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CANADA'S

BEST ISLAND

GETAWAYS

SUMMER 2017
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9 SUPER SUMMER HOT SPOTS

including an exclusive
photo essay on

HAIDA GWAI

CELEBRATING
First Nations **CULTURE**
near **SASKATOON**

EXPLORING
the **ARCTIC** with astronaut
CHRIS HADFIELD



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CANADA'S BEST ISLAND *getaways*

Eight super summer hot spots to satisfy your craving for sun, fun and surf

THERE'S A REASON private islands are the definition of enviable extravagance. And while we can't all be Bransons, Spielbergs or Dions (Céline recently sold *one* of her private-island properties, near Montreal), many of us still return to our favourite islands year after year. Sunbathed, sandy strips or rugged fortresses, Canada has an island for every type.

Maybe it's the extra effort required to reach them that adds a layer of the exotic: there's payoff in getting across. Or perhaps it's because you can really *know* an island. Their firm boundaries seem to magnify the thrill of those water-meets-land panoramas, experiences with local characters, the taste of island dishes and the comfort of lodgings.

Whatever *it* is, the islands in the following pages have *it* in spades. From a scrap of rainforest rising out of a whale-patrolled Pacific strait to a rocky retreat off Newfoundland, these spots will make you want to jump on the next plane, ferry or water taxi.



Did we miss your favourite island? Let us know on [Twitter](#) (@CanGeo) or [Facebook](#) (fb.com/cangeo).



A pair of orcas swim off Bere Point, on Malcolm Island's north shore.



Malcolm Island, B.C.

MALCOLM ISLAND IS A UTOPIA — at least that's what Finnish settlers hoped when they started a commune there at the turn of the last century. Their dream was short-lived, but it's easy to see why they chose this sliver of idyllic wilderness off Vancouver Island's northeast coast, long the territory of the 'Namgis First Nation. At Bere Point Regional Park on the island's north shore, orcas glide through Queen Charlotte Strait to rub their black-and-white bodies on the smooth pebble bottom — a rarely seen behaviour displayed by the threatened northern resident orcas and best viewed from the platform high above the point. On the east end, meanwhile, harbour seals, Pacific white-sided dolphins and humpback whales ply the waters around Mitchell Bay and Donegal Head, while trails and old logging roads wind through the moss-plastered red cedars and giant sword ferns of the island's interior. Luckily, Malcolm Island is just 24 kilometres long, so grab a bike from the free community bicycle program in Sointula, a charming seaside community just 25 minutes by ferry from Port McNeill, and get to know this under-the-radar piece of paradise.

—Michela Rosano

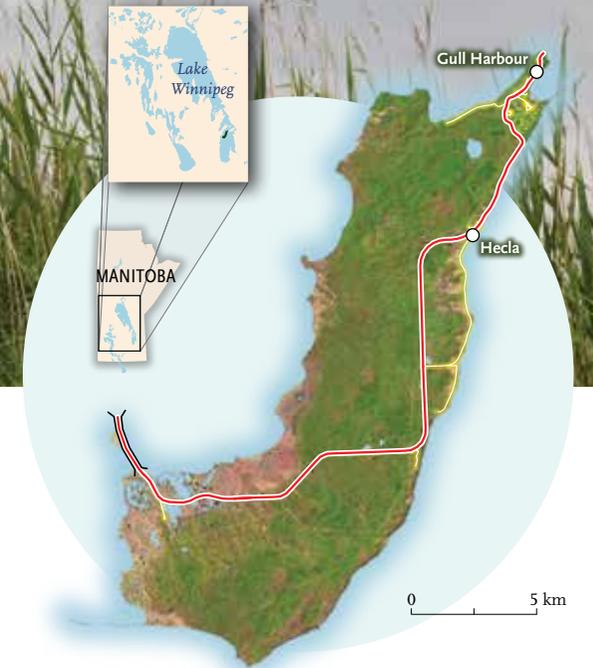
TASTE THIS Wild salmon at the Sointula Salmon Days festival, August 11-13, 2017. If you can't make that weekend, the Burger Barn at the marina has Vancouver Island beef burgers and crispy, locally caught fish and chips.

DO THIS See more of Malcolm Island's wildlife by booking a whale-watching, bear-viewing or fishing charter from North Island Adventures.

KNOW THIS Sointula is Finnish for "place of harmony." Learn more about the island's roots at the Sointula Museum.



