

The Eastern Townships at the heart of the 2024 total solar eclipse

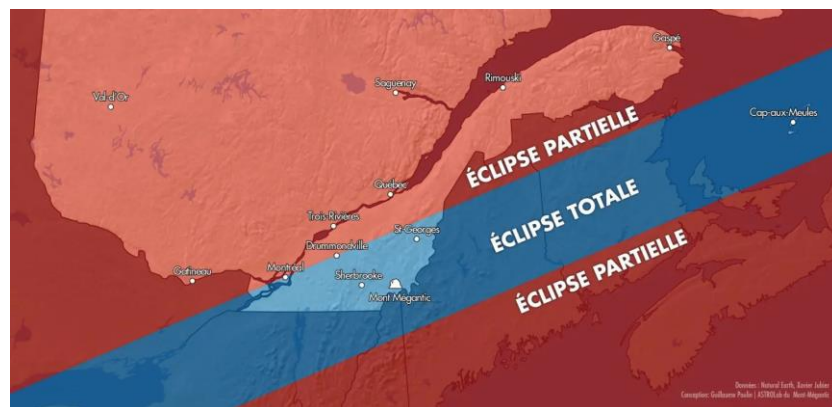
Sherbrooke, February 5, 2023 – The Eastern Townships is gearing up for an extraordinary astronomical phenomenon – a rare **solar eclipse**! This celestial display will occur on April 8, 2024 and the best place to view it will be in this region of Quebec. The eclipse lasts for only a few minutes, so Tourism Eastern Townships (Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est), is inviting visitors to stay for a while longer to discover the area's many activities and attractions.

"We hope that visitors who come to see the phenomenon will take the opportunity to plan a longer stay to discover our beautiful region," says Isabelle Charlebois, General Manager of Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est.

A not-to-be-missed phenomenon

The moon will slowly pass between the sun and Earth, gradually obscuring the light until the sun's corona comes into view with stars in a darkened sky, following the trajectory of a full solar eclipse. This rare spectacle is best viewed from the International Dark Sky Reserve in and around Mont Mégantic. (Covering an area of 5,300 square kilometres it was the first of its kind in the world.)

In Quebec, the last total solar eclipse was more than 50 years ago! The next one will not take place for another 80 years....



Source: eclipsequebec.ca. Data: Natural Earth. Xavier Jubier. Design: Guillaume Poulin | ASTROLab du Mont-Mégantic.

The Eastern Townships is one of the only regions in Quebec to lie entirely within the path of totality of the eclipse, meaning that visitors to one of the region's many observation sites will be able to see the total solar eclipse for several minutes - like nowhere else.

Many local players are mobilizing to organize activities across the Eastern Townships for the occasion.

Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est has set up a full web page where visitors can find all the information they need on the solar eclipse, including a detailed map of observation sites in the region, a directory of special events and activities, and many suggestions for extending their stay in the region. Visit easterntownships.org/2024eclipse

Extend your stay in the Eastern Townships

Are you looking for gastronomy, culture, relaxation or adventure? Tourism Eastern Townships has put together a number of itineraries to make the most of the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. While April is usually a quieter month in the region, the team has put together a number of itinerary ideas around some of the eclipse observation sites, where you'll also find many attractions, accommodations and restaurants open at that time, to help you discover the region's riches.

It's important to consult the websites of the businesses mentioned and check whether a reservation is required.

SUGGESTION 1 - Mégantic and Haut-Saint-François regions: Under the starry skies...

Where to view the eclipse?

2500 visitors will have the privilege to experience the total solar eclipse **at the foot of Mont Mégantic**, Quebec's astronomy capital, in the heart of the first international Dark Sky Reserve. The [Parc national du Mont-Mégantic](#) is preparing a 4-hour animation on an outdoor stage at the foot of the mountain. **Visitors will not be able to drive to Parc national du Mont-Mégantic, so it is imperative to have reserved a ticket on the ASTROLab website.** Those unable to obtain tickets will be able to watch a **special live broadcast** on the [Astrolab Facebook page](#) from 2 to 4 p.m., where experts will explain and accompany the experience of observing a total solar eclipse from a distance.

