

**Parks**  
in

*Québec*

Larger than Nature



Québec   
[www.bonjourquebec.com](http://www.bonjourquebec.com)

**Parks  
in**

*Québec*

**Larger than Nature**

**INDEX**

A Feast for the Senses  
Parks with a View  
A Walk in the Woods...Not far from Montréal  
Biosphere Reserve  
Up the Outaouais  
Foot and Pedal Power  
Heading North  
Touring the Townships  
Treasures of the North Shore  
The kingdom and Beyond...  
Maritime Québec  
A Taste for Nature



# A Feast for the Senses

From high atop a cliff, you gaze out over a river winding through a verdant landscape. Close your eyes and you're paddling between the steep walls of a vast fjord, crossing the snowy taiga or standing at the foot of bizarre coastal monoliths. Keep your eyes closed, and you'll hear the powerful spouting of whales, the deafening calls of snow geese, the rushing of rapids sparkling in the sun, the breaking of waves against the white cliffs...

Québec parks offer all these experiences for the senses and more! In these vast preserves you'll find the many faces of this immense land at the top of the Americas. Three of our parks are exceptional international treasures, in fact: Parc de Miguasha is included on UNESCO's prestigious list of world heritage sites, and the Grands-Jardins and Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie parks are part of the Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve.

Whether you're a confirmed nature lover, a would-be *coureur de bois* or just a Sunday hiker, this is the place to satisfy your craving for pure, clean air and green, white and blue spaces. Explore Québec's parks and open wide the pages of a very *natural* history book!



Front cover: Parc des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie  
and common loons

Back cover: Parc de la Gaspésie

Right: Parc des Grands-Jardins




# Parks with a View

The 26 nature parks described here are dotted across Québec, from Abitibi-Témiscamingue to the tip of the Gaspé peninsula, many of them easily accessible from the major urban centres. Each has its own special surroundings, relief, flora and fauna—its own personality, in short, and it all adds up to an amazing diversity of natural landscapes and sites.

Visitors will find top-quality equipment and facilities in all the parks. The table on page 21 lists some of the main outdoor activities available, all of them great environmentally friendly ways to recharge your batteries in protected natural surroundings. We ask visitors to please help us protect and conserve this precious heritage for the benefit of future generations.

4

---

 This symbol will help you find the parks on the maps on pages 22 and 23.



*Parc de la Gaspésie*

## A Walk in the Woods...

Not far from Montréal are some lovely parks much appreciated by city-dwellers.

### *Islands and Hills*

On the sandy shores of Lac des Deux-Montagnes, lapping at the western edge of Montréal Island, **PARC D'OKA** <sup>1</sup> offers a variety of natural environments (beaches, pine groves, marshes, maple groves) between the lake and the hilltops. A rare 18th-century station of the cross, with seven tiny wayside shrines, is a delightful find and has been classified as a historic site.

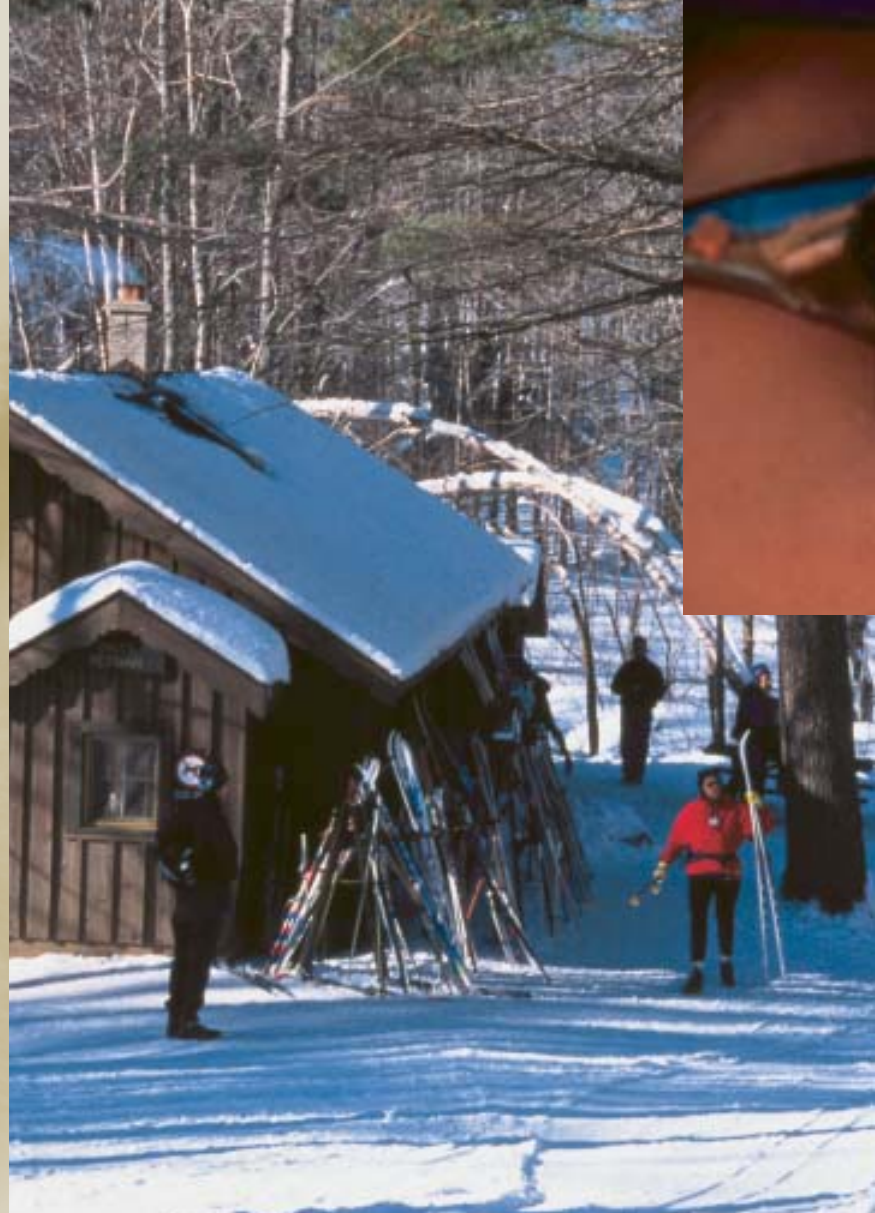
Across from Montréal lies **PARC DES ÎLES-DE-BOUCHERVILLE** <sup>2</sup>, a peaceful haven in the middle of the St. Lawrence. It's a paradise for hikers and cyclists: a string of islands laced with canoe circuits and home to nearly 170 species of birds. Visitors to **PARC DU MONT-SAINT-BRUNO** <sup>3</sup>, just 20 km (12 mi) from Montréal, will delight in the lovely woods of maple, oak and linden, a huge apple orchard that puts on a superb show in the spring, and a water mill from seigniorial times.