Hecla Island is part of Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park.



Hecla Island, Man.

HECLA? Heck, yeah!

This cheeky little slogan might yet tumble forth from an ad copywriter's lips, but — for now, anyway — it seems too boisterous for a place as sedate as Hecla.

But the easy-going pace of life is just part of what makes this island in Lake Winnipeg in Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park so appealing. Add rugged limestone cliffs, Grassy Narrows Marsh (a prime spot to see wildlife such as bald eagles, otters and grey wolves), Gull Harbour Beach's shallow waters and sandbars, and a thriving Icelandic heritage, and you've got a winning blend of outdoor adventure and culture that won't overwhelm you. In fact, the most boisterous the place gets is the first long weekend in August, when there's spillover from the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba in nearby Gimli. "That's when we have our annual parade, which is one of the province's best, if I do say so myself," says Sharon Holtz, who runs Hecla's Solmundson Gesta Hus B&B. "And it's followed by our annual traffic jam."

—Harry Wilson

TASTE THIS *Pönnukökur*, an Icelandic crepe. At Gesta Hus, they're served with brown sugar, cinnamon and Greek yogurt or *skyr*, an Icelandic yogurt-like dairy product.

DO THIS Birdwatching. Hecla is the northernmost point on the international Pine to Prairie Birding Trail, the southern end of which is in northwest Minnesota. Watch for boreal species such as the great grey owl and spruce grouse.

KNOW THIS Hecla is named after Mount Hekla, one of Iceland's most famous volcanoes.



Swimming under Bridal Veil Falls, near the village of Kagawong.



An aerial view of Grosse-Île, the northern end of Les Îles de la Madeleine.

Manitoulin Island, Ont.

I'M NOT SURE I have ever seen anything as beautiful as the sun rising over the North Channel of Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron. I'm also not sure I've ever seen anything as frightening as a huge black bear walking across the shoreline of my camp, right toward me, searching for food (particularly since I'd only recently seen *The Revenant*). In between those moments, Manitoulin Island has even more to offer.

If you like the water, swimming underneath the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls or jumping off the dock of the Austin H. Hunt Marina in Kagawong are musts, and the sandiest beaches are on the south side of the island, right near where the massive Chi-Cheemaun ferry drops you off. You won't see any franchises on Manitoulin (they don't allow them), so we prefer to stop at Turners' department store in Little Current, which now has a sixth generation of Turners running it.

And the 10,000-year-old presence of Indigenous people is there for all to see, at either the annual Wikwemikong powwow or Lillian's souvenir store in M'Chigeeng, where an impressive young chief named Linda Debassige heads the First Nation council. I may only get there a few weeks a year, but Manitoulin Island is my favourite place in all of Canada.

—Steve Paikin



TASTE THIS The whitefish sandwiches at Buoy's Restaurant in Gore Bay.

DO THIS Trek the Cup & Saucer Trail in Sheguiandah. It affords spectacular views of the Niagara Escarpment.

KNOW THIS The mayor of Billings Township is Austin Hunt. He's 91 years old and has been the mayor almost non-stop since 1950. He was Lester B. Pearson's campaign manager when the prime minister represented Algoma East (which includes Manitoulin Island) from 1948 to 1968.

