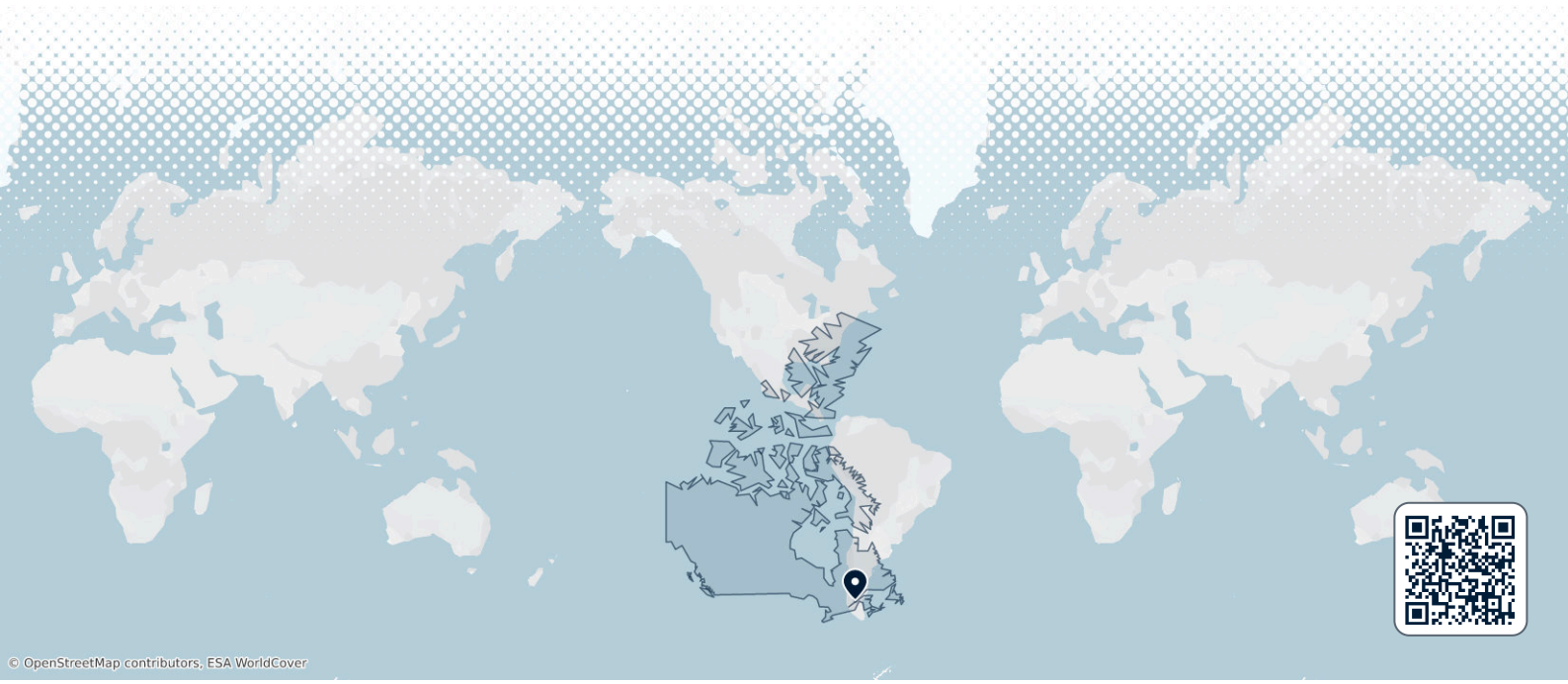


Charlevoix

Quebec · Canada

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Charlevoix is a region on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, east of Quebec City. Steep green hills meet the wide river. Small villages, farms and art galleries sit along the coast. UNESCO named the area a biosphere reserve in 1989.

It suits a relaxed trip of two to four days by car. Visitors come to drive the scenic river road, eat regional food, ski in winter and hike in two national parks. French is the main language, and most tourist services also work in English.

When to visit

Summer and early autumn are the best times for driving, hiking and river views. Winter is long and snowy, which suits skiing. April and November are quiet, and many small businesses close or cut hours.