Parc des Îles-de-Boucherville

## Biosphere Reserve

*The Nature Centre at Mont-Saint-Hilaire, classified as a Biosphere Reserve 20 years ago by UNESCO, features exceptionally well-preserved flora and fauna, along with a huge variety of mineral resources. Hikers are sure to enjoy the splendid views of the surrounding plain from the different peaks.*



Gatineau Park



### Up the Outaouais

**PARC DE PLAISANCE** <sup>4</sup> (now being created), set in the waters of the Outaouais, just off the road between Montréal and Hull, is a favourite stop for thousands of Canada geese every spring on their way to their summer grounds. The region is dotted with lakes and rivers, and the forests are home to plenty of white-tailed deer.

The jewel of the Outaouais region, without a doubt, is **GATINEAU PARK** <sup>5</sup>, stretching along the Gatineau valley. A verdant oasis on the doorstep of a huge urban area, the park is remarkable for its wooded hills and breathtaking fall colours, wildlife (50 species of mammals and 40 species of fish) and lookouts offering superb views of its unique geological features. In winter, cross-country skiers of all levels come to explore its 200 km (125 mi) of trails.

7



### Winged Wonders

Québec is a favourite stop for many species of migrating birds, in particular snow geese and Canada geese. In fall, the Cap-Tourmente National Wildlife Reserve, near Québec City, is a particular favourite with birders of all stripes. In spring, binoculars turn to the shores of Lac Saint-Pierre, between Montréal and Québec City, just recently designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.



