

Tour distance: 212 km (132 mi.)

Regions: Québec City & Area and Charlevoix

The road from Québec City to Tadoussac has got to be one of most beautiful and exciting you'll ever drive in your life. Flanked by the St. Lawrence River on one side and the mountains on the other, the drive brings you Québec at its most sublime. You must drive the scenic River Route (Route 362) between Baie-Saint-Paul and La Malbaie. Pure air, sparkling water, magnificent peaks, picturesque villages and epicurean delights - this is one experience you won't want to end!

POINTS OF INTEREST:

1. You're barely on your way when **Parc de la Chute-Montmorency** grabs your attention. An 83-metre (272-foot) waterfall in a glorious natural setting - you'll simply have to stop. And a worthy detour it is, too, with a sumptuous view of the St. Lawrence River, Île d'Orléans and Québec City.

2. Your second stop brings you to the **Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré** shrine. This medieval-inspired basilica, with its sublime stained glass and remarkable rose window, is ...heavenly!

3. Stop in **Mont-Saint-Anne**, a 4-season mountain resort. Here outdoor activities abound: hiking, golfing, mountain biking, etc. Go for a panoramic gondola ride 800 metres up the mountain and enjoy breathtaking views of the St. Lawrence Valley.

4. Nicknamed le paradis des artistes ("artists' paradise"), **Baie-Saint-Paul** is a pretty little town nestled in the Charlevoix hills. Artists have flocked here for years to try and capture its legendary beauty. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Baie-Saint-Paul also boasts the highest concentration of art galleries and craft boutiques in Canada.

5. For spectacular views of the St. Lawrence, drive scenic Route 362 from Baie-Saint-Paul to La Malbaie. This 58-km road promises great discoveries around every turn. In Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive, visit the Paper Economuseum, where craftspeople produce fine cotton paper inlaid with local flower petals. From there. In **Les Éboulements**, which offers one of the most stunning panoramic views in all Québec.

6. In **Saint-Irénée** is the Domaine Forget, a renowned dance and music academy hosts an international music festival (until early September). This large property is also steeped in history and features buildings that capture one's attention.

7. Route 362 ends in **La Malbaie**, formerly known as Murray Bay. William Taft, U.S. President from 1909 to 1913, owned a summer residence here. He reportedly said Murray Bay was "as intoxicating as champagne, but without the headache of the morning after." Today, the area's stately villas are charming inns, restaurants and art galleries. It is also home to the prestigious Manoir Richelieu.

8. Stop in at Fromagerie Saint-Fidèle, a cheese factory founded in 1902, and sample their delicious cheddar and The **Poterie de Port-au-Persil**, a gallery boutique featuring the handmade creations of 50 Québec potters, is also worth a stop. Every summer visitors are invited to create and sign their own pieces.

9. **Saint-Siméon's** claim to fame is its hospitality, which has earned it the title of "Hotel Village." From here you have access to a multitude of activities including whale-watching and ecotourism excursions, fishing and hiking. You can also hop on the ferry to Rivière-du-Loup, to begin your journey towards famous Percé Rock.