In close proximity to Parc national du Mont Mégantic, and in the heart of the International Dark Sky Reserve, the [Haut-Saint-François MRC](#) is planning an overflow circuit. The **vast majority of Haut-Saint-François municipalities will have designated observation points**, and many will broadcast the activities taking place at the PNMM on giant screens.

For those booking a stay in a yurt or mini-hut at [Hébergement aux cinq sens](#) in Piopolis, they'll have access to a **total eclipse interpretation and observation** activity offered by Benoit, amateur astronomer and host of Soirées aux étoiles, accompanied by a chaga tea tasting.

For families, head to the [Ferme des Petits Torrieux](#) in Frontenac for a Sugar Shack and Eclipse activity. On the menu: collecting maple water, visiting farm animals, tasting maple products, and observing the phenomenon live from the farm.

Visitors can also head to **downtown Lac-Mégantic** to watch the eclipse. With its many parking spaces, large open areas, wharf and park, the downtown area is an ideal place to watch the Astrolab live broadcast. Tents will also be set up for animation activities and live broadcasts of the ASTROLab program.

What is there to see and do in the area?

If you're a nature lover, you can enjoy some spectacular vistas from [Mont Mégantic National Park](#) , [Mont Gosford](#) or [Station touristique Baie-des-Sables](#). The [Parc régional du Marécage des Scotts](#) and [Sentiers pédestres de Chartierville](#) offer several kilometers of hiking trails accessible to the whole family.

In the mood for a road trip? [The Summit Drive](#), located in the heart of the first International Dark Sky Reserve, offers a 193 km circuit of breathtaking scenery through Haut-Saint-François, Des Sources and Mégantic regions. On April 8, visitors will be able to **contemplate the eclipse from one of the 36 inclined benches along the route**. The [Panoramic Sheds Tour](#), located in Haut-Saint-François, combines road trip and contemplation. The nine sheds, or pavilions, spread over 150 km, are strategically positioned to offer the most beautiful panoramas of this mountainous and starry land. And while you're on the road, why not take a detour to Chartierville's famous Magnetic Hill?

Lac Mégantic boasts several great eating establishments - [Musi-Café](#), the [Café Bistro La Brûlerie](#), [Citron-Vert restaurant](#), [La Garnison](#) microbrewery or the [Kaline Resto-Pub](#). Exceptionally, [Les Mal-Aimés](#) restaurant will be open on Monday lunchtime, April 8, for a gourmet farm lunch served during the solar eclipse (by reservation only).

There are also many accommodation options to choose from: gites, hotels, inns, motels, chalets and even unusual lodgings. There's something for everyone, but you'd better hurry as the region is highly prized for its prime location, proximity to nature and starry skies. **For a list of accommodations in the Haut-Saint-François and Mégantic regions, [click here](#)**. Two new accommodations have also recently been added to the region's offering: [Bora Boréal](#), floating cottages on the water in Bury and [Estello Suites and Spa](#), featuring 11 renovated suites and a nordic spa in the heart of the International Dark Sky Reserve, where you can watch the eclipse live (glasses provided).

SUGGESTION NO.2 - Sherbrooke, Memphrémagog and Coaticook: a cultural and gourmet getaway

Where to see the eclipse?

In the Sherbrooke area, visitors will be able to visit the [Exhibition Centre](#), with a reservation and a pair of glasses included, while entertainment and a live broadcast of the Parc National du Mont Mégantic special are planned indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather. As for the wider student community, they are invited to exclusive gatherings at [Bishop's University](#), [Cégep de Sherbrooke](#) and the [Université de Sherbrooke](#).

In the Coaticook Valley, [Mont Hereford](#) is organizing a 13-kilometre (round-trip) hike from the East Hereford parking lot to observe the eclipse from the summit of the mountain. (By reservation only. Maximum 250 people.) A lively viewing event will also be held at **Parc Chartier** in Coaticook, and the [Érablière du village](#) is planning a festive *beergarden-style* event to celebrate the eclipse.