Canada geese





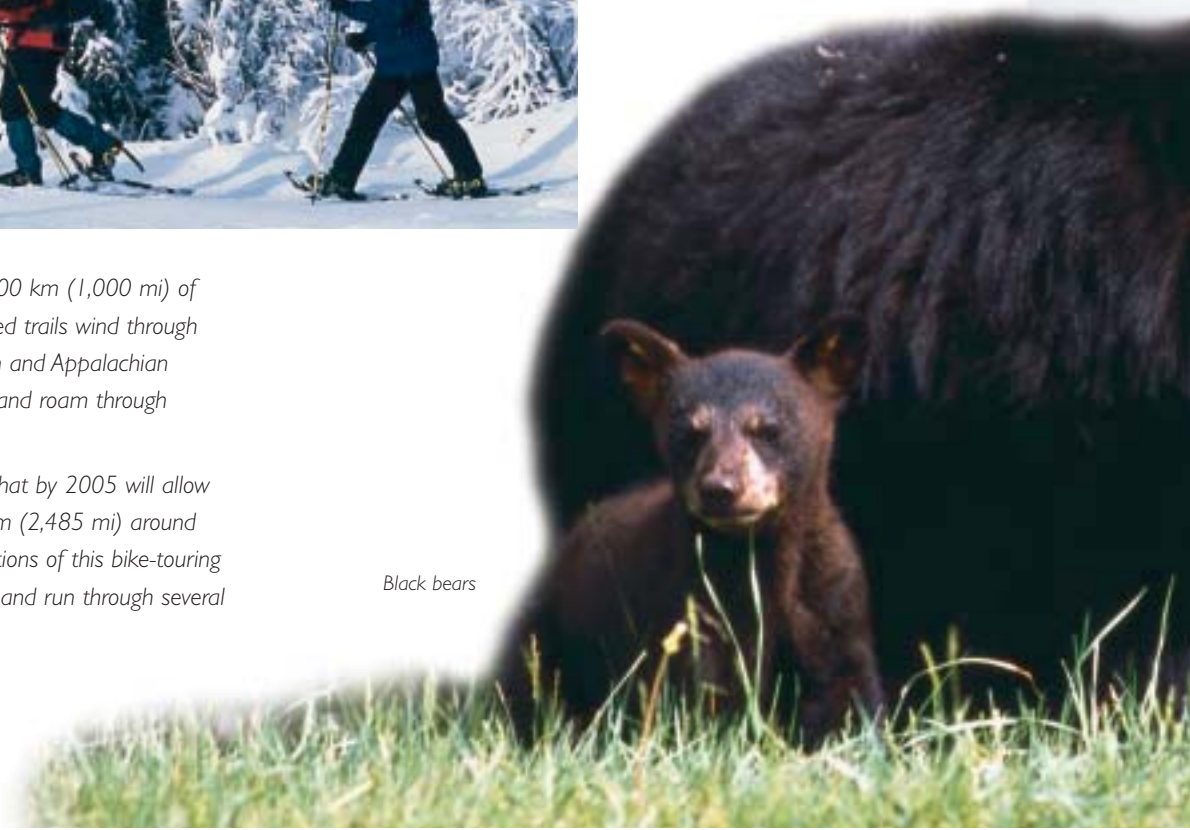
Parc du Mont-Tremblant

## Foot and Pedal Power

Québec's parks have more than 1,700 km (1,000 mi) of hiking trails of varying lengths. Marked trails wind through the boreal forest, climb to Laurentian and Appalachian peaks, wander along the Gulf coast and roam through meadows and valleys.

The Route verte is a cycling route that by 2005 will allow cyclists to pedal more than 4,000 km (2,485 mi) around the province. A good number of sections of this bike-touring route have already been completed, and run through several parks.

Black bears



## Heading North

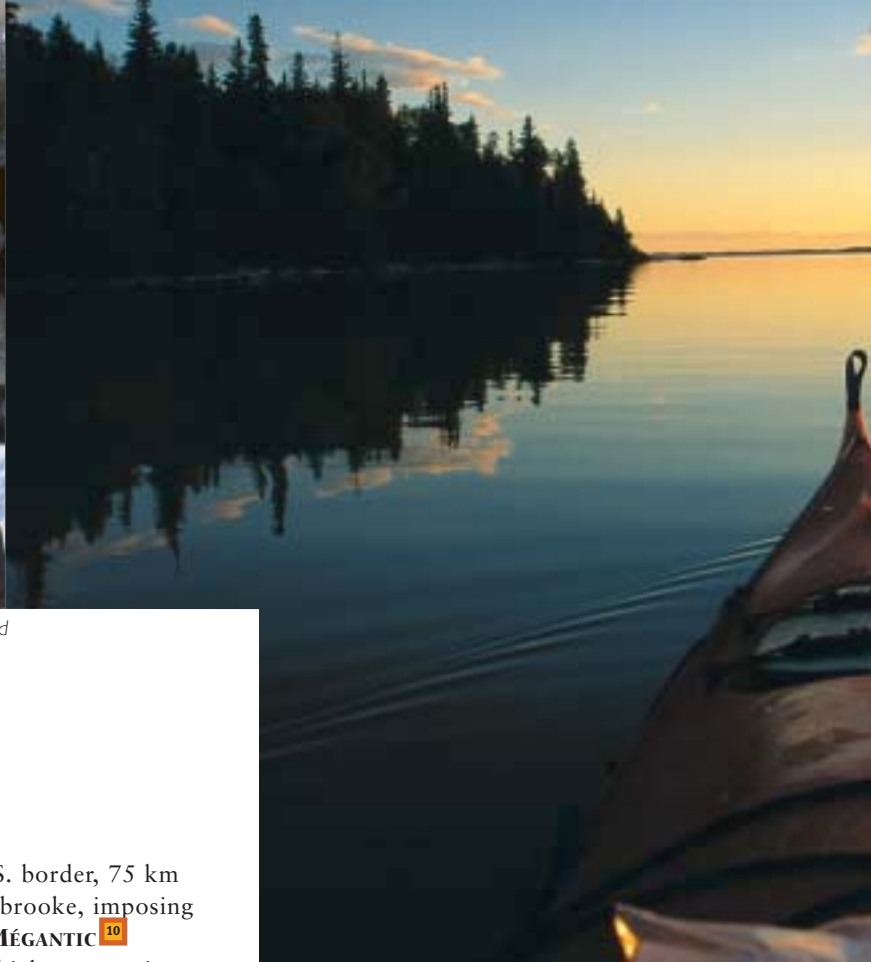
*Take the Autoroute des Laurentides and its extension, Highway 117, north to an immense land of forests, blazing with colour in September and October, and two major parks: Parc du Mont-Tremblant, 180 km (112 mi) north of Montréal, and Parc d'Aigüebelle, in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.*

### 6 PARC DU MONT-TREMBLANT

Québec's largest (1,510 km<sup>2</sup>/940 sq. mi) park has a long history, dating back to the late 19th century. Its southern reaches, in the Laurentian Shield, consist of hills and valleys covered with forests made up primarily of maple and yellow birch. Its northern expanses sparkle with numerous lakes and long rivers. The park boasts no fewer than 400 bodies of water, six rivers, lovely waterfalls and rapids and plenty of aquatic life, making it a favourite with outdoor enthusiasts. A ski station and resort famed throughout northeastern North America is perched at the foot of the mountain (altitude: 930 m/3,050 ft).

### 7 PARC D'AIGÜEBELLE

Here, amongst the impressive rock formations rising from the surrounding plain, you'll find all sorts of geological evidence of volcanic activity and glacial geomorphology, including the spectacular faults in which lakes La Haie and Sault lie. Parc d'Aigüebelle is very popular with hikers and paddlers, and home to large numbers of beaver and moose.