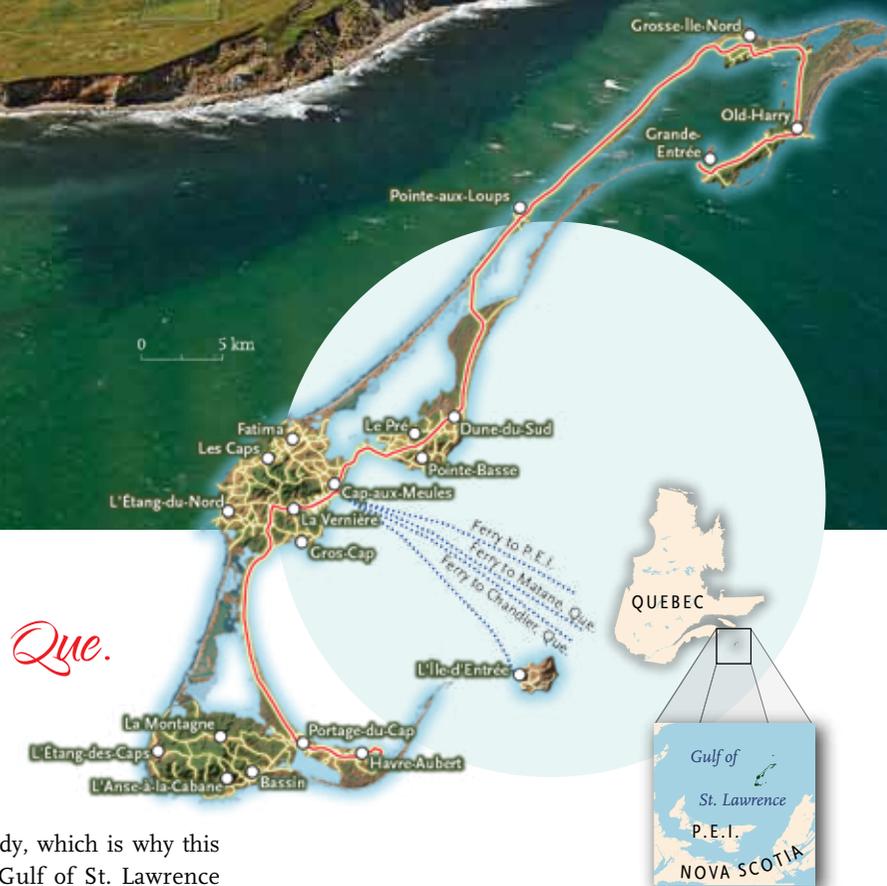
Îles de la Madeleine, Que.

WHEN JACQUES CARTIER visited the Magdalens back in 1534, he noted in his diary that they were "very sandy."

Happily, the Maggies are still very sandy, which is why this small archipelago in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence remains a beach-lover's dream, especially if you prefer your sand without crowds. On my first visit, I walked for three blissful hours along a 12-kilometre beach and barely saw another soul. But the beaches — and the jagged red coastal cliffs — are just part of the attraction. If you hop in a car (or on a bike), you will quickly discover Instagram-worthy lighthouses, harbours and villages scattered throughout the six main interconnected islands.

You'll also meet some of the 12,000 *Madelinots*, most of whom speak with an Acadian-infused French accent heard nowhere else in Quebec, and many of whom still make their living from the sea. On my final evening, I strolled to a wharf and watched excited local fishermen unloading huge slab-sided halibut. *Fantastique.*

—James Little



TASTE THIS Lobster at La Moulière in the Domaine du Vieux Couvent hotel. May, June and July are the best times to sample it.

DO THIS Swim in sea caves — La Salicorne inn offers guided trips.

KNOW THIS There have been more than 400 shipwrecks off the islands' shores.



The iconic Swallowtail Lightstation, at Grand Manan's northeast tip.



The harbour at West Arichat, off the scenic Fleur-de-lis Trail.



Grand Manan Island, N.B.

WITH ITS RUGGED COASTS and charming fishing communities, Grand Manan is an island-lover's dream. Best visited in summer and early fall, this 34-kilometre-long island is accessible via a ferry that runs a couple times a day from Blacks Harbour, N.B. (and should be booked in advance). Enjoy fresh lobster, scallops and herring, along with a variety of edible seaweeds harvested on the island, and watch for some of the more than 240 species of birds, including puffins and razorbills, that brought ornithologist and artist John James Audubon here in 1933. Or beachcomb for shells and sea glass, kayak on the Bay of Fundy, explore craft shops and cafés, and take in the annual Summer's End Folk Festival in August. Grand Manan has a mix of inns, cottages and bed and breakfasts, but the adventurous stay at the Hole-in-the-Wall park and campground. Named for the nearby egg-shaped archway rising out of the ocean, the windswept cliffside campsites deliver spectacular views, including frequent sights of finback, minke and humpback whales feeding offshore and seals lazing on nearby rocks.

—Karen Pinchin

TASTE THIS Crispy sourdough, baguettes and brioche, as well as croissants, doughnuts and cookies from the North Head Bakery, a seasonal family run shop in business since 1988.

SEE THIS Climb to the top of the historic Swallowtail Lightstation, a rare pre-Confederation wooden tower first lit in 1860, and ring its rooftop fog bell.

KNOW THIS Bring a magnet and play with the magnetic sand, or magnetite, at Red Point Beach's low tide. Other rocks found on the island include jasper, agate, amethyst, zeolites, copper and marble.