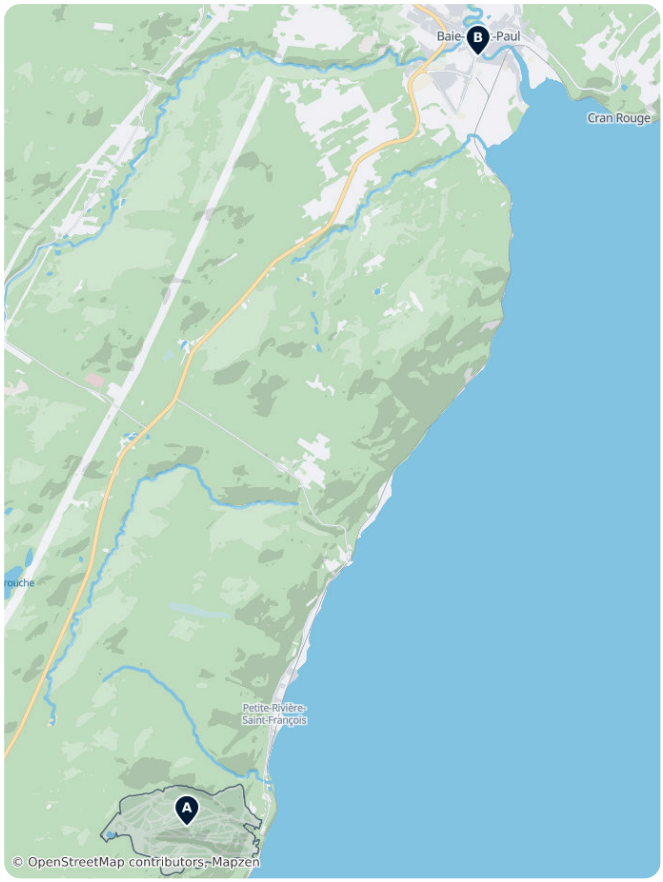
Plan around the autumn colours, usually from late September to mid-October. The hills along the river turn red and orange, and hotels fill early.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for skiing	-8° / 2° Feels like -13°	-16° / -26°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Great Great for skiing	-7° / 3° Feels like -12°	-14° / -24°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Great Great for skiing	-2° / 6° Feels like -7°	-9° / -20°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for skiing	5° / 13° Feels like 1°	-2° / -10°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for cycling	14° / 23° Feels like 11°	5° / -1°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 27°	11° / 5°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	14° / 10°	17 rainy days · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 27°	13° / 9°	15 rainy days · Calm winds
September	Good Good for cycling	17° / 25°	9° / 4°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Fair Fair for cycling	10° / 18° Feels like 6°	3° / -3°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for skiing	2° / 10° Feels like -2°	-4° / -13°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Great Great for skiing	-4° / 4° Feels like -9°	-11° / -21°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5; NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Le Massif is the main ski resort of the region. It has the biggest vertical drop in eastern Canada and views over the river. Mountain biking runs in summer.
- B Musée d'art contemporain de Baie-Saint-Paul is in Baie-Saint-Paul, a village known for its artists and galleries. The museum shows art made since 1947.
- Parc national des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie has deep river valleys and steep cliffs above the river. Daily visitor numbers are limited, so buy access online in advance.
- Parc national des Grands-Jardins is a wide plateau of northern forest and open ground. It has hiking trails in summer and snow routes in winter.
- Île aux Coudres is a small farming island in the river. Cycle the road around it and stop at the old mills.
- La Malbaie is the main town in the east of the region. The grand Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu hotel stands on the cliff above the river.



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What to experience

- **Drive the Route du Fleuve.** Follow the river road between Baie-Saint-Paul and La Malbaie. Stop at viewpoints and village shops.
- **Ski or snowboard at Le Massif.** The season usually runs from early December to late April.
- **Join the autumn colour season.** Hike or drive the hills in late September and early October.
- **Take the ferry to Île aux Coudres.** The short crossing gives views of the river and the hills.
- **Visit the Christmas market in Baie-Saint-Paul.** It is held on weekends in late November and early December.

Day trips

Charlevoix is itself a day trip from Quebec City. These trips start from Baie-Saint-Paul, in order from closest to farthest.

- Île aux Coudres: about 30 minutes by car to the ferry, then a short crossing. Good for a half-day by bike.
- Parc national des Grands-Jardins: about 45 minutes by car. Hiking and views.
- La Malbaie: about 1 hour by car. Town, river views and the Manoir Richelieu.
- Parc national des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie: about 1.5 hours by car, on a long road in the hills. Allow a full day.

Where to explore

- Quebec City is the nearest big city and the main gateway. It is about 1 hour 15 minutes by car from Baie-Saint-Paul.
- Montreal is about 4 hours by car from the region.

Getting there

- **By air**: Most visitors fly to Quebec City (YQB) or Montreal (YUL) and drive. There is no commercial airport in Charlevoix.
- **By car**: Baie-Saint-Paul is about 1 hour 15 minutes from Quebec City on Route 138. La Malbaie is about 2 hours from Quebec City. From Montreal, the drive takes about 4 hours.
- **By bus**: Intercar coaches link Quebec City with towns in Charlevoix, including Baie-Saint-Paul and La Malbaie. Service is limited, so check the schedule before you plan.
- **By train**: There is no scheduled intercity train to the region.