## Touring the Townships

10 Less than one hour from Montréal, **PARC DE LA YAMASKA** <sup>8</sup> spreads the leafy shade of its venerable maples around a vast reservoir fed by the Rivière Yamaska; the park is ideally suited to cycling, swimming and bird-watching. **PARC DU MONT-ORFORD** <sup>9</sup> looks out over a resort area highly popular year round, especially during the fall colours festival. Mont Orford (850 m/2,790 ft) itself, an extension of Vermont's Green Mountains, has lots to offer campers and skiers. Every summer, the Orford Arts Centre attracts music-lovers to its splendid natural setting at the foot of the mountain.

*Parc du Mont-Orford*

Right near the U.S. border, 75 km (47 mi) from Sherbrooke, imposing **PARC DU MONT-MÉGANTIC** <sup>10</sup> boasts the second-highest summit in the region (1,100 m/3,600 ft), with vistas of the neighbouring peaks in New Hampshire and Maine. For even more distant views, check out its observatory and astronomy interpretation centre. **PARC DE FRONTENAC** <sup>11</sup>, with its gentler slopes, takes in part of the shores of Lac Saint-François, one of the largest bodies of water (50 km<sup>2</sup>/30 sq. mi) in southern Québec and a perfect spot for swimming and water sports (canoeing, canoe-camping, kayaking, etc.).

*Parc de Frontenac*



*La Mauricie National Park*

## Treasures of the North Shore

The North Shore of the St. Lawrence glitters with many superb and easily accessible natural jewels, including La Mauricie National Park, Parc de la Jacques-Cartier (near Québec City), and the Grands-Jardins and Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie parks. The latter two are part of the Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1988 by UNESCO.

---

### **12** LA MAURICIE NATIONAL PARK

Halfway between Montréal and Québec City, La Mauricie National Park boasts some of the most beautiful landscapes in the ancient Laurentian mountains. Nearly all of the park's 553 km<sup>2</sup> (343 sq. mi) of hills and valleys is covered in forest, largely maple. It's an ideal spot for canoeing and wildlife observation, with its many lakes, but hiking and cycling are other great ways to appreciate its natural beauty.



Parc des Grands-Jardins



12

#### 14 PARC DES GRANDS-JARDINS

A fascinating Nordic enclave in the midst of the boreal forest, the park features amazingly varied plant life and relief, a harsh climate and a number of summits topping 1,000 metres (3,280 ft), covered by taiga and home to caribou herds. Mont du Lac des Cygnes, with the highest peak in Grands-Jardins, treats visitors to incomparable panoramas of the Charlevoix mountains. This one should be on every cross-country skier's to-do list!

#### 15 PARC DES HAUTES-GORGES-DE-LA-RIVIÈRE-MALBAIE

This park (next to the previous one) features the incomparable attractions of Rivière Malbaie, wending its way peacefully along 9 km (6 mi) between the steepest gorges (700 m/2,300 ft) in eastern Canada. Numerous waterfalls and rapids spill down drops of over 100 metres (328 ft). You can explore the river by canoe or kayak or even in the comfort of a *bateau-mouche* tour boat!

#### 13 PARC DE LA JACQUES-CARTIER

Just 40 minutes from Québec City, Parc de la Jacques-Cartier is situated on a vast mountainous plateau gouged out by a number of river valleys, including the famous Jacques-Cartier. This spectacular valley never fails to impress whitewater enthusiasts and hikers of all levels. In the fall, visitors can take in an unusual event, as the park's naturalists invite them to watch brook trout spawning.

Parc de la Jacques-Cartier



## The *Kingdom* and Beyond...

The Rivière Saguenay flows out of Lac Saint-Jean and makes its way down to the St. Lawrence through a stunningly majestic fjord—a spectacle like nothing else in this part of the continent, contained entirely within a park of awesome natural beauty. It's no wonder they call it the Kingdom of Saguenay.



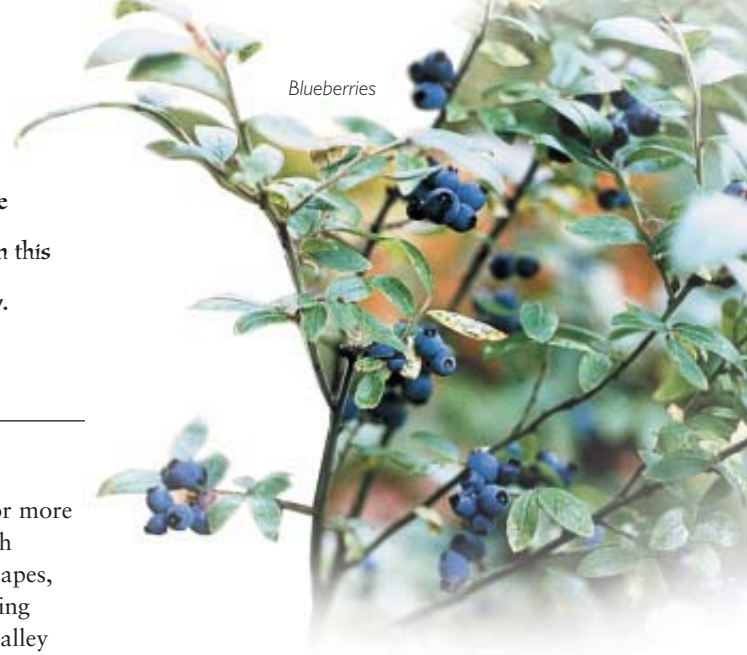
Parc du Saguenay ▲

---

### 16 PARC DU SAGUENAY

The Saguenay fjord stretches for more than 100 km (60 mi), lined with promontories and precipitous capes, interspersed with bays harbouring pretty villages. In this ancient valley where fresh water meets salty water, a complex and diversified ecosystem has evolved. From the lookout at Baie Sainte-Marguerite you can spot the beluga (white) whales that come here to feed and play. The setting is nothing less than grandiose. Climb the paths hugging the steep shores for exceptional views, or take one of the boats plying the waters between Sainte-Rose-du-Nord and Tadoussac.

