

6 DAYS IN EEYOU ISCHEE BAIE-JAMES

6 days – Culture and grandiose sights

Indigenous culture and hydro dams



Matagami

WITH A STOP-OFF IN VILLEBOIS,
BEAUCANTON AND VAL-PARADIS



ROAD TO THE ÉCOGÎTES

DAY 1

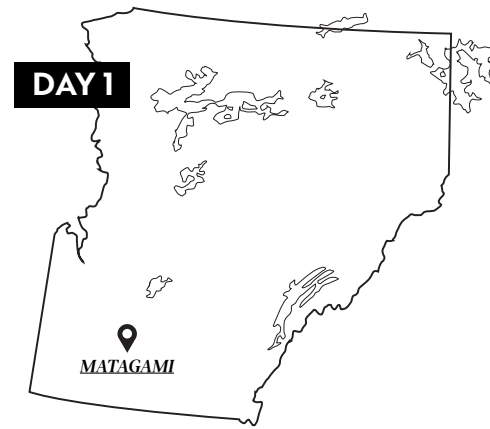
MATAGAMI
Population: 1,367
Languages spoken: French

Before heading to Matagami, take time for a little detour through Vallée-de-la-Turgeon. It's a place that keeps a low profile, but has plenty of stories to tell.

Along the way, you might come across Joutel, a ghost town and remnant of a bygone mining era. Then come the communities of Villebois, Beaucanton and Val-Paradis, nestled in the heart of the boreal forest.

Here, covered bridges are part of the landscape: Des Pionniers, Maurice-Duplessis, Taschereau, Des Souvenirs. Each has its own style, its own history. Once gathering places and crossings, they now stand as guardians of a heritage unique to Quebec.

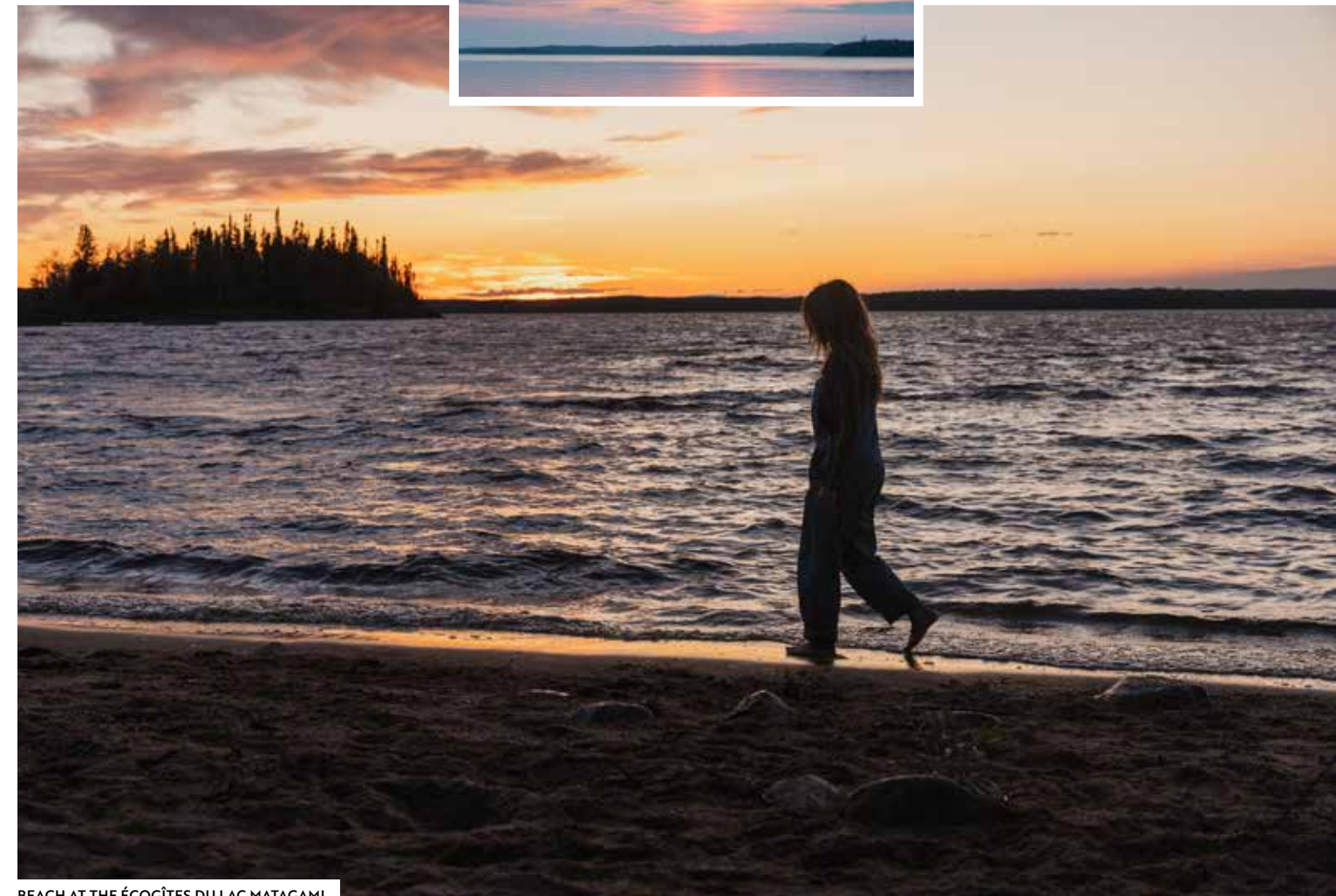
Two heritage churches are also worth a visit: the one in Beaucanton, built entirely of stone, and the one in Villebois, with its chapel dedicated to St. Benoît Labre, the only one of its kind in Quebec. After this journey into the past, head to Matagami for a quiet evening.



