

Tour distance: 485 km (302 mi.)

Regions: Mauricie and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

Start your road trip to Lac Saint-Jean at Trois-Rivières, situated on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River halfway between Montréal and Québec City. From Old Trois-Rivières, follow Route 155 through Shawinigan to La Mauricie National Park of Canada. From there, head to Lac Saint-Jean: Québec's inland sea!

POINTS OF INTEREST:

1. Old Trois-Rivières - Sprinkled with historic monuments and buildings, it has some fine examples of eighteenth-century architecture. Along the streets you'll find panels and plaques telling the city's history. This culture-loving town boasts art galleries, museums and concert halls.

2. Shawinigan - This city just twenty minutes north of Trois-Rivières on the shores of the St. Maurice River has also been called "Niagara of the East," because its waterfall is almost as high at 50 metres (164 feet) high! The power of Shawinigan Falls was harnessed to produce electricity, which was what gave birth to the town that bears its name.

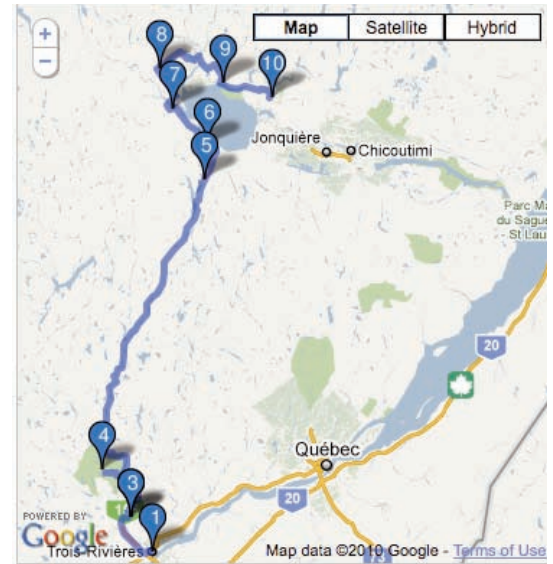
3. La Cité de l'énergie - Fascinating and educational, Shawinigan's Cité de l'énergie boasts the second-highest observation tower in Québec, a collection of industrial machinery housed in a restored powerhouse, interactive exhibits, an impressive multimedia show and captivating scientific demonstrations. The magic of energy and technology! Complete tour lasts 3.5 hours.

4. La Mauricie National Park of Canada and La Tuque - Panoramic route 155 hugs the shoreline of the St. Maurice River to travel through breathtaking landscapes. The park offers all kinds of land and water activities, plus a 75-long hiking trail aptly named The Long Trail. Way up the St. Maurice River sits La Tuque, a town of 12,063 people with arts and crafts, churches, covered bridges and more.

5. Ermitage Saint-Antoine - The Capuchin Fathers at the Ermitage Saint-Antoine de Lac-Bouchette offer spiritual in nature a retreat for individuals, couples and families. In addition to a museum, monastery and indoor chapel, its has an outdoor chapel overlooking Ouiatchouan Lake on forested lands with groomed trails. Three-star hotel, dining room, cottages, campground and hiking trails. Guided tours depending on availability and interpretative signs (bilingual).

6. Village historique de Val-Jalbert - Originally a pulp and paper town founded in 1901, several homes, a convent and a general store from that era have been preserved. The area features beautiful scenery, including the magnificent Ouiatchouan Falls that you can get to by pathway, stairs or cable car. Stay in quality accommodations or the campground with pool; also, restaurants and gift shops. Guided tours depending on availability (bilingual) and interpretative signs (French).

7. Zoo sauvage de Saint-Félicien - This "wilderness zoo" has over 1,000 animals roaming in a wide-open natural environment. The recently opened Amur tiger habitat has joined the Japanese macaque monkeys and Japanese cranes in the Asian section. There's a caged train through the Nature Park Trails, a pedestrian section and even a 1½-day safari in caribou country (reservations). Guided tours depending on availability and interpretative signs (bilingual).



8. Les Jardins de Normandin (Gardens) - The fact that a European-style garden thrives this far north isn't even the most astonishing thing about this jewel. Its formal layout features a French sun garden designed around high noon, a medicinal herb garden inspired by the Middle Ages, an Oriental garden and a decorative kitchen garden - complete with edible flowers - laid out in the French Renaissance style. A restaurant on site serves products from the vegetable garden.

9. Musée Louis-Hémon (Museum) - French author Louis Hémon lived in this historic town in 1912 when he wrote *Maria Chapdelaine*, a novel based on life in Lac Saint-Jean. Exhibits on the Québécoise heroine are on display and passages from the play are depicted at Maison Samuel-Bédard. Of interest is a tour through the area that traces Maria Chapdelaine's footsteps. Also on site are a blueberry grove, picnic area and gift shop. Guided tours depending on availability (bilingual).

10. Jardin Scullion - Twice Grand prix du tourisme québécois regional winner, Jardin Scullion was created on a 40-hectare farm. It includes out-of-the-ordinary vegetation from the four corners of the world that has adapted very well to the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean climate. Includes peat bog and landscaped woods leading to an old-style lumberjack camp. Guided tours depending on availability (bilingual).