Blueberries





Parc des Monts-Valin



From Chicoutimi, you can head for **PARC DES MONTS-VALIN**<sup>17</sup>. The highest peak in this group of rocky mountains reaches over 965 m (3,165 ft), with particularly steep slopes. In winter, the heavy snow transforms the conifers into an enchanted forest peopled by “mummies” and “ghosts” that works its magic on skiers and snowboarders. In summer, take a trip to the north shore of Lac Saint-Jean, where **PARC DE LA POINTE-TAILLON**<sup>18</sup>, on the delta of the Rivière Péribonka, offers long, fine sand beaches and pleasant woods just right for cycling.

## Maritime Québec

East of Tadoussac, where it is joined by the Saguenay, the St. Lawrence gradually widens until its estuary becomes a gulf resembling an inland sea. The Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park is the gateway to maritime Québec, whose shores extend for hundreds of kilometres, to Labrador in the north and the tip of the Gaspé peninsula in the south.



### 19 SAGUENAY–ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK

This park, situated at the confluence of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence rivers, is the first in Québec to protect and celebrate an exclusively marine environment. In summer, visitors can watch minke, finback, blue and other whales, not to mention three species of seals, from a boat or simply from the shore. There are a number of visitor activities at Cap-de-Bon-Désir and the Maison des Dunes at Tadoussac, where naturalists lead interpretation workshops on the wealth of marine plant and animal life in the park.

15





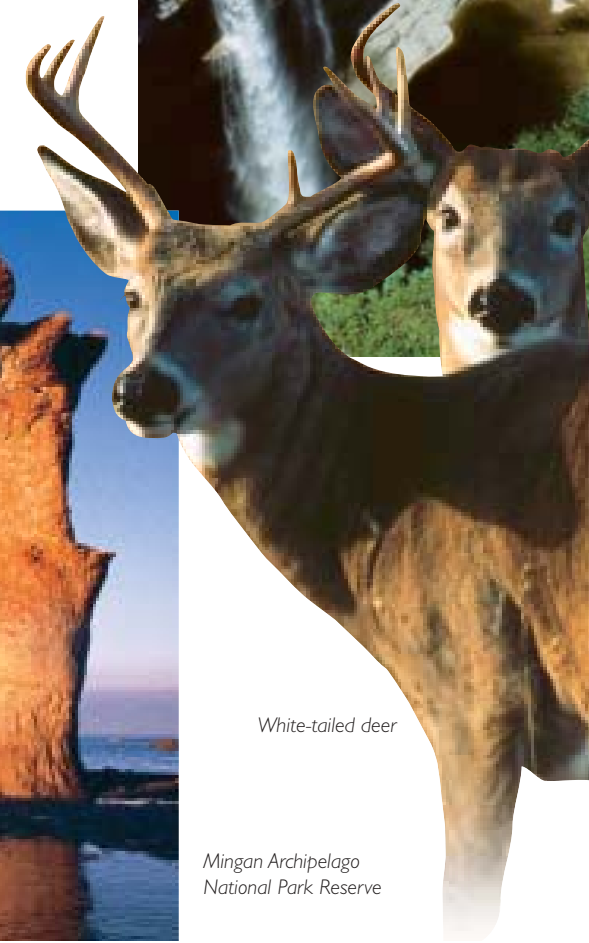
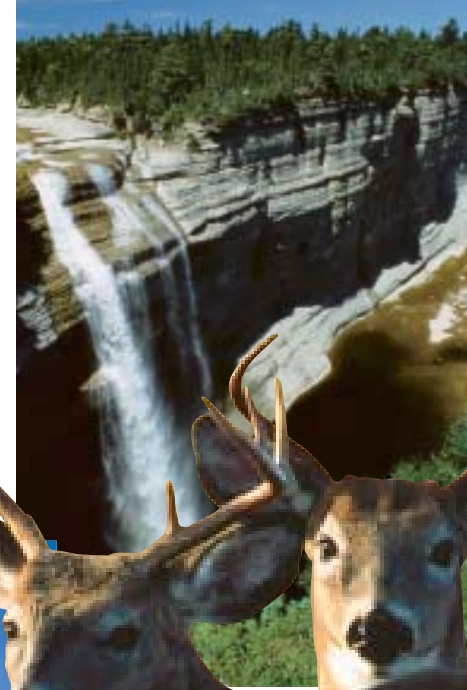
Continue along the North Shore to the Mingan archipelago, a magical spot in its own little world. In the distance you can glimpse mythical Île d'Anticosti.

**20 MINGAN ARCHIPELAGO  
NATIONAL PARK RESERVE**

The archipelago, consisting of some forty islands and islets, was visited 500 years ago by Basque fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is renowned mainly for its strange geological formations; the impressive limestone monoliths carved out by the elements never fail to astonish and fascinate visitors. Atlantic puffins and other waterfowl turn the bare cliffs into a colourful fresco, while whales and seals roam the coastal waters. Guided tours are offered to introduce visitors to the remarkable plant life on the archipelago.

