

Regional Road Trip

The Wine Road

Tour distance: 180 km (112 mi.)

Regions: Montréal and Eastern Townships

Autoroute 10 leads directly from Old Montréal to the Eastern Townships (*Cantons-de-l'Est*) over the Champlain Bridge. The “Townships,” as natives call them, are less than one hour away and lie just north of the Canada – US border. In fact, the area was pioneered by United Empire Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution, and their influence on architecture tells the tale. The Eastern Townships is the kind of country where you just pick a road and discover what’s over the next hill – and that could be a covered bridge over a lazy river, a twelve-sided barn or a vineyard.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

1. Old Montréal - Set between the city’s downtown skyscrapers and the St. Lawrence River, Old Montréal is rich in 18th and 19th century architecture, with dozens of art galleries, museums, fine restaurants and trendy boutique hotels. Along the harbourfront lies the Old Port, a 2.5 km-long boardwalk that’s always busy with a wide range of outdoor and indoor attractions.

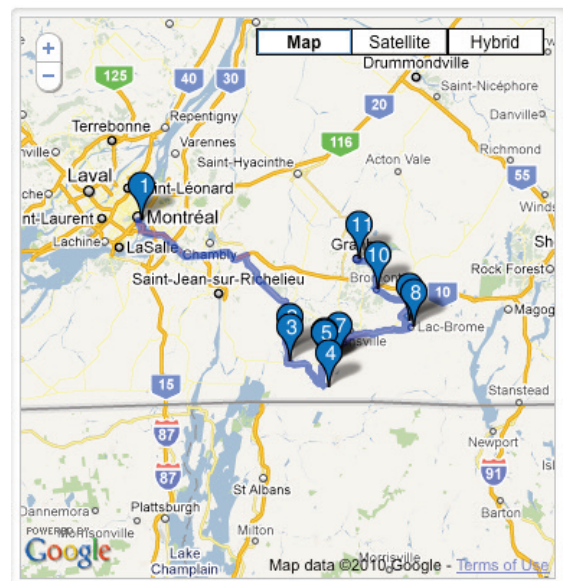
2. Saint-Ignace-de-Stanbridge/Mystic - The half French/half English name of your first stop in the Eastern Townships is typical of an area where the two cultures have intertwined so intimately for centuries. Saint-Ignace-de-Stanbridge looks like an old New England town, with its plain Protestant church and large, wood-frame homes. Nearby Mystic, with its mysterious name, is home to the large, eight-sided barn.

3. Bedford - In August, this pretty town hosts the oldest agricultural fair in Québec, with tractor pulls, a demolition derby, animal judging and rides. Walk the Meules Trail along the Rivière au Brochet and through the town, or cycle the Circuit du patrimoine bike path. Wine connoisseurs will find several vineyards within a 10-km radius, while antique-car fans will get revved up over the Autofest.

4. Frelighsburg - This genuine Loyalist town, settled in the late 1790s close to the US border, is part of the Most Beautiful Villages of Quebec association. You’ll find a well-preserved mill, the General Store, the Grammar School, churches and other historic structures. It also lies at the foot of Pinnacle Mountain, which has magnificent hiking trails – not to mention apple orchards. Come Labour Day weekend, the town celebrates with Festiv’Art.

5. L’Orpailleur Vineyard, Dunham - This 14-hectare vineyard in the heart of wine country has developed several labels in addition to its flagship L’Orpailleur, which means “gold gatherer.” The vineyard has guided tours, a museum, walking trails, wine tasting, a picnic area and gourmet restaurant with *terrasse*.

6. Gagliano Vineyard, Dunham - The Gagliano family bought Le Vignoble Les Blancs Coteaux and successfully applied their Sicilian know-how to our cold climate. They produce wine in all its form, as well as both French and Italian-named labels. Also, they offer guided tours, wine tastings, a boutique and, throughout the summer, picnic baskets, sandwiches and a special barbecue on weekends.



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7. Dunham - All Wine Route roads lead to Dunham, the epicentre of viticulture in the Eastern Townships, with no fewer than 12 vineyards within a 12-km radius. The apple and the blueberry are two other fruit that are grown and celebrated in the area, with cider houses and specialty products to enjoy. La Clé des champs de Dunham, held every June in the picturesque and historic town, is the first gourmet event of the season to pay tribute to the goodness from the land.

8. Lac-Brome/Knowlton - The municipality of Lac-Brome comprises all the towns situated on the shores of Brome Lake, such as the beautiful and historic Knowlton, another one of the Most Beautiful Villages of Quebec. Famous for its antique shops and boutiques, for one day in July you can take the Knowlton House and Garden Tour of six homes and gardens. You can also take in a play in English, visit a lavender farm or jump in Brome Lake at Douglass Beach for a swim.

9. Brome Lake Duck - Who hasn't heard of Brome Lake Duck? Known all over the world, this indeed is the very lake where the waterfowl are still raised the old-fashioned way. The Brome Lake Duck Boutique sells a complete line of fresh, re-cooked, ready-to-serve and frozen products such as confits, sausages, smoked duck magret, pâtés and of course whole duck. In September the Brome Lake Duck Festival offers gourmet tastings, cooking demonstrations, plus entertainment.

10. Bromont - Bromont is the Townships' major recreational town, with a water park, mountain bike trails, regular bike trails, several golf courses, and hiking trails in the nearby Parc national de la Yamaska. It's also home to the Olympic Horse Park, which plays host to some high-ranking equestrian events, such as The International Bromont, the Bromont Horse Trials and others. There's even a chocolate museum and, of course, the Bromont Chocolate Fest!

11. Granby - Granby may be famous for its first-rate zoo, but it's also a good-sized town with a lot going on. For starters, there's a major choral event called the Granby International Singing Festival, then there's the International Antique Car Show, events in the "Mondial du vélo" bicycle race, the Trout Fishing Derby and the Couleurs Urbaines Painters' Symposium. The last vineyard on the circuit is nearby Vignoble Côte des limousins, which also sells fine cheeses meats.

