

CHECKING IN

SAVE OR SPLURGE AT TREMBLANT DURING SUMMER



ROCHELLE LASH

Save or splurge?

Les Suites Tremblant encompasses a variety of condos, hotel rooms and mountain chalets for all styles and price points.

Here are the ingredients for slopeside Tremblant two ways, low budget and high budget. Both options are strategically located for a summer full of sporting and cultural events, plus the buzz of activities and the charm of the colourful village that hugs the mountain's base.

Tremblant's Gondola Express restarts May 21 as the mountain resort gears up for its warm-weather season.

Low budget: The condos at Place St-Bernard, at the heart of the Tremblant slopeside village, offer lots of bang for the buck, including free lodging for children 17 and under who stay with their parents. A minute's walk from the Gondola Express, Place St-Bernard's hotel rooms and one-, two- and three-bedroom getaways are spread over two adjacent buildings, Le Deslauriers and Le Johannsen, on top of sports shops such as Oakley and Salomon.

The accommodations have attractive, functional decor with fireplaces, and guests have access to the indoor water park, Aquacub La Source. The condos all have full kitchens, but are also steps away from casual eating-out options such as Coco Pazzo, Pizzeria, Le Shack and the new Louis Laurent, which serves bistro food and gourmet-to-go.

High budget: Joe Bondurant Ryan, the U.S. railway heir and mining prospector who founded Tremblant in the 1930s, liked to live large, so the deluxe Bondurant development is well-named.

Almost adjacent to Place St-Bernard, the Bondurant has handsome two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. With views of either Mont Tremblant or tiny

Mirror Lake, these are among the most posh accommodations on the resort.

Bondurant has a four-season outdoor hot tub, designer kitchens and richly furnished living rooms with stone fireplaces. Guests can use the year-round outdoor heated pool at Le Westin Resort & Spa, just steps away. **Free at Tremblant:** Guests at Bondurant and Place St-Bernard, as well as many other slopeside hotels, get a major bonus until Oct. 16: free rides on the gondola to the summit.

The resort village will present more than 100 shows for both kids and adults covering the pop and classical spectrum, all at no charge, including Tremblant International Blues Festival, July 8-17; Rythmes Tremblant, July 22-31; and Fête de la Musique, Sept. 2-5. You can chill on a deck chair in front of the stage — no charge for this seat — or grab a beer and a burger for about \$20 at Fat Mardi's, Le Shack or La Diable Microbrewery, which all have terraces.

Throughout summer, children's entertainers — mascots, buskers and the adorable costumed characters of Bestibuzz — will stroll the village. If you like games, there is a human-scale circuit of snakes and ladders on the plaza near the Lolë shop, which also holds free yoga sessions and other fitness classes on many mornings.

On July 1, Tremblant's Canada Day adds more concerts, plus a parade and fireworks.

Want to watch other people sweat? Thousands of elite athletes from more than 30 countries will compete in Ironman, cycling, mountain biking and marathon events from May to August.

If you prefer to do it yourself, the scenic Tremblant recreation and cycling path runs for eight kilometres through the forest and along the Rivière Diable to Tremblant Village, where it links with the Linear Parc of the P'tit Train du Nord.

Or, if you're into heart-thumping cardio, you can hike up several paths to Tremblant's summit. The activity centre and informa-



The slopeside condos at the Bondurant are among the most luxurious at the Tremblant resort, with views of either Mont Tremblant or tiny Mirror Lake. TREMBLANT



The hotel rooms and suites at Place St-Bernard, at the heart of Tremblant's mountain resort, are well-priced and practical. TREMBLANT

tion desks have maps, and the trails, straight up or winding, run between 2.5 and six km.

Not free, but fun: At the Beach and Tennis Club on Lac Tremblant, the access fee of \$16 (or \$6/\$12 for children) buys lake swimming, the beach, sun chairs and volleyball, but there are extra charges for tennis and rentals of canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, pontoon boats and motorized craft.

Life in the fast lane at Tremblant resort features Ziptrek Eco-tours, an aerial adventure high above the treetops — sometimes as high as a 25-storey building and zipping as fast as 100 km/h,

although few people will reach those extremes. (The circuit of five ziplines, with short, guided nature hikes in between each, costs \$119 for ages 15 and over, or \$99 for ages 7 to 14, and 65 and over.)

There is more speed at the 1.4-km luge course that uses the Flying Mile ski lift to go up, and a twisting track to slide down (\$13 per ride).

On the tamer side, Tremblant Gourmand, Sept. 10-18, will pair food experiences with the great outdoors. The festival runs workshops by celebrity chefs and kiosks of artisan foods, with a modest charge for tastings.

IF YOU GO

Tremblant, lodging and activities: 888-738-1777, 514-764-7546, tremblant.ca. Prices are approximate and fluctuate according to date and availability.

Place St-Bernard/Les Suites Tremblant: including the Gondola Express and Aqua Source, a sample rate. Sun.-Thurs., for four people in a one-bedroom condo, starts at \$176 (or \$44 p.p.), per night; or for six people in a two-bedroom condo, rates start at \$264 (or \$44 p.p.). Hotel rooms are available, as well. Rates increase on weekends. Free parking outdoors at P1, P2, P3 (except during some large events); indoors, \$15.

Bondurant/Les Suites Tremblant: for six people in a two-bedroom unit, rates start at \$408 per night (or \$68 p.p.), Sun.-Thurs., including Gondola Express, Le Westin pool/hot tub, and one indoor parking space.

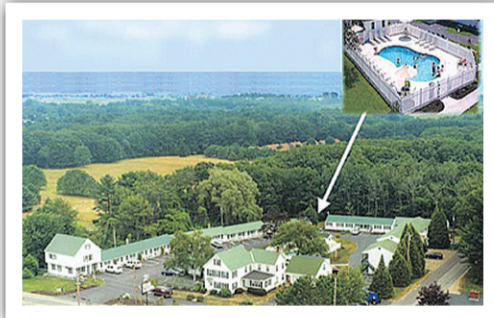
Tremblant resorts add a three-per-cent fee, before taxes, to support free entertainment and other ventures.

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