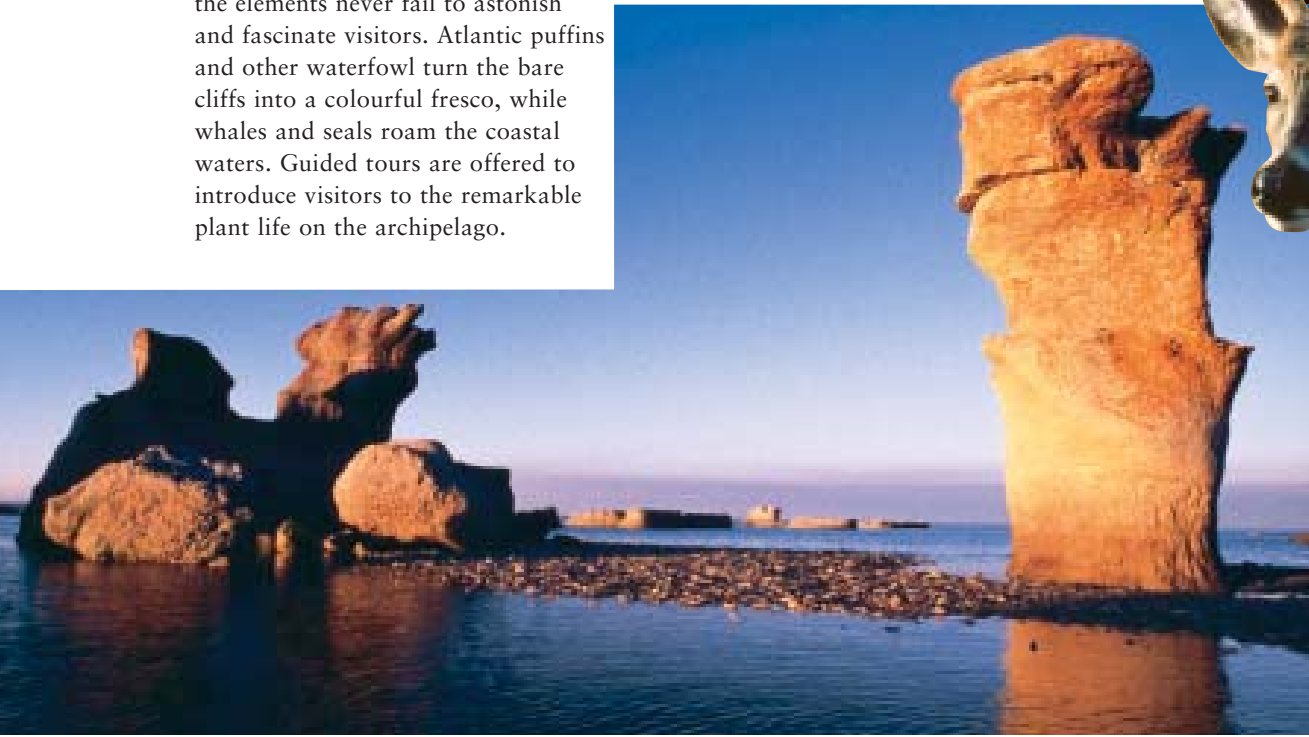
**21 PARC D'ANTICOSTI**  
(now being created)

White-tailed deer are the kings on this island (over 125,000 of them), a magnificently preserved treasure of nearly 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> (4,970 sq. mi). Up until the early 1900s, this was still a private resort. The park (550 km<sup>2</sup>/340 sq. mi) is located in the middle of the island, and crowned by the spectacular 100-metre-high Vauréal waterfalls (330 ft), along with several canyons, including the Rivière Chicotte, and impressive shoreline cliffs.



White-tailed deer

Mingan Archipelago  
National Park Reserve



*On the south shore, the Navigator's Route runs through a number of parks with names that conjure up natural splendours: Bic, Forillon, Percé and Bonaventure, and of course Gaspésie and Miguasha parks as well.*



Parc du Bic

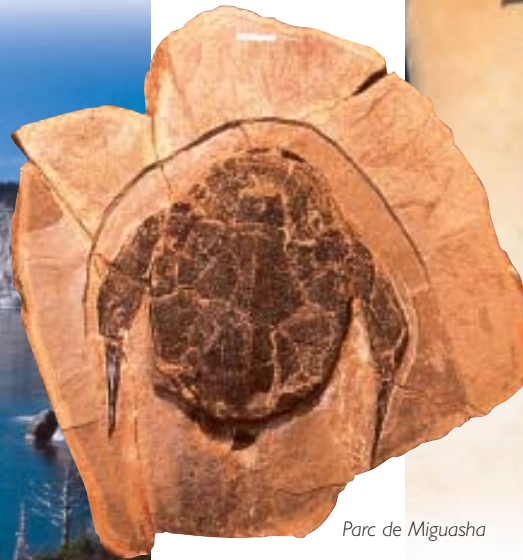
## 22 PARC DU BIC

Jagged hills and wonderfully picturesque rocky capes, harbours and islands make this park, near Rimouski, one of a kind in the estuary. Natives used this excellent natural harbour 8,000 years ago. For hikers, this riverside park promises excellent views of grey and harbour seals, eider ducks and, especially in the spring, different species of raptors.