LAC MATAGAMI



LAC MATAGAMI



BEACH AT THE ÉCOGÎTES DU LAC MATAGAMI

Matagami

DAY 2



STÉFANIE THOMPSON - PAINTER

Where to stay

Services

- Restaurant
- Fuel
- Pharmacy
- Grocery / Convenience store
- Garage (vehicle repair)
- Accommodations / Hotel
- Shop

The day dawns gently over Matagami. Birds are singing, the air is still cool. Everything points to a peaceful day, matching the activities that await you.

Head to Galerie d'art AU, the first of its kind in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James. Housed in the former "Le Jamésien" building, it's much more than an exhibition space, it's a meeting point between cultures, generations and even elements.

Its name, AU, is a nod to the gold from the mines and to water, the same water at the source of Matagami's Cree name, "the meeting of the waters."

Paintings, crafts, installations, storytelling, photographs... Here, artists and artisans, both Cree and Jamesian, finally have a space to shine. And while the artworks speak, you can enjoy a coffee or pastry with local flavors in the lounge area, right in the heart of the gallery.

A creative pause before tackling the next leg of the journey: toward the Route Billy-Diamond, where the straight lines stretch toward infinity.

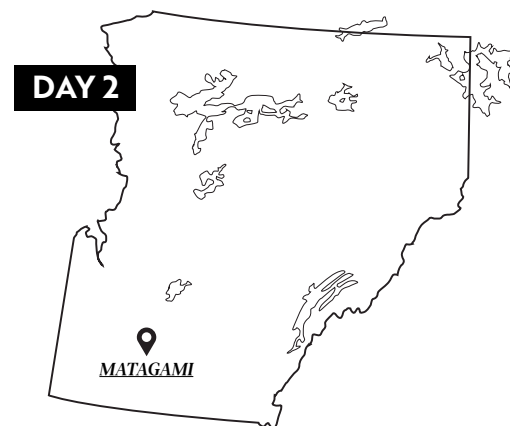
GALERIE D'ART AU



GALERIE D'ART AU



DAY 2



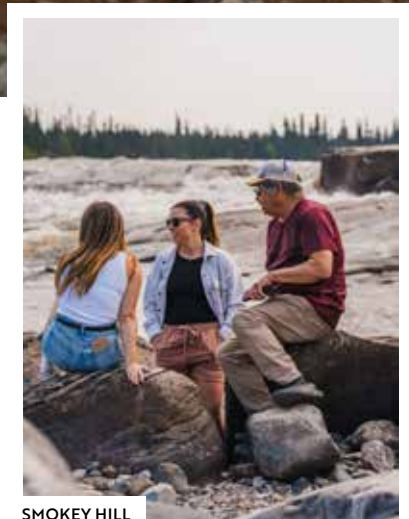
MATAGAMI

DAY 3

WASKAGANISH
Population: 2,531
Languages spoken: English and Cree

Waskaganish

Waskaganish



SMOKEY HILL

Today, we leave the highway behind to immerse ourselves in a place deeply rooted in tradition: Waskaganish, where the Rivière Rupert meets James Bay.

With a bit of luck, you might cross paths with Tim Whiskeychan, a renowned Cree artist whose works explore the land, spirituality, family ties and raw beauty. Canvas after canvas, he shares his culture like a living legend woven together, blending ancestral traditions with contemporary expression.

Alternatively, book a cultural activity through the community's tourism department: prepare bannock over a fire in a traditional tipi, take a guided tour of the village, listen to elders' stories, or stroll through the historic Smokey Hill site. Here, every person and every place has a story to share.

Between encounters, the landscape commands attention: majestic, wild, soothing. The kind of setting that reminds you you're exactly where you need to be.



KANIO-KASHEE LODGE

WHERE THE RIVER FLOWS INTO JAMES BAY



Where to stay

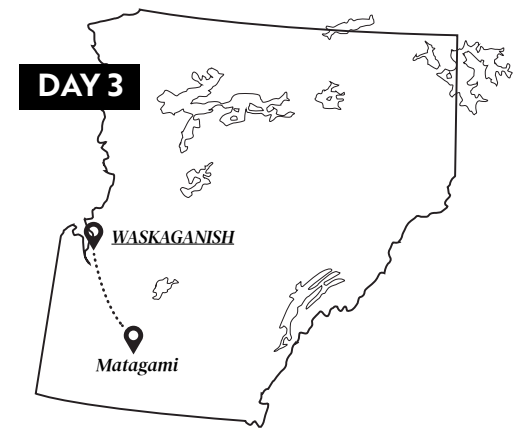
Eating out

Services

- Restaurant
- Fuel
- Grocery / Convenience store
- Garage (vehicle repair)
- Accommodations / Hotel
- Shop



SMOKEY HILL



Matagami → **Waskaganish**
340 km

On **Route Billy-Diamond**
Unpaved section to be expected - [see our map](#)