Getting around

- **By car**: A car is the practical way to see the region. Villages and parks are far apart, and local buses are infrequent.
- **Ferry to Île aux Coudres**: Ferries run between Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive and the island, with frequent departures from early morning to late evening. No reservation is needed. See Société des traversiers du Québec.
- **On foot and by bike**: Villages like Baie-Saint-Paul are walkable. Distances between towns are long. Île aux Coudres is flat and good for cycling.

More on the region at Tourisme Charlevoix.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

Villages are small and walkable, but towns and parks are far apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The hills are steep on the mainland. Île aux Coudres is flat and good for cycling.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Yes. This is a region to drive. Public transport is limited, and the parks and villages are spread out.
- **Roads**: Route 138 follows the river and has steep hills and bends. In winter, snow tires are required in Quebec, and roads can close in storms.
- **Parking**: Parking is easy in villages. National parks charge an access fee.

Food & drink

Charlevoix is known for regional food. Look for local cheese, lamb, smoked fish, ciders and craft spirits. The Route des Saveurs links farms, producers and markets along the river.

Eat in the centre of Baie-Saint-Paul, where restaurants and cafés cluster near the main street. Dinner is usually early, and some small places close one or two days a week outside summer. Tipping of 15 to 20 percent is normal.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Tourtière
A savory meat pie, traditionally made with pork, beef, or game, especially popular in Quebec.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Poutine
Fries topped with cheese curds and hot gravy, originally from Quebec and now popular nationwide.

Bannock
A simple fried or baked bread with roots in Indigenous cooking, found in many regional variations across the country.

Montreal-style Bagel · Bagel montréalais
A smaller, sweeter, denser bagel than the New York style, boiled in honey water and baked in a wood-fired oven.

Maple Syrup · Sirop d'érable
Syrup tapped from maple trees, mainly in Quebec and Ontario, used on pancakes and in baking and savory dishes alike.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Butter Tart
A small pastry shell filled with a sweet, gooey butter, sugar, and egg filling, sometimes with raisins or pecans.

Nanaimo Bar
A no-bake dessert bar from British Columbia with a chocolate-crumb base, custard filling, and chocolate topping.

DRINKS

Caesar
Canada's signature cocktail: vodka, Clamato juice (tomato and clam broth), and spices, served with a celery stalk.

Canadian Whisky
A lighter, smoother style of whisky than Scotch or Bourbon, often blended with rye.

Ice Wine
A sweet dessert wine made from grapes frozen on the vine, produced mainly in Ontario's Niagara region and British Columbia's Okanagan Valley.

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Safety & health

Charlevoix is very safe for visitors. Normal care is enough. Keep valuables out of sight in parked cars at trailheads.

Weather changes quickly in the hills and on the river. In winter, wear warm layers and check road conditions before you drive. In summer, bring insect repellent for forest trails. Cell coverage is weak in the national parks and valleys, so carry a map.

History

Indigenous peoples lived along this shore long before French settlers arrived in the 1600s. Villages grew around farming, fishing and shipbuilding on the river. Île aux Coudres was named by *Jacques Cartier* in 1535 for its hazelnut trees.

The region also sits inside a very old meteorite crater, one of the largest impact sites in North America. The crater explains the steep, broken hills. In the 1800s, wealthy visitors came by steamship to La Malbaie, and the area became a summer resort.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Canada at a glance:

