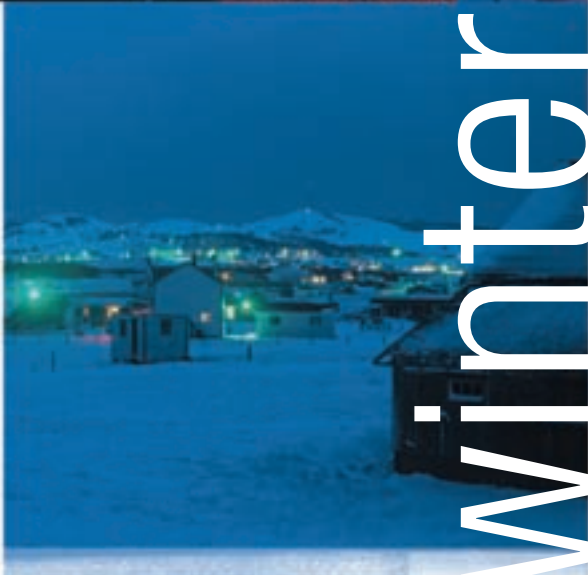


Experience Island life!



winter



Îles de la Madeleine, Quebec, Canada

# Discovery



Viewed from the air, the vision of thousands of black shapes sprawled over the vast expanse of ice is mind-boggling. Once the helicopter lands and you are observing the scene from the ice field, you enter a completely different dimension. You become part of a universe in which only a few privileged humans have ever set foot, an unblemished, pure white world which is reborn from year to year: the nursery of the harp seal.



In the frozen depths of winter, nomadic harp seals begin their southward migration. Every year, the females return to the Magdalen Islands to calve on the vast ice fields surrounding the archipelago, providing one of Nature's rarest and most wonderful spectacles.



Vocal communication between mothers and infants provides a stirring harmonic background to this hymn to life. Scrawny and yellowish at birth, the newborns drink greedily of their mothers' rich, nourishing milk and soon become fat and white. The only break in their arctic camouflage is two black eyes and a black muzzle that stand out against the wintry backdrop. It is fascinating to observe these charming mammals - known to the Madelinots as "sea-wolves" - in their natural element. Over a couple of weeks, the whitecoats gradually exchange their snowy colouring for the black and silver that gives the adults such excellent camouflage in their marine environment. Underwater, the seals' agility has all the fluid grace and beauty of a sublime submarine ballet. These sights and memories will remain with you forever, and even your best photo images cannot begin to convey the magic of this experience for your friends. If you are really lucky, you might even get a glimpse of a hooded seal displaying his impressive "bladder-nose".



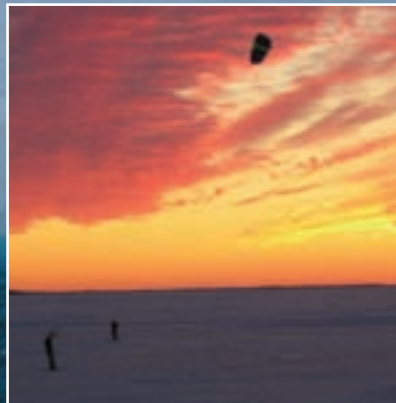
action

A wild of ice



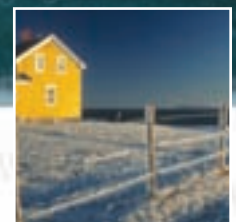
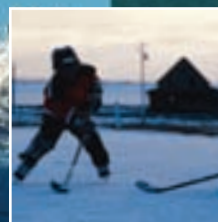
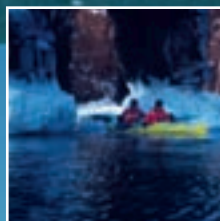
Usually, observation tours to the seal nursery on the ice run through the first three weeks of March. You can also enjoy complementary activities such as meetings, interpretation tours, shows, tours of the archipelago and outdoor sports.

With every new day and every new turn of the road, visions of the unique splendours of the Madelinot landscape unfold before your eyes: towering red sandstone cliffs, enormous, immaculate ice fields, snow-covered hills and valleys. Thanks to versatile, environmentally-friendly yurts, you can even spend star-studded nights under the splendid winter skies of the islands; then, when you rise in the morning, you can enjoy exploring the farthest reaches of the Islands.



Those who are more nautically inclined might prefer to explore the coast from a sea kayak threading its way through open leads between the ice floes: an experience only available to a select few, a silent glide through a miraculous universe of crystal sculptures. Another option, Zodiac tours, cover greater distances along the shores and offer access to hidden grottoes encased in glittering ice. You will be astounded by the scenery, which is totally different from its summer aspect.

And you might take the clue from the Madelinots, who like to say : " In the Islands, we might not know the time, but we always have the time." So take the time for a break and enjoy quality time-off in the middle of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.



Fascination

est fascinant à l'aspect naturel, ces attachants ma (habités + loup-marin + par les h de deux semaines

# Culture

The vast frozen expanses of the archipelago's lagoons are a perfect venue for wind and sliding sports. You may choose skis, board or buggy, but whichever you choose, you can be sure that the constant winds and level surfaces will provide hours of intense pleasure for lovers of traction kites. Those of a more meditative bent might choose a dog-sled tour or a sleigh ride (cabarouette) : both are very interesting options.



A visit to the Îles de la Madeleine at this time of year will allow you to experience the Islanders' daily life. Mostly of Acadian descent.



The Madelinots are known for their warm welcome, their brilliantly coloured, widely-scattered homes, and their local dialect, which is liberally sprinkled with colourful imagery of wind and sea.



Unlike the summer season, their winter life glides along to a much slower tempo. You can share their culture and take full advantage of the island experience by choosing from a wide range of activities adapted to the season and the prevailing weather.

# Outdoor



For information about the Îles de la Madeleine :



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