THE ARTIST TIM WHISKEYCHAN



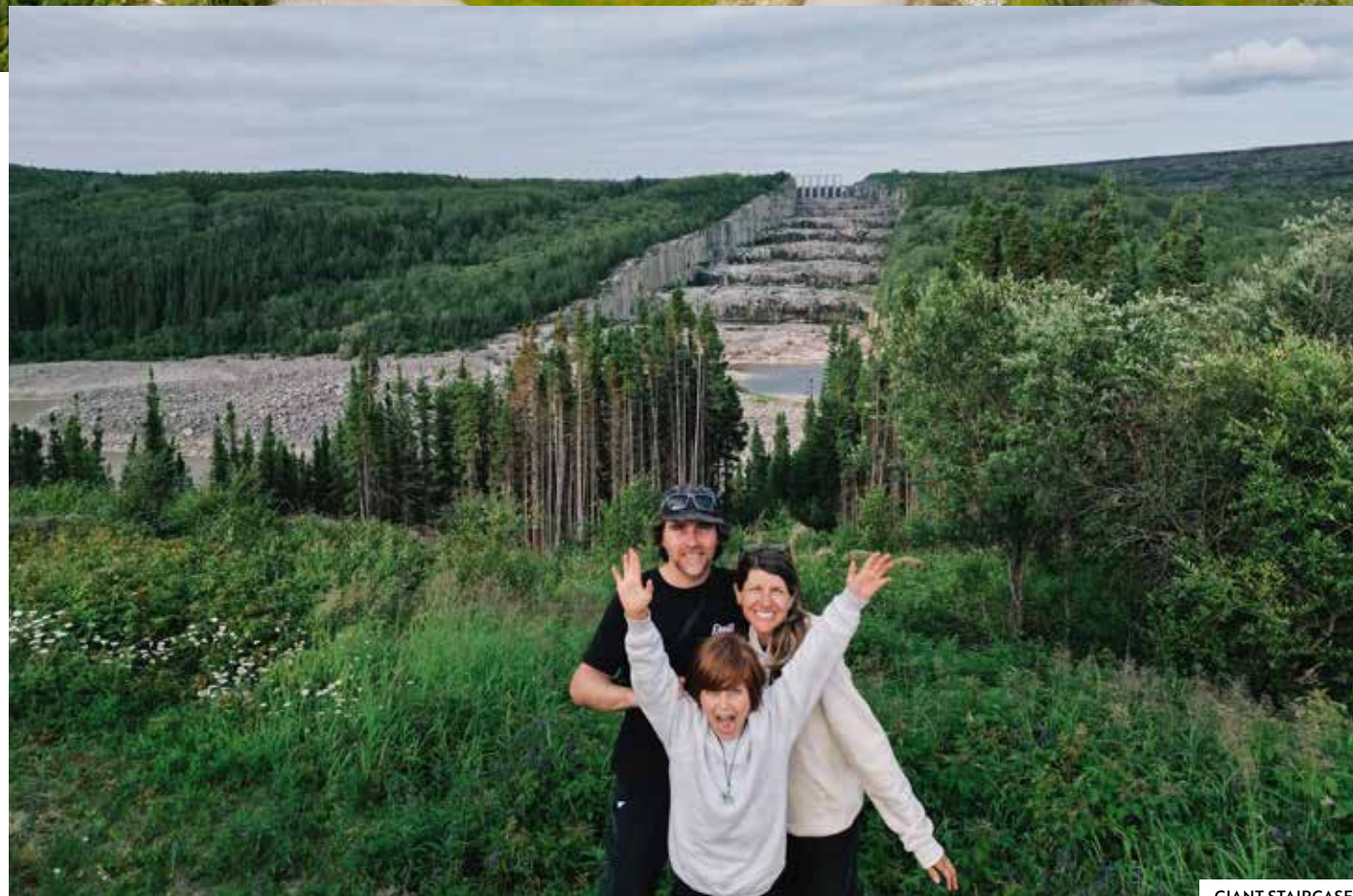
