

CAMPING WITHOUT ROUGHING IT IN SUTTON

Huttopia provides tents or chalets with resort activities in a rustic setting



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The new Huttopia Sutton is all about glamping, imported from France. This idyllic woodsy domain combines ready-made rustic dwellings with resort activities such as wine tastings, a children’s program, tennis and two heated swimming pools.

At Huttopia Sutton you won’t have to put up a tent, fumble with poles or clean the chalet at the end of the season. No more do-it-yourself camping, unless you want to take that on.

Huttopia is a mountainside vacation village of well-equipped cabins and tents that opened recently amid the maples and pines high above the charming town of Sutton in the Eastern Townships. The company took over the beautiful property of Hôtel Horizon, prized for its dramatic views of hills and valleys and its handy location less than two kilometres from the entrance of the Mont Sutton ski area.

WHAT TO DO
The twist is that Huttopia is a rare combination of living in nature and enjoying a family-centric resort with activities and social get-togethers. If you don’t feel like cooking, you can “go out,” but you won’t have to go far.

The domain operates Le Resto, which serves local wine and beer, as well as breakfast and an all-around supper menu of burgers, pizza, steaks, salads and kids’ fare, plus desserts of tarte tatin, crepes and ice cream. And Le Café bakes bread and pastries daily.

Even in a cabin or tent, you’re never too far from civilization. Almost all the conveniences of home are housed in a striking, contemporary glass-and-wood central pavilion with a dépanneur, showers, bathrooms, a laundry, a library and a game room.

Still, Huttopia’s goal is that its guests will unplug. There is no Wi-Fi signal, but there is one television in a lounge and one guest computer.

Kids love the swimming pools, of course, but there also are free programs of supervised activities customized for two age groups — five to seven years old and eight to 12 years old — including nature walks, treasure hunts, circus workshops and poetry classes.

At night, the vacation village presents family-friendly movies under the stars, fireside sing-alongs, magic shows and mini-concerts by local musicians. And grown-ups don’t have to let go of the good life: a farmers’ market flourishes with crafts and food on Wednesdays and the vineyard l’Orpailleur of nearby Dunham holds wine tastings on Thursdays.

Huttopia also organizes off-site excursions to the best of the Sutton area. Most of these activities charge an extra fee: horseback riding at Centre Equestre Sutton, bike rentals for use on Townships trails, hiking along the beautiful trails of the Parc d’environnement naturel de Sutton (PENS) and visits to the Sutton Alpaca Farm. The domain Diable Vert offers standup paddle-boarding and canoeing on the Missisquoi River, and the unique-in-Canada zip-style tour VéloVolant, in which cyclists pedal a bike airborne along a cable through forests and over waterfalls.

WHERE TO SLEEP
Huttopia’s accommodations are all woodsy, esthetically integrated into the hilly forest and built to eco-standards.

Here is the cushy part: The domain supplies mattresses, bed linens, towels, pillows, comforters and cooking utensils, and takes care of all maintenance.

The lodgings vary in size, style and level of comfort. The options are:

Le Chalet: Open year-round, the 20 chalets are fully equipped, two-storey log cabins that can accommodate up to six people, using a pullout sofa in the living room. They’re modest country-homes-away-from-home, with indoor bathrooms and showers. The chalets are sparsely furnished, but the kitchens have electric stoves, refrigerators, microwaves and dishwashers.

La Canadienne: Open approximately May to October, the 40 Canadiennes are comfortable, ready-to-camp tents suitable for



At Huttopia, you can rough it, relatively speaking, by bringing your own tents, or renting out ready-to-camp sets equipped with propane stoves, refrigerators, dishes and bedding. *PHOTOS: HUTTOPIA SUTTON*



Huttopia Sutton offers resort facilities such as two swimming pools and wine tastings. Guests are encouraged to unplug — there is no Wi-Fi.

five people and equipped with propane stoves, refrigerators, dishes and bedding. These are the tents that are used throughout the excellent camping network of the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq).

La Bonaventure: Similar, but for twosomes.

Wilderness camping: If you still prefer to rough it, Huttopia has 30 traditional campsites. You’ll have to bring your own tent, cooking stove, sleeping bag and food, but you’ll have access to the central pavilion and its comforts.

Hôtel Horizon: The original Hôtel Horizon is being renovated into what likely will be a cosy country lodge, scheduled to reopen in December.

Huttopia was built to be green, with restricted use of vehicles on the site, and eco-conscious cleaning agents and systems for water and waste. All of the buildings were constructed of untreated and unpainted wood, and some are raised on platforms to minimize impact on foliage and wildlife.

Sutton is the first Huttopia venue in North America. The company is based in France, where it has eight sites, and founders Céline and Philippe Bossanne are planning more sites in Quebec and elsewhere.

IF YOU GO

Sutton is a 90-minute drive from Montreal via Highway 10 to Exit 68 or 72.
Huttopia Sutton: 1-844-488-8674, canada.huttopia.com; 297 Maple St., Sutton. Pets, \$5. Chalets are open year-round. Tents are open May-October. High-season rates (Aug. 15 until Labour Day) begin at \$32 per night for a wilderness camping space for bring-your-own gear (two adults and two children); La Bonaventure tent for two people costs \$60 (weekdays) or \$75 (weekends); La Canadienne tent for up to five, \$115 (weekdays) or \$129 (weekends); Le Chalet, for six people, \$175 (weekdays) or \$230 (weekends). Rates include bedding (except for wilderness camping), walking trails, on-site activities, heated swimming and wading pool. Extra: firewood, \$5; second parking space, \$5; baby equipment, \$5; restaurant and café; chalet housekeeping; bicycle rentals.

Sutton Tourism: 1-800-565-8455, infosutton.com; Eastern Townships tourism and events: 1-800-355-5755, easterntownships.org.

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