Northern gannets



Parc de Miguasha

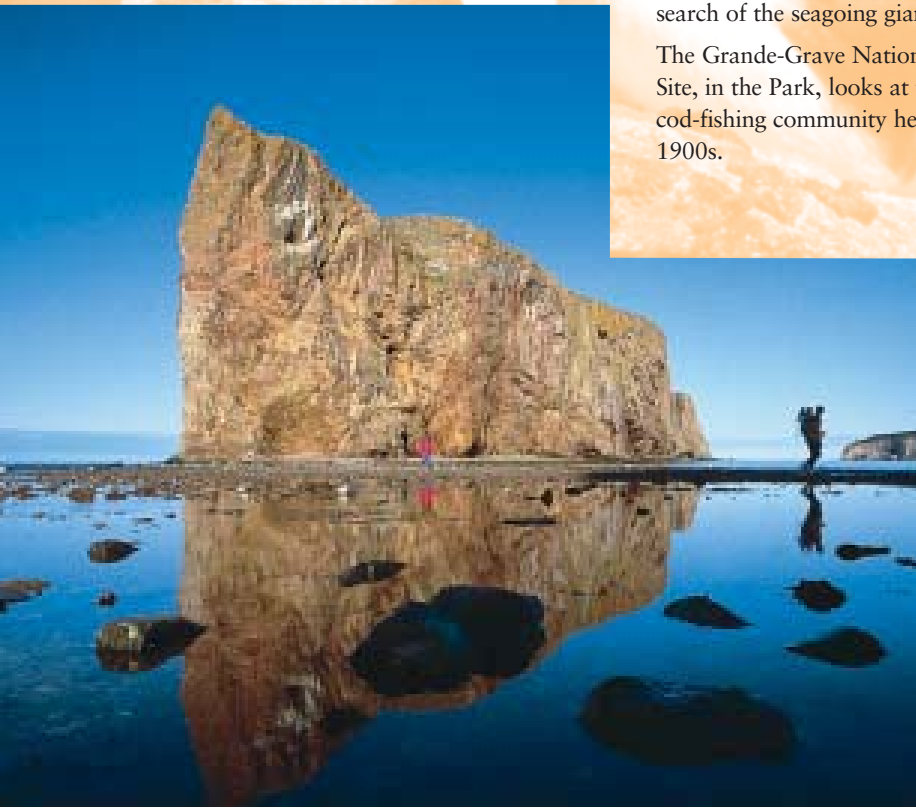


### 23 PARC DE LA GASPÉSIE

This park was created over 60 years ago, and includes no fewer than 25 summits rising over 1,000 metres (the peak of Mont Jacques-Cartier is 1,268 m/4,160 ft) and one of the finest glacial cirques east of the Rockies. Its more than 800 km<sup>2</sup> (500 sq. mi) feature a huge variety of plant life and habitats. Caribou, moose and white-tailed deer share the same territory, a situation found nowhere else in Québec. The Rivière Sainte-Anne, which crosses the park, is one of the best salmon rivers in the Gaspé. With its endless breathtaking panoramas, the park attracts day-trekkers and more ambitious hikers seeking unusual experiences.



Parc de l'Île-Bonaventure-et-du-Rocher-Percé



#### 24 FORILLON NATIONAL PARK

Jacques Cartier rounded the impressive Cap-Gaspé and sailed along the Forillon peninsula before dropping anchor in the Baie de Gaspé in 1534. Today, the steep cliffs that mark the end of the long Appalachian chain have been given over to a splendid park. It boasts spectacular cliffs, steep harbours and pebbly beaches, while on its rugged coast, seals sport and a multitude of seabirds, including murre, cormorants, guillemots and kittiwakes, make their nests. Whale-watching boats will take you out in search of the seagoing giants.

The Grande-Grave National Historic Site, in the Park, looks at the thriving cod-fishing community here in the early 1900s.

#### 25 PARC DE L'ÎLE-BONAVENTURE-ET-DU-ROCHER-PERCÉ

The incessant aerial ballet by the multitudes of birds wheeling and calling above the cliffs of Île Bonaventure makes for an extraordinary sight. Just minutes by boat from the coast you can see over 250,000 seabirds, including the largest colony of northern gannets in North America. The island also attracts amateur botanists, to admire its profusion of plant species. Birdwatchers can perch at special lookouts high atop the island or take a boat ride around the island.

Nearby is famous Percé Rock. At low tide you can walk out to this imposing stone ship and examine the fossils on its sides. There's lots to explore, for it's 470 m (1,540 ft) high and 85 m (280 ft) long.

#### 26 PARC DE MIGUASHA



This exceptional fossil repository, nestled in Chaleur Bay, has featured on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites since 1999. In its cliffs, researchers have discovered traces of 23 fish species from the Devonian period, over 370 million years ago. The wealth and quality of its fossils make this park a true naturalist's delight. The museum of natural history is also worth a visit.

# Q.

# @.



## Québec

- Accommodations
- Packages
- Attractions
- Events
- Activities
- Holiday Ideas
- ✓ Reservations

For information & reservations:  
[www.bonjourquebec.com](http://www.bonjourquebec.com)  
1 877 BONJOUR (1 877 266-5687), ext. 062

*Toll-free calls and reservations only from Québec, elsewhere in Canada and the United States.*



Québec 

[www.bonjourquebec.com](http://www.bonjourquebec.com)





Parc du Mont-Tremblant

## A Taste for Nature

In the following table we have listed some of the main outdoor activities available in Québec parks. All the parks have hiking trails and picnic areas and offer nature interpretation workshops led by naturalist guides. In most cases, you can rent the equipment you need for recreational and sports activities.