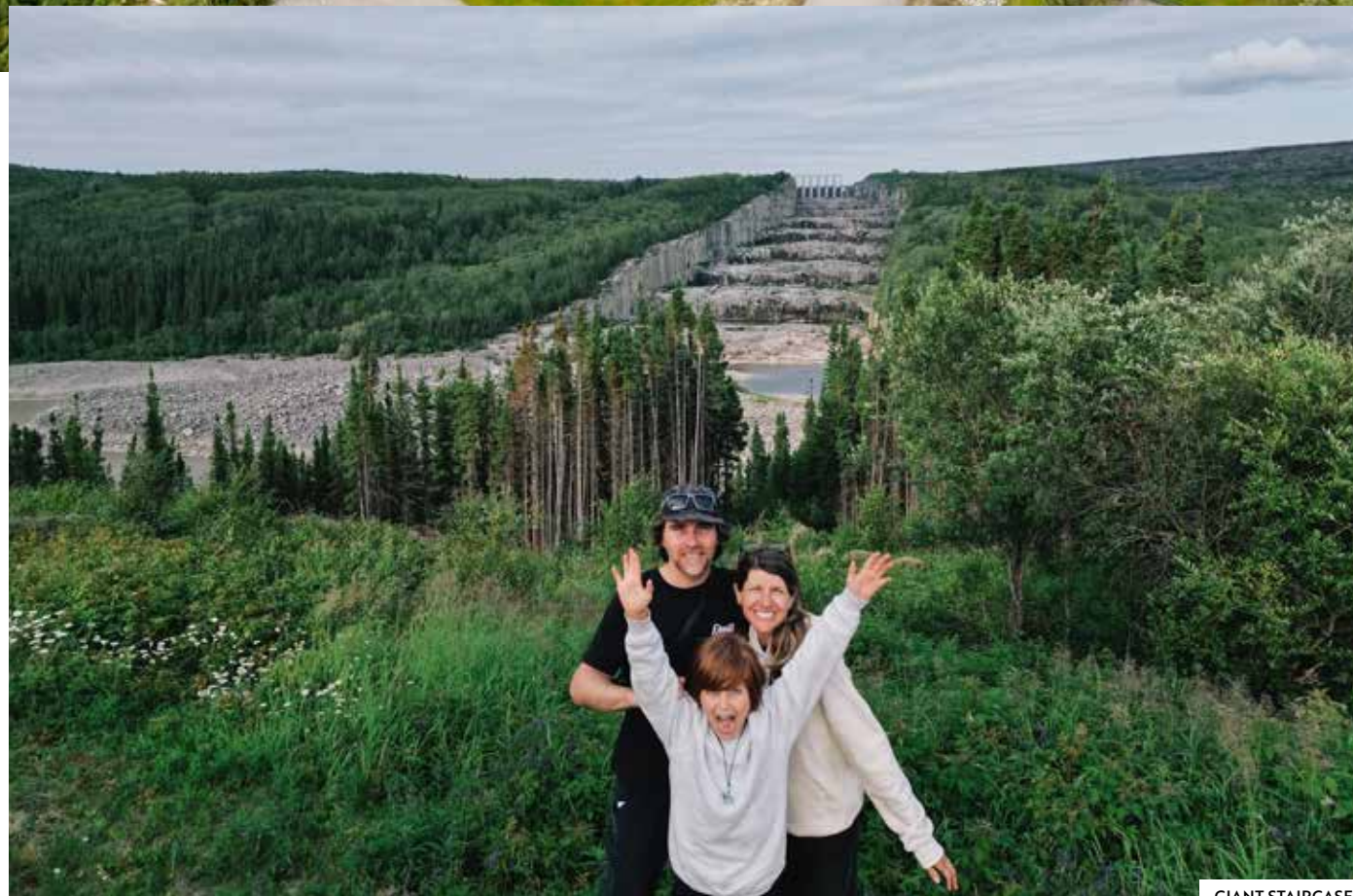
WIINIPAAKW TOURS