In the Memphrémagog region, the *Carrefour* in Austin will open its doors (reservation required) at 11 a.m. to show the evolution of the eclipse from Mexico on a screen, and to listen to Denis Laurin of the Canadian Space Agency, a specialist in cosmic observation devices, who will present the science of eclipses. [Mont Orford](#) will be in party mode: DJs, drinks and food at the foot of the slopes, and, weather permitting and with tickets, the lifts will be open as well as one of the ski runs for the day. Maison Merry, meanwhile, will be offering the public historical entertainment related to eclipses in Victorian times and the early 20th century. The [Marais](#)

[de la Rivière-aux-cerises](#) and the [Centre de villégiature Jouvence](#) are also busy organizing the observation of the phenomenon on their respective sites.

What is there to see and do in the area?

Culture vultures will be spoilt for choice! Downtown Sherbrooke is home to a number of museums - the [Musée d'histoire de Sherbrooke](#), [Musée de la nature et des sciences de Sherbrooke](#), and the [Musée des beaux-arts de Sherbrooke](#).

The [Circuit des murales](#) – a circuit of giant murals painted by professional artists, depicts scenes from Sherbrooke's history – a novel way to explore the city's attractive downtown.

In Coaticook, the [Musée Beaulne](#) (a former private home) traces the history of Arthur O. Norton who made his fortune manufacturing railroad jacks.

For a bite to eat, try [Auguste](#) and sample its unique version of poutine, the [Siboire Dépôt](#) microbrewery (local beers brewed on site and its oh-so-popular fish 'n' chips!) or the [OMG Resto](#) for a juicy burger. In Memphrémagog, [Bistro Kòz](#) and [Bistro 4 Saisons](#) will be specially open on Monday April 8, offering a variety of packages.

In the Coaticook Valley, it's well worth stopping at the [La Station de Compton](#) to taste their delicious cheeses! Wander around the Economusée (onsite), where you can learn all about how cheeses are made and matured.

[Hop Station](#), a microbrewery in Coaticook, is housed in a former railway station and it will soon be launching a new maple syrup beer to commemorate the solar eclipse.

Stay in one of the many inns, hotels and B&Bs in Sherbrooke such as [l'Île de Garde](#) or le [Marquis de Montcalm](#). In these intimate, privately-run establishments, owners are always willing to chat to their guests and to fill them in on what there is to see and do in their region. In Coaticook, at [Auberge du Changement d'Ère](#) adventurous souls can stay in yurts or suspended "pods", in a stunning natural setting, and at [Mont Expérience Hereford](#), with unusual accommodations for a superb stay.

SUGGESTION 3 - Brome-Missisquoi and Granby : Exercise. Relax. Eat. What a combination!

Where to view the eclipse?

Numerous activities will be taking place in the Brome-Missisquoi region. Visitors can choose between the **Place Publique in Bromont or the Campus Germain-Désourdy**, where entertainment will be provided by members of the Fédération des astronomes amateurs du Québec. For hikers accompanied by guides, the eclipse will be observed from the summits of [Monts Bernard, Horizon and Spruce](#) in the **Parc des Sommets de Bromont**. [Bromont, montagne d'expériences](#) will open its chairlift (tickets required) to access the summit and observe the phenomenon.

Parc Duhamel in Bedford Township and Frelighsburg Town Hall will also welcome visitors.

In Glen Sutton, in the Eastern Townships' second dark sky reserve, [Au Diable Vert](#) will be organizing a bilingual guided tour of its open air planetarium for overnight guests. The activity will also be open to day visitors, subject to availability in the run-up to the event.

[Mont Sutton](#) will also be welcoming visitors in their parking lots, at the Bar Le Tucker where the live broadcast from the ASTROLab and animation will be shown, or while skiing, weather permitting.

In the Granby area, visit the parking lot of the [Centre d'interprétation de la nature du lac Boivin](#) to observe the phenomenon in the presence of animators, or the [Parc national de la Yamaska](#), where a special eclipse animation is planned.

What is there to see and do in the area?

If you love a good workout, you'll enjoy climbing the walls at [BackBone Boulder](#) in Bromont or the challenge of track cycling in the new indoor velodrome at the [Centre national de cyclisme de Bromont](#). (The only one in Quebec.)

