

## Authentic Quebec, Without the Big-City Cost

by Fiona Tapp | January 30, 2018

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Europe, and especially France, ranks highly on many travelers' vacation bucket lists. Transatlantic flights, chic city hotels, and fine dining, however, can take a serious chunk out of your travel budget. If you're dreaming of rolling fields and excellent wine but need to rein in the costs associated with a European vacation, take a look at Quebec.

This French-speaking Canadian province has Gallic charm to burn, and it can be experienced without the complexity or expense of flying to Europe. Visitors are spoiled for choice between the capital of Quebec City and trendy, cosmopolitan Montreal, but the province's more rural spots can be especially transportive.

For an immersive experience where you can truly imagine you're an ocean away from home, head to southwestern Quebec and [Abitibi Temiscamingue](#), a small region with a big name. In the Algonquin language, it means "where the waters divide." Cross the suspension bridge at Parc National d'Aiguebelle to learn more about how each river flows in a different direction, north to Hudson Bay, and south to the St. Lawrence River.

For a taste of French-style hospitality, without the costs associated with a Europe trip, here's a look at this region:

## Cultural Events and Activities

If you arrive in the summer months you'll have plenty of festivals to choose from including the legendary, **FME** (the Festival de musique émergente en Abitibi-Témiscamingue) which is entering its 16th year and features an eclectic lineup of international musicians (typically \$110 to \$150 for multi-show tickets), along with the **Pow-Wow Pikogan** a free event showcasing the color and culture of indigenous culture through traditional song and dance. For a range of the best local flavors, take the free shuttle down **La route du terroir**, an agritourism trail spanning 5 miles during the month of August. Here you'll be able to browse stalls of handmade crafts, produce, and local delicacies.

## French-Canadian Cuisine

French cuisine is world renowned, but in Quebec, the best of traditional French food merges with Canadian influences to produce unique flavors. One cheap and delicious staple is poutine (French fries with gravy and cheese curds). At **Chez La Morasse**, you can sample the recipe that has been served here for the last 49 years, starting from only CAN\$4.39 (or \$3.52 USD). Fuel up for the day with a satisfying breakfast or brunch from The Saint-Exupéry cafe in Rouyn Noranda, which is named after the author of the iconic novella *The Little Prince*. Eggs with house potatoes cost CAN\$5.95 (or \$4.83 USD). For a sweet treat, grab a cone from Glâss bar laitier, a luxe ice cream stop fashioned from bright blue shipping containers; their cones dipped in homemade chocolate start from CAN\$2.00 (or about \$1.62 USD).

## Hotels and Lodging

Choose from hotels, motels, and log cabins deep in the woods at national parks, like [Parc Aiguebelle](#). Book an eco-cabin or pod in Rouyn Noranda starting at CAN\$80 (or \$64 USD) per night.

## Logistics and Costs

Abitibi Temiscamingue is reached via a short drive from the airport at Rouyn Noranda, which is served by major airlines connecting through Montreal or Toronto. Or you can drive or take the train from Montreal.