Radisson

DAY 4

RADISSON
Population: 200
Languages spoken: French



GIANT STAIRCASE

After a long drive from Waskaganish, arriving in Radisson feels cinematic. Here, everything seems bigger, vaster, quieter too. You can already sense the shadow of underground giants.

Upon arrival, ease into your immersion with the “Radisson, Past to Present” app, a 90-minute walking rally through the village. This circuit retraces the fascinating history of this town born in the excitement of major construction projects, yet still animated by a vibrant community spirit.

If you still have energy, visit the Builders’ Memorial Park, just 5 km from the village. This tribute site, erected on the former LG-2 camp, evokes the daily lives of the 100,000 workers who built James Bay. More than 40 panels retrace the reality of this legendary project.

Come evening, savor the calm. Tomorrow, you’ll descend underground.



ROUTE BILLY-DIAMOND



Waskaganish → *Radisson*

485 km

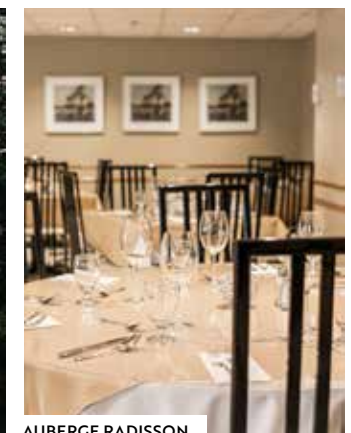
On Route Billy-Diamond



LES JARDINS DU 53^e TAÏGA



CAMPING



AUBERGE RADISSON



Radisson

DAY 5

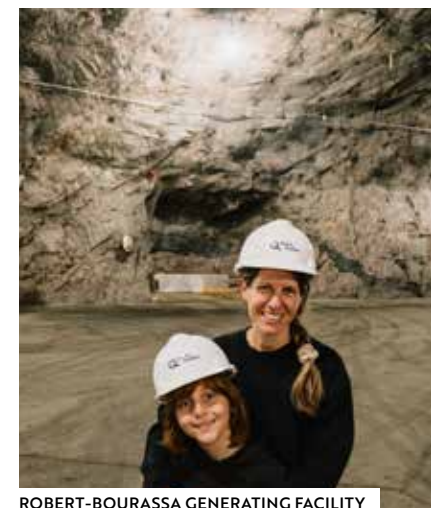
Start the day with the “In the Footsteps of the Pioneers” rally (2 hours), available on the mobile app. Perfect for understanding the technical and historical discoveries while walking in the steps of those who transformed this region.