CURRENCY
CAD $

EMERGENCY
911

ELECTRICITY



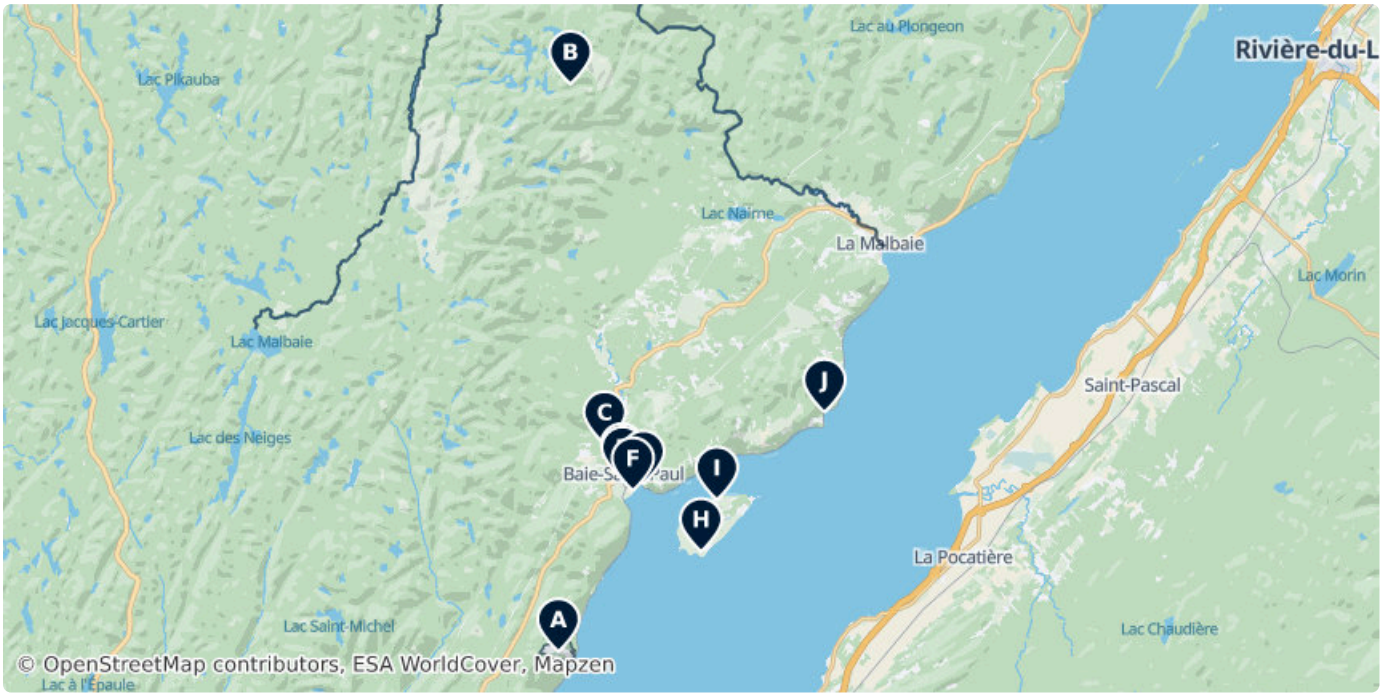
Type A / Type B
120 V · 60 Hz

LANGUAGES
English, French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Charlevoix Essentials

This selection explores the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Charlevoix, where the Laurentian Mountains meet the St. Lawrence River. It features Le Massif de Charlevoix, which boasts the highest vertical drop in Eastern Canada. The list covers the artistic hub of Baie-Saint-Paul and the maritime traditions of L'Isle-aux-Coudres, including its historic water and wind mills. Visitors can sample regional flavors at the Écomusée du fromage and Cidrerie Vergers Pedneault, or explore the rugged banks of the Malbaie River.





A Le Massif

Le Massif de Charlevoix, known as just Le Massif, is a ski area in Quebec, Canada, northeast of Quebec City and directly overlooking the St.

(47.28027, -70.59479)

lemassif.com, +1-418-632-5876



B Malbaie River

The Malbaie River in the Charlevoix region empties into the Saint Lawrence River at La Malbaie.

G0A, Canada (47.80538, -70.57824)

C Écomusée du fromage

Part of the Maison d'Affinage Maurice Dufour, this museum details the production of artisanal cheeses like Le Migneron and offers tastings of regional dairy products.

1207 Boul Monseigneur-de Laval, G3Z2W7, Canada
(47.47261, -70.53127)

laiteriecharlevoix.com

D Belvédère de la Vigie

Elevated lookout providing panoramic views of Baie-Saint-Paul, the St. Lawrence River, and the surrounding mountains formed by a prehistoric meteor impact.

(47.43626, -70.47804)

E Carrefour culturel Paul-Médéric

Multi-purpose cultural space featuring art galleries, local history exhibits, and the municipal library within the heart of Baie-Saint-Paul.

(47.43986, -70.50661)

F Baie St-Paul

One of Quebec's oldest towns, established in 1681. It is characterized by its high concentration of art galleries and historic architecture along the Gouffre River.

Baie-Saint-Paul, QC G3Z 0M6, Canada
(47.42990, -70.49272)

G Le Saint-pub

The flagship pub for MicroBrasserie Charlevoix, offering a menu centered on house-brewed beers and pit-smoked meats in a casual setting.

(47.44295, -70.50760)

saint-pub.com, +1-418-240-2332

H Les Moulins de l'Isle-aux-Coudres

Historic site on L'Isle-aux-Coudres featuring a rare combination of a functional watermill and windmill, used to demonstrate traditional flour milling.

Chemin du Moulin, Chemin du Mou lin, L'Isle-aux-Coudres, QC G0A 0C9, Canada (47.37333, -70.39909)

lesmoulinsdelisleauxcoudres.com

I Cidrerie Vergers Pedneault

Family-operated orchard and cidery established in 1918 on L'Isle-aux-Coudres, producing a range of ciders, juices, and fruit preserves.

(47.42122, -70.37748)

J Plage de Cap-aux-Oies

A quiet riverside beach located in Les Éboulements, offering a mix of sand and rock with views of the St. Lawrence River and passing ships.

G0A, Canada (47.50243, -70.22977)

DATA SOURCES

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