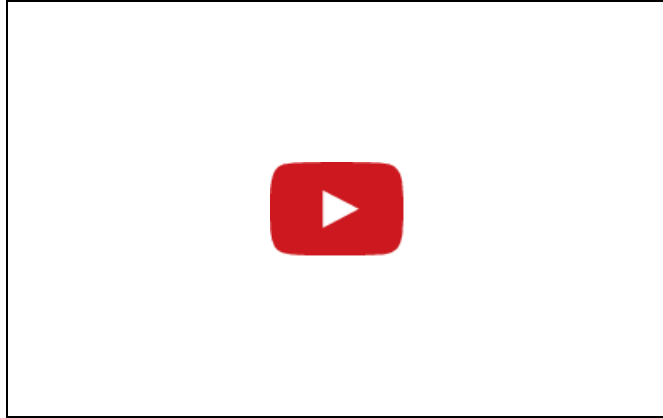




THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

Iles de la Madeleine

This archipelago in the St Lawrence is Quebec's best-kept secret. A chain of islands, surrounded by soft beach in every direction, windswept grassland, red cliffs, and bright-painted clapboard houses with massive fairway-cut lawns. Blustering wind have turned the island into global destination for windsports, with shallow lagoons providing ideal conditions for kitesurfing and kite buggies. Seafood is abundant – smoked, pickled, grilled, poached – and seal is still on the menu too. There's a postcard view around every corner.



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Length of Trip : 5-7 Days

Cost : Ranges depending on choice of accommodation and meals.

Best time to go : June to September

Wheelchair friendly : Yes

Family friendly : Yes

Where to eat : Check out the smoked herring, seal and island treats and the traditional smokehouses at Le Fumoir d'Antan. A popular local hangout is the [À l'Abri de la Tempête microbrewery](#). Using local ingredients like wildflowers, algae and fresh herbs, they craft some impressive brews! I had a memorable meal in the dining room of [Auberge chez Denis à François](#) in Havre-sur-Mer. [La table des Roy](#) is a high-end, award-winning restaurant renowned for mixing local ingredients with Asian and classic French influences. Less pricey [Le Sablier](#) is a sea-front restaurant on Havre-aux-Maisons, serving up traditional Quebecois coastal fare like classic lobster pot. If you're self-catering, pick up Magdalen Islands lobster for bargain prices at the local wharves. Cheese lovers will find the two raw cheeses at [Fromagerie du Pied-de-Vent](#) well worth travelling for.

Official Site : <http://www.tourismeilesdelamadeleine.com/en/>

Where to Stay : Situated at the east end of the islands in the village of Grande Entrée, the 26-room [La Salicorne Auberge](#) offers family, romance and culinary packages, arranging a variety of tours around the area. Alternatively look into [Château Madelinot](#) and their sister property [Auberge Madeli](#). For something a little more homely, [Auberge chez Denis à François](#) has 10 cozy rooms close to the beach in Havre-Aubert. In Havre-sur-Mer, check out [Auberge Sympathique](#)

Getting There : During summer, you can get to the islands with daily flights from Montreal, Quebec City and Gaspé. They are also accessible via a [5-hour scenic ferry from Souris](#), Prince Edward Island. You could also look into a [CTMA cruise that leaves Montreal](#), sailing up the St Lawrence with your own cabin, gourmet meals and shows and bars. Once you're on the island, various companies offer car, bicycle and motorbike rentals. Route 199 is the main artery connecting the inhabited islands.

Note from Robin : Don't be alarmed to find seal on the menu, it's very much part of the island's culinary tradition. [Cave bashing with La Salicorne](#) is probably the wildest natural ocean experience I've encountered anywhere!

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