31-\$50, 2491 Notre Dame West, 514-935-6504, www.joebeef.ca)

Located in the exhibition level of the the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, **Bistro Le Contemporain** serves experimental dishes that sound precious but are surprisingly tasty. After gobbling low-temperature trout confit with herb sponge cake, yogurt, and mujjol caviar, one diner commented: "It may be the best thing I've ever eaten, and I eat all the time." (\$15-\$25, 185 Sainte-Catherine West, 514-847-6900, www.macm.org/en/general-information/restaurant)