At precisely 1 p.m., the guided tour of the Robert-Bourassa generating station (LG-2) begins. Bring your ID and prepare to be amazed: you’ll descend 137 meters underground, into the heart of the world’s largest underground hydroelectric plant. Above ground, discover the impressive spillway, nicknamed “the giant’s staircase,” and the dizzying dam, as tall as a 53-story building. Allow 4 hours for this free tour offered by Hydro-Québec (reservation required - 48h in advance).

End the day at the Hydro-Québec interpretation center, adjacent to the plant. A permanent exhibition on wildlife, flora, Indigenous cultures and electricity production sets the stage for one of Quebec’s greatest industrial epics, all in 30 minutes.



RIVER



ROBERT-BOURASSA GENERATING FACILITY



GIANT STAIRCASE

- Where to stay**
- Eating out**
- Services**
 - Restaurant
 - Fuel
 - Grocery / Convenience store
 - Accommodations / Hotel
 - Shop



CAMPING DE RADISSON



ON THE ROAD



AUBERGE RADISSON

Chisasibi



FORT GEORGE ISLAND

DAY 6

CHISASIBI
Population: 5,000
Languages spoken: English and Cree

The road to Chisasibi crosses landscapes where the pavement seems suspended between sky and taiga. Before reaching the community, a stop is essential: the guided tour of the La Grande-1 generating station, at 9 a.m. sharp. More modest in size but not in importance, this run-of-river facility reveals another facet of hydroelectric ingenuity. Here, technology embraces nature.

The Upichiwin lookout, near a traditional Cree fishing site, offers a magnificent view of the land and a window into the deep connections that unite the Eeyou to this territory.

Once in Chisasibi, immerse yourself in the living world of Cree culture by visiting the Cultural and Heritage Centre. This place gathers stories, knowledge and practices passed down through generations. Objects, photographs, voices: everything here testifies to a vibrant, living culture.

At day's end, head to James Bay. As the sun grazes the water, silence becomes almost sacred. The blazing sunset over the bay is more than a spectacle: it's an invitation to slow down, to listen, to feel.

Where to stay

Eating out

Services

- Restaurant
- Fuel
- Grocery / Convenience store
- Garage (vehicle repair)
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- Shop



CHISASIBI



REMNANT OF THE OLD TRADING POST



QUICK DIP IN COLD WATER

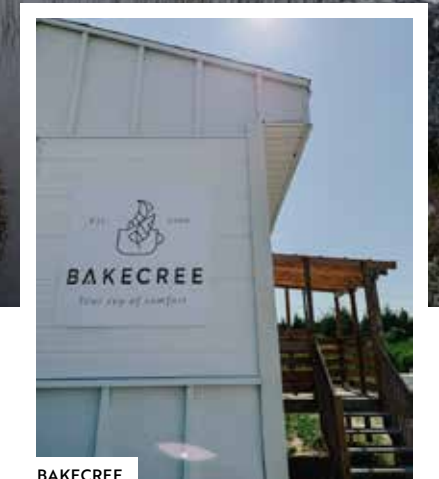
BETWEEN BOREAL FOREST AND TUNDRA



MAMOWEEDOW



MAMOWEEDOW



BAKECREE

Radisson → Chisasibi

108 km

On Route Billy-Diamond



This itinerary has been carefully prepared, but some information may have changed since its publication. If you have any questions or would like the most up-to-date information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Have a great trip to Eeyou Istchee Baie-James!

Eeyou Istchee Baie-James – Tourist Destination

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(from left to right and top to bottom):

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