

Guide to Montreal's Outdoor Recreation Clubs In Winter! *Tips for finding great clubs and joining in!*

Immerse yourself in nature, culture and language!

What follows is a list of several “multi-activity” outdoor recreation clubs, groups and online forums in Montreal that offer winter activities. Snowshoeing, skiing or skating (or hiking, cycling, camping, canoeing, kayaking) with a group is a great way to meet people, discover the landscapes of Quebec, have fun and even practice your second language! Some of these clubs offer incredible opportunities to immerse yourself in Quebec culture and practice your French. Other clubs have members from around the world, which means you’ll meet a very diverse crowd, and be able to practice French, English and many other languages. Enjoy!

Alpine Club of Canada, Montreal Chapter

Highlights: This is one of the oldest outdoor clubs in Canada! The club organizes mountain activities such as hiking, climbing, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing. It owns land and a hut in Keene in the Adirondacks (New York).

Organizers help set up carpooling.

Membership: You must become a member to participate in the outings. See <http://dev.accmontreal.ca/>.

Membership includes insurance. You’re welcome to attend a social activity before becoming an official member, to learn more about the club.

Main Language: The website is in French and English. The activities are often run in French.

Bougex - an online outdoor recreation forum

Highlights: Members organize hundreds of activities using this important outdoor recreation website as a platform.

Membership: Become a member for free at www.bougex.com. The next step is to read through the event announcements, sign up and contact others if you need to carpool.

What to Know: Typically, activities are organized by volunteer members. Each activity is organized differently depending on the member. Don’t hesitate to ask questions to make sure you’ve understood the important details about an outing. Wait until you’ve participated a few times before organizing an outing yourself. Carpooling is not always organized.

Main Language: French

Club de montagne le Canadien

Highlights: The club was founded in 1949 by a French climber. The club offers mountain activities such as hiking, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing, as well as trail maintenance. Volunteer organizers help set up carpooling.

Membership: You must become a member to participate in the outings -

<http://www.clubmontagnecanadien.qc.ca/>.

What to Know: To participate in the backcountry ski outings, you will need to have strong skiing skills.

Main Language: French

Club de plein air Les Aventuriers

Highlights: This truly 4-seasons club organizes many trips per year, including canoe-camping, hiking, biking, kayaking, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing. The organizers help set up carpooling.

Membership: Register at <http://www.aventuriers.qc.ca/>, which includes membership in a outdoor federation that provides insurance. An information evening is held for prospective new members each spring and is announced on the website. Non-members can participate in an easy hike to learn more about the club.

What to Know: To participate in canoe trips with this club, you must first attend an introductory course in calm water and on the river. Courses are held each spring. You can often find paddling partners willing to share their canoe, but many people find it more convenient to buy a canoe to participate regularly in the canoe trips.

Main Language: French

Concordia Outdoors Club

Highlights: This club organises many different affordable activities outside of Montreal, with transportation by bus.

Membership: There is no membership fee and activities are open to non-students. Overnight outings are restricted to participants ages 18 and over. To participate, reserve and pay via the link announced through the club's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/concordiaoutdoors/>.

What to Know: The club's website describes how the activities work - <https://www.concordiaoutdoorsclub.com/>

Main Language: English

Intercultural Outdoor Recreation Program

Highlights: This innovative program aims to bring Montrealers from near and far through friendly outdoor activities. It also aims to make traditional Quebec outdoor recreation accessible to new immigrants. Introductory outdoor courses are organized often. Carpooling is organized. Most often, gear is provided.

Membership: This Intercultural Outdoor Recreation program is part of the Milton Park Recreation Association, a not-for-profit community centre. Become a member when you register for your first activity. Register at www.miltonpark.org, 3555 St. Urbain or 514.872.0566. There is typically a fee to participate in activities, often with a sliding scale for low-income newcomers to Canada.

What to Know: See www.pleinairinterculturel.com for a list of activities. Sign up for a free e-newsletter about accessible outdoor recreation.

Main Language: French and English, with some outings organized as outdoor language exchanges.

McGill Outdoors Club

Highlights: Established in 1936, this club is one of the oldest in Montreal. This McGill University club is open to all and offers a variety of activities. The club owns a house in Prévost in the Laurentians, and offers outdoor equipment rental at a low cost.

