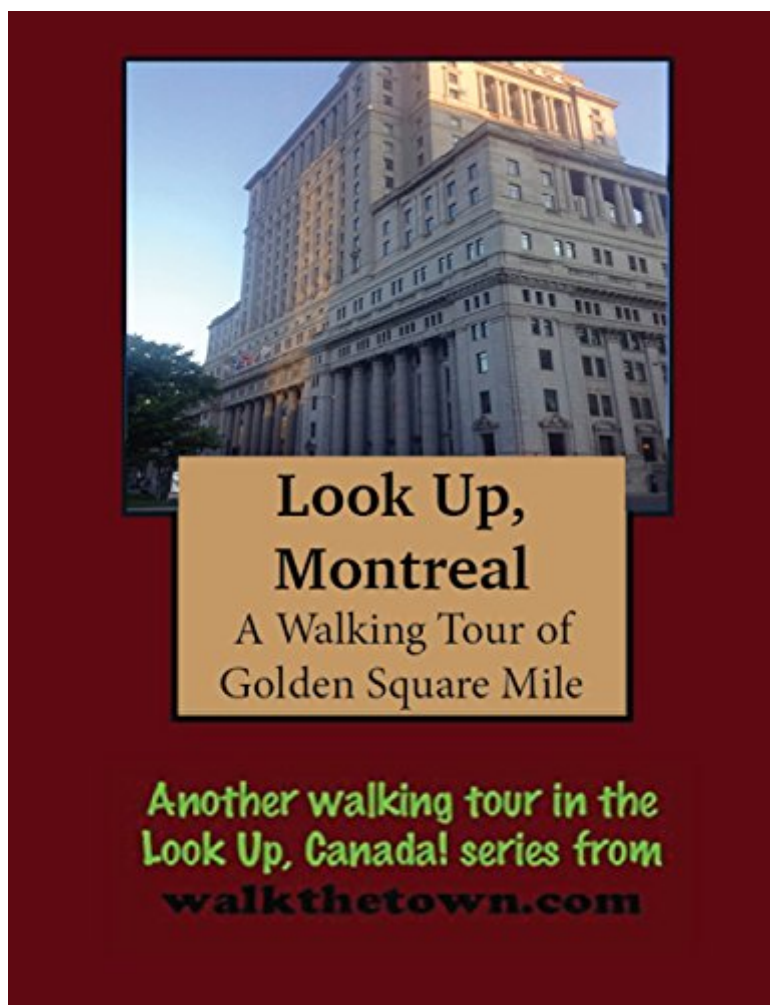


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A Walking Tour Of Montreal - Golden Square Mile



Synopsis

There is no better way to see Canada than on foot. And there is no better way to appreciate what you are looking at than with a walking tour. Whether you are preparing for a road trip or just out to look at your own town in a new way, a downloadable walking tour from walkthetown.com is ready to explore when you are. Each walking tour describes historical and architectural landmarks and provides pictures to help out when those pesky street addresses are missing. Every tour also includes a quick primer on identifying architectural styles seen on North American streets. This is all you need to know about how important St. Catherine Street is - when the Montreal Canadians win the Stanley Cup, as they have done more than any other National Hockey League franchise, this is the street the team uses for its parade route. The emergence of St. Catherine Street can be more or less traced back to 1891 and a decision by Henry Morgan to move the city center and away from the financial houses of Old Montreal. In short order six large department stores had lined up along St. Catherine Street and Montreal had a retail artery the equal of any town in North America. The move coincided with the development of new transportation options as the city began to spread out. Many of Canada's business and industrial leaders settled nearby under the slopes of Mount Royal that came to be known as the Golden Square Mile. It was said that 70% of all the wealth in Canada could be found behind the gates of the resplendent mansions on the blocks on either side of Sherbrooke Street. A Who's Who of North American architects was busy on residential commissions and on retail work two blocks south on St. Catherine Street. But times change. There was a Great Depression, a major world war and shifting attitudes. In 1977 the passage of the Charter of the French Language made French the mandatory language when dealing with companies with French-speaking staff. Many English-oriented businesses decamped from Montreal to Toronto. It was the culmination of an era that saw the decline of Anglo-Canadian influence in the province. Those elegant mansions were regarded as a nagging symbol of decades of French Canadian oppression and the wrecking balls flew with abandon. These days only a fraction of the opulence of the Golden Square Mile remains, almost nothing south of Sherbrooke Street. In the place of the historic mansions are mostly faceless steel and concrete high rise towers. The Canadians have not paraded down St. Catherine Street since 1993 and probably would not recognize much of what they would ride past today. We will take a look along St. Catherine Street and Sherbrooke Street and see what heritage buildings still stand and we will begin our explorations where Henry Morgan set up shop 125 years ago...

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