Admission fees apply at all parks except Gatineau Park.

		Hiking	Cycling	Canoeing	Kayaking	Boat tours	Swimming	Snowshoeing	X-country skiing
<b>Activities</b>									
Forillon National Park	24	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
Gatineau Park	5	•	•	•			•	•	•
La Mauricie National Park	12	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve	20	•			•	•			
Parc d'Aiguebelle	7	•	•	•	•			•	•
Parc de Frontenac	11	•	•	•	•		•		
Parc de la Gaspésie	23	•		•	•			•	•
Parc de la Jacques-Cartier	13	•	•	•	•			•	•
Parc de la Pointe-Taillon	18	•	•	•	•		•		
Parc de la Yamaska	8	•	•	•	•		•		
Parc de l'Île-Bonaventure-et-du-Rocher-Percé	25	•				•			
Parc de Miguasha	26	•							
Parc des Grands-Jardins	14	•	•	•	•			•	•
Parc des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie	15	•	•	•	•	•			
Parc des Îles-de-Boucherville	2	•	•	•	•			•	•
Parc des Monts-Valin	17	•	•	•				•	•
Parc d'Oka	1	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Parc du Bic	22	•	•		•			•	•
Parc du Mont-Mégantic	10	•						•	•
Parc du Mont-Orford	9	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Parc du Mont-Saint-Bruno	3	•	•					•	•
Parc du Mont-Tremblant	6	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Parc du Saguenay	16	•			•	•		•	•
Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park	19				•	•			



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1</b> Parc d'Oka                    | <b>11</b> Parc de Frontenac                            |
| <b>2</b> Parc des îles-de-Boucherville | <b>12</b> La Mauricie National Park                    |
| <b>3</b> Parc du Mont-Saint-Bruno      | <b>13</b> Parc de la Jacques-Cartier                   |
| <b>4</b> Parc de Plaisance             | <b>14</b> Parc des Grands-Jardins                      |
| <b>5</b> Gatineau Park                 | <b>15</b> Parc des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie |
| <b>6</b> Parc du Mont-Tremblant        | <b>16</b> Parc du Saguenay                             |
| <b>7</b> Parc d'Aiguebelle             |  |
| <b>8</b> Parc de la Yamaska            |  |
| <b>9</b> Parc du Mont-Orford           |  |
| <b>10</b> Parc du Mont-Mégantic        |  |



- 17 Parc des Monts-Valin
- 18 Parc de la Pointe-Taillon
- 19 Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park
- 20 Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve
- 21 Parc d'Anticosti
- 22 Parc du Bic
- 23 Parc de la Gaspésie
- 24 Forillon National Park
- 25 Parc de l'Île-Bonaventure-et-du-Rocher-Percé
- 26 Parc de Miguasha



### Distances (km/mi)

	MONTRÉAL	QUÉBEC CITY
CHICOUTIMI	465/290	210/130
GASPÉ	930/580	700/435
HAVRE-SAINT-PIERRE	1,115/690	865/537
HULL	205/127	450/280
MONTRÉAL	–	255/158
QUÉBEC CITY	255/158	–
ROUYN-NORANDA	640/400	875/543
SHERBROOKE	145/90	240/150



Most of these parks are administered by Parcs Québec. La Mauricie and Forillon National Parks and the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve are administered by Parks Canada. The Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park is administered jointly by the two organizations. Gatineau Park, for its part, is administered by the National Capital Commission.

There are also some thirty regional nature parks, many of them worth a special detour:





For more information,

call **(514) 873-2015** or  
**1 877 BONJOUR**  
**(1 877 266-5687), ext. 809**

toll free from Québec, elsewhere in Canada and the United States,

or consult our Website:  
**[www.bonjourquebec.com/parks](http://www.bonjourquebec.com/parks)**

**Published by Tourisme Québec**

Product Manager: *Suzanne Watson*

Co-ordination: *Louise Mondoux, Sophie Marcoux*

Research: *Leonora Moura*

Texts: *Denys Lessard*

Translation: *Terry Knowles, Pamela Ireland*

Graphic Design: *Communications Daz*

Cartography: *Le Groupe Korem inc.*

Printing: *Bowne de Montréal inc.*



Photos: *Archives nationales du Québec, Claude Bouchard, Benoît Chalifour, Sébastien Cloutier, Marie-Andrée Delisle, Sandrine Dussart, Gaétan Fontaine, Louis Gagnon, Marcel Gignac, Jean-Pierre Huard, Paul Laramée, Jean-Guy Lavoie, Sylvain Majeau, Louise Pelland, Jose Schell, Sépaq, Linda Turgeon, Paul Villecourt, Heiko Wittenborn*

© Tourisme Québec

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2001

ISBN 2-550-37652-8

Parks in Québec is the fourth in a series of thematic brochures that already includes Gardens in Québec, The Aboriginal Way and Churches in Québec. This brochure was produced in co-operation with Parcs Québec (Sépaq) and Parks Canada.

The information in this brochure was up to date at the time of printing. Tourisme Québec will not be held responsible for any possible errors or omissions.

Printed in Québec, Canada



**Québec**

[www.bonjourquebec.com](http://www.bonjourquebec.com)