Membership: To become a member, see <http://www.mcgilloutdoorsclub.ca/>. To learn more about the club, non-members may attend weekly planning meetings. The club offers a weekend for new members at the beginning of the fall, but you can join at any time. You must be a member to participate in official trips organized by the executive committee of the club and to rent equipment. Otherwise, all other activities are open to the public.

What to Know: Sign up for the free e-mail list and you'll get daily invitations to outings.

Main language: English.

Montreal Field Naturalists Club

Highlights: This small outdoor club was founded in the 1970s and offers many easy and intermediate-level outings. The club offers hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, nature observation, presentations, etc. The organizers make a special effort to make new people feel welcome.

Membership: The club encourages prospective members to come try it out first. Please see <http://montrealfieldnaturalists.wordpress.com/> to register or have a look at the list of outings.

Main language: English

Montreal Outdoor Adventure Club Meetup Group (and other Meetup Groups)

Highlights: Dozens of outdoor groups are appearing on Meetup! This dynamic group organizes many ambitious hikes in the Adirondacks in the United States and elsewhere. The group also offers canoeing, kayaking, camping, biking, skiing and snowshoeing.

Membership: Register for free and become a member of Meetup, where you'll find all sorts of interesting groups – www.meetup.com. Search by geography and keyword. For this particular group, visit <http://www.meetup.com/MOACMONTREAL/> and join, and then sign up for specific activities.

What to Know: Each Meetup Group is different. For this one, activities fill up very quickly, so it is best to sign up early. If you need to change your plans, be sure to update your status as soon as possible. It's always worth it to get on the waiting list, because everyone on the list is notified as soon as a spot becomes available, no matter how far down the list you are.

Main Language: Each Meetup Group varies. For this particular group, the events are listed in English. The outings are held in French and English.

Naturafond

Highlights : This group organises cross-country skiing and snowshoeing outings most weekends, outside of Montreal. They rent a bus and can usually pick people up at metro Angrignon.

Membership : Typically, people become a member, and then register for individual outings - <http://www.naturafond.ca/>. It is possible to participate at the last minute as a non-member, but it's more expensive.

What to Know : You'll need to bring your own skis or snowshoes, although usually it will be possible to rent onsite. There is sometimes a beginner ski course organised early in the winter

Main Language: French

Randonnée aventure

Highlights: This outdoor club was established in 1986 by a group of newcomers from various European countries! The club offers many outings by bus from Montreal to beautiful ski resorts, and to go snowshoeing, hiking and biking. The organizers create small sub-groups corresponding to various skill levels. This club's nickname is the "friendly club"!

Membership: Visit www.randonnee.ca to become a member. It is possible to do a trial outing without becoming a member. Additional fees per outing are used to pay bus transportation and trail fees at parks or ski resorts.

What to Know: Typically, you must bring your own skis or snowshoes to outings. Sometimes it is possible to rent on site. Be prepared to ski or hike all day. You should already know how to ski.

Main Language: Most information about outings is in English and French. During the outings, the language depends on the organizers.

Triplevé, a small outdoor recreation company

Highlights: This is a small local business with a friendly, club-like atmosphere. Triplevé organizes carpooling, reserves sites and plans outings. It features particularly interesting and unusual destinations. Triplevé offers outings and/or courses for canoeing, cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, etc.

Membership: There is no membership fee. There is a reasonable fee per outing. Visit www.tripleve.com for information and to sign up for the mailing list.

What to Know: Triplevé can give you advice and help out if you don't have your own tent, sleeping bag, skis, etc. Meals are often organized as a group, and everyone helps out.

Main language: French.

University Downhill Ski and Snowboard Clubs

Highlights: Typically, university ski clubs are open to non-students. Most are quite affordable compared to other options, and prices include a seat on a bus and a lift ticket.

Membership: Each club is different, but many require that you first become a member, and then register for individual outings. List of clubs - Club de ski snow de l'université de Montréal : <http://www.csum.ca/>

The Students Society of McGill University Ski & Snowboard Club: www.ssmuski.com/

Concordia Ski & Snowboard Club: <https://www.concordiass.club/>

Main languages: French (Université de Montréal) and English (Concordia and McGill)

Even more outdoor clubs!

There are also outdoor clubs associated with specific communities:

Les chèvres de montagne (for women): <http://www.leschevresdemontagne.com/>

Plein air hors sentiers (mostly for gay men): <http://www.horssentiers.ca/>

Have a great time exploring the outdoors and our many amazing clubs!

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