The many mountains and trails around the village centers of [Sutton](#) and [Bromont](#), the activities of the [Au Diable Vert](#) mountain resort and the [Yamaska National Park](#) are also great places to exercise outdoors! At the end of an action-filled day, you can relax at the [BALNEA Spa](#) which has just added a new infinity pool to its facilities. Relax and enjoy the view over mountain-fringed Lac Gale.

Foodies have the choice of several restaurants in the area that offer fine dining in the area- [la Maison Boire](#), la [Table à Mo](#) and the [Bistro Kapzak](#) in Granby or [Le Chardo](#) and [Le Roux](#) in Bromont.

BTW, a number of wineries along the [Brome-Missiquoi Wine Route](#), are open in april. The Eastern Townships, "cradle" of Quebec's viticulture industry, produces over 60% of the wines made in the province!

Unusual accommodations, hotels, cottages... There is a wide choice of places to stay - the [Château-Bromont Domaine Jolivent](#), le [Pleasant Hôtel & Café](#), [Huttopia](#), the [Beatnick Hotel](#), the [Hotel St-Cristophe](#) and more...

Stars, stars and more stars....

If you didn't get enough of this "heavenly" phenomenon, don't worry, there are plenty of other astronomical events here in the Eastern Townships. The region is known as the perfect spot for gazing at the stars, no matter what the time of year!

During the summer, **Mont Mégantic International Dark Sky Reserve** attracts dozens of people who come to watch the [Perseids](#) (meteor showers) which, in 2024, will be at their peak on August 11 and 12. The 5,500-square-kilometre reserve was created to shield the starry sky from light pollution. This move was critical to the work of researchers and for the educational programs at the Observatory and the [ASTROLab](#) in Mont-Mégantic National Park, one of North America's leading astronomy sites. Just a stone's throw from Parc National du Mont-Mégantic and around the mountain of the same name, visitors can enjoy warm and welcoming B&Bs in La Patrie, Notre-Dame-des-Bois and Val-Racine, such as [[Aux berges de l'Aurore](#), [Au Domaine de la Giroux-ette](#), [Au Vaillantbourg](#), [Au Domaine des Montagnais](#), Chalet du Randonneur or Les écogîtes l'[Explorateur](#). And why not take the opportunity to visit the charming village of [Scotstown](#)?

Au [Diable Vert](#) is a mountain resort in Glen Sutton, in the heart of another Dark Sky Reserve (the second largest in the Eastern Townships). This eco-friendly, outdoor centre offers a unique attraction – Observatoires - an open-air, augmented reality planetarium, that allows star-gazers to observe the constellations and other heavenly phenomena.

Other night sky activities take place elsewhere around in the region: hikes by moonlight in the [Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton \(PENS\)](#), a sound-and-light experience at [Foresta Lumina in the Parc de la Gorge in Coaticook](#), overnight stays at a campsite (or rustic shelter) at the [summit of Mont Sutton](#), photographing the night sky during [Zenderfull](#), an event in Val-Racine....Stars, stars and more stars, all over the Eastern Townships!

To help you plan a visit...

Further information about the solar eclipse: Éclipse Totale de Soleil eclipsequebec.ca

To find out all about the eclipse...in the Townships: easterntownships.org/2024eclipse

Further information about the region: [Tourism Eastern Townships](#)

About Tourism Eastern Townships

Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est (Tourism Eastern Townships) is one of 21 tourism associations (ATRs) in Quebec and the official representative of Quebec's Ministry of Tourism in the Eastern Townships. Since 1978, the TCE's mission has been to promote tourism development, marketing the region within Quebec and internationally. TCE brings together more than 600 members representing more than 1,000 tourism offerings throughout the 9 regional county municipalities (MRCs) and in all sectors of the tourism industry: accommodation, restaurants, attractions, activities and events.

The Eastern Townships is the fourth most popular tourist destination in Quebec. The region attracts some 10 million visitors every year, accounting for 6.5 million overnight stays and a tourism spend of more than \$900 million annually. The tourism sector is also the region's fourth largest employer, accounting for 18,000 jobs.

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Source : Shanny Hallé

Media relations

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