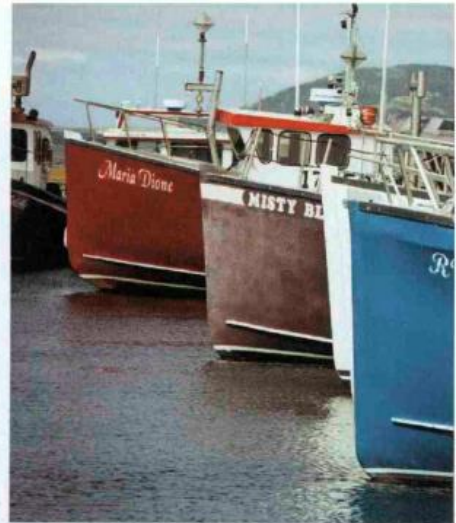


# CONDE NAST TRAVELER

CANADA 47.3697 N, 63.3066 W



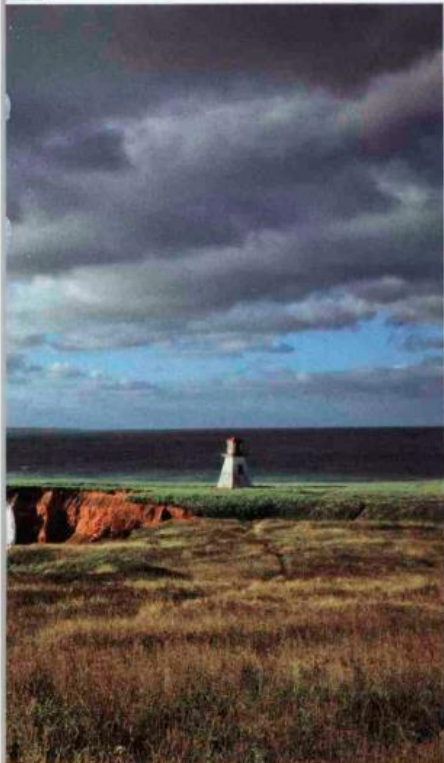
## A FRANCO-FOODIE PARADISE IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

➤ A hundred miles beyond Prince Edward Island, the emerald green, beach-and-cliff-ringed Îles de la Madeleine could pass for the type of tropical atoll usually found in the South Pacific. And like those wanderlust islands of childhood lore, the seven inhabited Magdalens, in English parlance, are largely populated by the descendants of shipwreck survivors. Getting there can feel like riding a nautical time machine: a five-hour ferry from Souris, PEI, on the deck of which is a neatly tied life preserver stenciled *ÎLES DE LA MADELEINE* as if art directed by Wes Anderson; in the bar, a singer belts out Johnny Cash hits in French.

There's something distinctly European yet disorienting about the Maggies, six of which are conjoined by a two-lane paved road. Brightly painted houses dot the hills, more like County Cork than Cape Cod, while harp seals plop themselves onto the beach to sunbathe the day away and kiteboarders zip across shallow coves. Some of the coastal dunes reach epic proportions, like towering castles knocked over into sand.



— —  
 AND ANOTHER  
 THING ...  
 BY THE MID-1500S,  
 BASQUE, BRETON, AND  
 NORMAN FISHERMEN  
 HAD ENCOUNTERED  
 THE ISLANDS' NATIVE  
 MI'KMAQ. OVER TIME,  
 THE POPULATION  
 GREW, THANKS  
 IN PART TO 400-PLUS  
 SHIPWRECKS.



**FROM LEFT:** Colorful houses along the coast; lobster boats in the marina; an epic coastal view; the Café de la Grave; fish and chips at Bistro du Capitaine.

But many of the winningest memories from here inevitably involve food: lobster tail fried on a stick; whelks expertly roasted in butter and chives; sweet and creamy scallop ceviche; and crisp, mineraly oysters on the half shell everywhere. Which isn't surprising considering the dominant culture is Acadian, the same French diaspora that settled New Orleans. Around every bend in the road is someone turning the bounty of the islands into something edible: Smoked herring comes from the local Fumoir d'Antan. Le Verger Poméloi churns out excellent dry ciders and brandies. À l'abri de la Tempête makes craft beers flavored with cranberries and an array of local flowers.

Of course, there's a catch: Fall drops early in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. By mid-September, stores have replaced beach towels and children's sand toys with ice hockey gear and snowblowers. TYLER GRAHAM

**Getting There**

From June through early September, nonstop flights take off from Montreal to the Magdalen Islands. Otherwise, a car ferry leaves Souris, on PEI, daily.

**Where to Eat**

Quai 360: Near the ferry on Cap-aux-Meules, this rustic-modern spot does seasonal market-based menus. La Table des Roy: An institution with a top-notch tasting menu highlighting local seafood.

**Where to Stay**

The islands' website lists house rentals. Otherwise, there's an old stone convent, Le Domaine du Vieux Couvent, that's been converted into a cozy boutique inn.