Isle Madame, N.S.

YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN for never having heard of Isle Madame. The small island, in Nova Scotia's Chedabucto Bay, is often overshadowed by its larger and more famous neighbour to the northeast, Cape Breton Island. But those who make the jaunt to Isle Madame — a 30-minute drive from the Canso Causeway — will find ample reward in the island's unspoiled beauty and fascinating history.

After the fall of Louisbourg in 1758, many exiled Acadian families made their way to Isle Madame and built new homes and churches in its secluded coves, away from the prying eyes of the British. By the turn of the 19th century, the island's main settlement, Arichat, with its deepwater harbour, was one of the busiest Atlantic ports in North America and a hub for fishing and shipbuilding. Drive the scenic Fleur-de-lis Trail around the island today and you will meet the descendants of Isle Madame's original families at the helm of inns and cafés that blend graceful hospitality with the thoughtful preservation of the island's Acadian heritage.

—Alexandra Pope



TASTE THIS Enjoy a cup of locally roasted coffee and a homemade treat at La Goélette à Pépé in Arichat and learn about some of the families who settled Isle Madame.

DO THIS Take a guided driving or walking tour of Isle Madame's many lighthouses and hear exciting tales of wrecks and rescues.

KNOW THIS The specific Madame for whom the island is named? Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, the second wife of King Louis XIV of France.

The Fogo Island Inn stands on the island's rugged north shore next to Joe Batt's Arm.



The rolling landscape around Cape Dorset, the "capital of Inuit art."



Fogo Island, N.L.

FOGO IS AN ISLAND OFF AN ISLAND in northern Newfoundland. It's bleak, windblown and hard to get to — the ferry sometimes gets stuck in the channel ice. Yet Fogo's now an "it" place for global trend-seekers.

Fogo? Whose villages have names such as Joe Batt's Arm, Tilting, Seldom and, of course, Little Seldom? The same. True, there's great berry-picking in September. I went for a quick hike and came back four hours later with a garbage bag full of blueberries and blue lips.

But what makes Fogo so beguiling is that the locals are the experience. None of your fancy folks here. Even at the upscale Fogo Island Inn authenticity trumps luxury. It's the creation of tech multi-millionaire Zita Cobb, who was born on the island and started the Shorefast Foundation to help bring back its people and culture when the cod dwindled. The foundation's motto is "Finding new ways for an old continuity," and both the inn and the island are that, for sure.

—Bob Ramsay

TASTE THIS "The caribou and what it eats," a dish at the Fogo Island Inn's award-winning restaurant.

DO THIS Hike to Brimstone Head, a small mountain near town, for a selfie.

KNOW THIS The Flat Earth Society considers Fogo Island one of the four corners of Earth.

Dorset Island, Nunavut

YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR with Dorset prints — often stark and stunning, linear stylizations of Arctic wildlife — and carvings created in the island hamlet of Cape Dorset, but nothing beats setting foot in what is arguably the most artistic community north of 60 and seeing them with your own eyes. Yes, it takes an extra bit of cash to reach a place so remote, but the return is a rare opportunity to explore the community and the fruits of the West Baffin Co-operative, which many credit with igniting the international obsession with Inuit art.

Of course, you don't have to have the soul of an artist to be bowled over by Cape Dorset. You can boat or hike, at low tide, from Dorset Island into Mallikjuaq Territorial Park on Mallik Island, where you'll see foundations of the ancestral Thule people's squat stone-and-whale-rib houses as well as traces of the even more ancient Dorset culture. Time your visit for mid-summer and you'll encounter a landscape spattered with purple saxifrage and other tough, bright wildflowers. It's enough to bring out the artist in anyone. 🌿

—Nick Walker

TASTE THIS Raw seal. If you're lucky enough to attend a community feast, this frozen delicacy is tender and clean, with a rich flavour that hints of iron and ocean.

DO THIS Hire a local outfitter. They provide tours covering 3,500 years of local history, not to mention the know-how should a polar bear wander too close.

KNOW THIS The late Kenojuak Ashevak, possibly the most renowned Inuit artist of all time, created her world-famous works here.

LEFT: COURTESY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TOURISM/MEGAN MCLELLAN; RIGHT: LEE NARAWAY/NUNAVUT TOURISM