

GoMedia **Canada 2020**

Quebec/Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Ancient Forest, Modern Beats

September 6-9, 2020

Theme

The residents of Abitibi-Témiscamingue have no need to compromise.

Life within reach of the region's vast forests means hunting and fishing have been traditional activities for generations in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Yet its residents are also avid consumers of all kinds of culture, and the region doesn't lack for opportunities to experience new artists and events. Explore this duality on the "Ancient Forest, Modern Beats" tour. You'll discover Canadian musical artists showcased in the region's most popular event, the FME music festival. After this expedition to downtown Rouyn-Noranda, you'll be immersed in the enchanting scenery of the tranquil boreal forest and the brand-new Opémican national park. The "Ancient Forest, Modern Beats" tour is all about the contrast between urban and rural life in this small and vibrant region with just under 150,000 inhabitants.

Description

One of the biggest festivals in Abitibi-Témiscamingue is held every year on Labour Day weekend: the [Festival de musique émergente \(FME\)](#). The festival turns 18 this year, and still draws over 30,000 people from across the country. This is quite a feat to repeat year after year, considering that the host city, Rouyn-Noranda, has only just over 40,000 inhabitants itself.

The festival, which takes place September 3-6, focuses on emerging artists and groups who may not yet be known to larger audiences. The region's inhabitants are always hungry for new experiences and eager to discover new music, and the festival is proof of that curiosity.

[Parc national d'Opémican](#) will fully open next summer with the planned addition of the Kipawa sector. This park is sure to quickly become a popular destination for families, with spectacular scenery that will also attract adventurers.

The unique site, dominated by the tall white and red pines characteristic of the boreal forest, offers a remarkable landscape with rugged topography and the many rock walls that line Lake Témiscamingue.

Étoile "ready-to-camps," located by the cliffside, will offer you a space to decompress in the calm of nature and relax in the privacy of your personal unit. Enjoy a short hike on the trails, and cap off the day by gathering for an authentic campfire experience with stories and songs.

Considerations

- As this tour features a great deal of walking through the town and forests, we recommend that interested applicants be able to get around independently and be in good physical shape so they can remain standing for long periods of time. That said, the hiking trails in Parc national d'Opémican are intended for a variety of people, so you do not need to be in extraordinary physical condition to consider this tour.
- FME takes place in many different outdoor and indoor venues in Rouyn-Noranda, and journalists will have access to V.I.P. sections in strategic areas that offer choice spots for taking pictures. Tables and seats are available in certain venues, and free alcoholic beverages will be provided for those interested.
- Internet and cellphone coverage will be easily accessible during the first part of the tour in Rouyn-Noranda. The hotel where you will be staying has all the standard amenities, including a Wi-Fi network. Access to cell service will be intermittent while travelling, and difficult or inaccessible in most areas of Parc national d'Opémican. Wi-Fi is accessible only at the park's welcome centre, so take the opportunity to disconnect and get away from it all.
- The [ready-to-camp cabins](#) feature beds, a dining table and a kitchenette with a small fridge. Bathrooms and showers are located a few minutes walk away.
- Vehicle travel will be limited to approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes of driving to get from the town of Rouyn-Noranda to Parc national d'Opémican. However, we will stop along the way to eat dinner at the restaurant La Bannik, located in Ville-Marie, about 1 hour and 15 minutes from Rouyn-Noranda. Finally, upon departing the park, we will drive for 1 hour and 10 minutes to North Bay airport in Ontario. (Cell network access will once again be intermittent during this time.)
- Participants should pack a variety of clothing for this tour (all details in the recommended items section).
- The tour can be offered in English and/or French only; interpreters are welcome.
- Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue will assume all expenses related to transportation, accommodations, activities and food. All other expenses are the responsibility of the participant or their organization. A valid credit card may be required for check-in at the hotel and to cover any discretionary expenses incurred.
- We expect participants to respect the schedule and arrive on time to previously established meeting points to ensure the tour can proceed as planned.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Sunday, September 6

- 6:25 p.m. Arrive at Rouyn-Noranda airport, travel approximately 15 minutes to arrive at the hotel (Montréal – Rouyn flight with Air Canada Jazz, 4:50 p.m. departure from Montréal)
- 6:45 p.m. Check in to [Le Noranda Hotel & Spa](#), one of the city’s most luxurious hotels, located right in the heart of the FME festivities. There is a restaurant on site, and the location provides easy access to your room throughout the festival.
- 7:15 p.m. Dinner at [Le Cachottier restaurant](#), located just a few minutes from the hotel. This restaurant has an excellent reputation, and offers tapas-style meals, so you can sample a wide variety of dishes and enjoy all the different local flavours and products.
- 8:30 p.m. After dinner, participants will be free to explore FME and its shows with their unlimited V.I.P. access. (Note that Sunday is the festival’s final evening and there is usually a major main show.)
- Overnight Return to Le Noranda Hotel & Spa

