

The New York State capital of Albany represents a quick and easy getaway for Montrealers

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ALBANY- I have been to the city of Albany, New York many times. In January 2020, I made my last visit there just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which put a pause on travel. Returning again more recently, I was reminded of why I like the state capital so much. In particular, I was fortunate to have a great place to stay.

WHERE TO STAY

One of the bonuses of a visit to Albany is the ability to visit some American stores not available to us here in Canada. Therefore, it was convenient that the Residence Inn Albany Washington Avenue Extension was just adjacent to the Crossgates Mall. The Residence Inn is an extended-stay hotel, which is also just minutes from the Albany International Airport, the Empire State Plaza, and more. It also under 30 minutes by car from the Saratoga Racetrack and the Global Foundries.

Staying at the Residence Inn feels like being at home, while still enjoying some excellent hotel services. You can choose between studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom suites, with the suites providing enough space for a full kitchen and separate areas where one can relax, work, and sleep. My family and I enjoyed the two-bedroom and two bathroom suite, which were incredibly spacious.

Hotel amenities include free WiFi, daily hot breakfast, coffee and tea. There is also an indoor pool and hot tub, a fitness centre, a small convenience shop and a laundry room. The lobby is quite nice with a large amount of seating, including a nice outdoor space to relax when the weather is appropriate.

The hotel is completely accessible, with elevators, a self-operating lift, and a sloped entry into the swimming pool. Service animals are always welcome. Accessibility features available to guests upon request include adjustable height hand-held shower wands, alarm clock telephone ringers, bathtub grab



Winter fun is alive in Albany.

rails, a bathtub seat, closed caption TV, flashing door knockers, hearing accessible rooms, and lowered electrical outlets and deadbolts. Some of the bathrooms also contain non-slip grab rails and roll-in showers.

The hotel is located at 124 Washington Avenue Extension. For more information, you can call 518-218-7240 or log onto the hotel website: <http://www.marriott.com/albwa>.

Albany truly is a great place to shop, with a wide array of stores for all to enjoy. While we stayed close to the Crossgates Mall, it was also a quick and easy drive to the nearby Colonie Center as well. The majority of entrances at both malls are ADA accessible with ample parking distributed throughout. Wheelchair rentals are also available.

Crossgates Mall has been labeled as the largest shopping, dining and entertainment destination

in New York's Capital Region. It offers over 10 different entertainment experiences, providing something for every age group. Younger children and families don't have to shop – they can bowl their hearts out, play the newest video arcade games, see an IMAX movie, or go down some colourful indoor slides. Crossgates offers dining options to suit any taste, including 12 sit-down restaurants, 11 food court options, two fast-casual eateries, and 16 snack spots.

Colonie Center, a 1.3 million square-foot enclosed two-level, regional shopping center with over 100 specialty stores, is at the heart of New York's Capital Region. The centre is anchored by a three-level Macy's, Boscov's and Sears. Colonie Center features popular retailers such as The Gap, New York & Company, Bath and Body Works, Kay Jewelers, American Eagle, Victoria's Secret, Sephora, and Barnes & Noble. The center boasts the only Cheesecake Factory Restaurant and P.F. Chang's China Bistro in the capital region and a state-of-the-art all-digital Regal Cinema with a newly renovated RPX theater. Additional sit-down eateries include Five Guys Burgers & Fries and Moe's Southwest Grill, as well as the second-level food court. The center sits at the intersection of Wolf Road and Central Avenue, is just 5 minutes from the Albany International Airport, and is accessible from Interstates 87 and 90.

NEIGHBOURING TOWNS AND ATTRACTIONS

Albany lies at the foot of the Adirondacks and Catskill Mountains and is at the tip of the historic Hudson Valley Region. Within a short ride are the neighboring towns of Cooperstown and Saratoga Springs. Albany is home to several museums, historic homes, and outdoor activities such as boating, skiing, biking, and snowshoeing. Sights to consider exploring include the Million Dollar Staircase, the "Egg" at the Empire State Plaza, and more. Albany is also less than three hours from New York and Boston, if you're looking to add more stops to your trip.

For more details go to <https://www.albany.org>



Empire State Plaza in Albany.