Day 2 – Monday, September 7

- 10:00 a.m. Breakfast at the hotel
- 11:00 a.m. Depart from Rouyn-Noranda for Ville-Marie on Lake Témiscamingue (136 km, approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes of driving)
- 12:30 p.m. Breakfast at [La Bannik](#), which serves carefully prepared dishes that showcase the products of Témiscamingue. The restaurant has one-of-a-kind ambiance, with a magnificent location and natural scenery overlooking Lake Témiscamingue at the foot of a verdant mountain dotted with evergreen trees.
- 2:00 p.m. Visit to the [Obadjiwan-Fort Témiscamingue](#) National Historic Site. This spot, located near the restaurant on the same lakeshore, will enrich your explorations with some historical context. This former trading post is situated at the very heart of this vast region and its history, having been witness to more than 6,500 years of First Nations presence and 200 years of commercial rivalry between fur trading merchants. You’ll be swept away by the stories told by your surroundings, the beautiful beach and the enchanted forest, all of which will make for excellent media content for the tour’s guests.
- 4:00 p.m. Depart for Parc national d’Opémican (63 km), approximately 45-minute drive
- 4:45 p.m. Arrive at the “ready-to-camps” on the cliffside of Parc national d’Opémican
- 6:00 p.m. Campfire dinner with activities (music, storytelling)
- Overnight Overnight in the ready-to-camps

Day 3 – Tuesday, September 8

- 9:00 a.m. Breakfast at accommodation
- 10:00 a.m. Guided hike on the trails to the high falls. This linear trail passes through the woods along the Kipawa River, offering views of the falls and giants’ kettles, a phenomenon in which spinning debris gets caught in the current and hollows out the rock. There is also a two-kilometre nature interpretation trail.
- 12:00 p.m. A picnic lunch will be served on site so you can fully soak up the atmosphere of the falls. You can eat on a rocky overhang near the waterfalls or in a wooden dining shelter.

- 2:00 p.m. Water activities on Lake Témiscamingue. Paddle with a guide and explore Lake Témiscamingue in a kayak, canoe or rabaska. The lake is quite deep, 120 metres on average, and 110 kilometres long, covering an area of approximately 300 km². It's easy to see how it got its [Algonquin](#) name, which means "deep body of water."
- 6:00 p.m. Campfire dinner with activities
- Overnight Overnight in the ready-to-camps

Day 4 – Wednesday, September 9

- Morning Eat breakfast, pack bags and pay for personal expenses
- 9:00 a.m. Visit the historic buildings of Opémican Point. Opémican Point has borne witness to a number of important episodes in Témiscamingue's history and is the focal point of [Parc national d'Opémican](#). Its geography, artifacts and archeological remains are evidence of a rich past, stretching from the last glacial period through Indigenous use of the territory and on to the logging of recent decades. All this led the Ministère des Affaires culturelles to grant Opémican Point cultural property status in 1983.
- 10:40 a.m. Depart for North Bay airport, approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes from the park (90 km)
- 11:00 a.m. (Optional, we will stop if participants are hungry at the time, and if not, we will provide lunch at the airport cafeteria.) Stop for lunch at the [Kabane du Panache](#) in Laniel, 20 minutes from our starting point. This outdoor restaurant has well-thought-out, minimalist decor, with a friendly ambiance and lively Cuban music. This unique stand serves up mouth-watering food in a simple design concept: a 20-foot container painted pink and transformed into a chip stand with picnic tables, swings, and a patio with a view of Lake Kipawa.
- 12-12:30 p.m. Arrive at North Bay airport to take the 2:05 p.m. Air Canada flight to Victoria with a layover in Toronto
- 7:35 p.m. Expected arrival at Victoria airport

Recommended items to bring

The tour will be a study in contrasts, so we recommend bringing clothes to wear out in the city as well as more comfortable clothing for hiking and forest activities. A good pair of shoes and warm clothing are recommended, as the weather in early September is fickle and can swing between -10 and 30 degrees Celsius in just a few hours. A bathing suit and sunglasses would be good to pack, temperature permitting. A headlamp could also be useful for camping at night. Finally, a raincoat is strongly recommended, as we would like to continue with planned activities rain or shine.