

Taking it outside at exhilarating Sutton

Glamping, mountain biking, hiking — and shopping — beckon in Eastern Townships



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

To go or not to go? If you are considering travel, factor in that the establishments featured in Hotel Intel have instituted new physical distancing and sanitation protocols.

The friendly Eastern Townships community of Sutton combines an exhilarating outdoorsy experience with delightful shopping and creative eats along the town's main street. With the focus on vacationing in isolation, the woods beckon.

Glamping: The international company Huttopia offers best-in-show glamping on a mountaintop high above Sutton. If you are hesitant about surviving the rustic life in tents and simple chalets, Huttopia is the place to start. The site is well equipped, and Sutton's main street is only two kilometres away.

You can cook over an open fire, of course, but Huttopia also has a self-serve bistro for smoothies, fancy coffee, pizza, crêpes and poke bowls, plus beer from nearby Farnham and wine from Léon Courville in Lac Brome. Huttopia's sister property, Hôtel Horizon, cooks up an evening table d'hôte from Thursdays to Saturdays.

Life at Huttopia revolves around the Centre de Vie, which houses reception, a TV lounge and a tiny general store, with essentials such as s'mores and doggie hiking gear. A large terrace overlooks a playground, a bocce court and a heated swimming pool. (The pool currently has a one-hour maximum, and reservations are required.)

The domain accommodates up to 600 people, and it's hopping this season. Huttopia's 80 canvas-and-wood tents, sleeping two to five people, each have a kitchenette, a firepit, a front porch and new beds and bedding. One tent model even has an indoor bathroom. The new Trappeur Duo Nature tents for two people opened a few weeks ago, adding a romantic option.

Also nestled in the woods, Huttopia's 40 wooden chalets house up to six people. Each dwelling is oriented for privacy.

Mountain biking: Two winter sport locales — Mont Sutton, an alpine ski mountain, and Plein Air Sutton, an adjacent cross-country ski and snowshoe centre — have created a thrilling network of more than 30 kilometres of linked trails for mountain biking through the forest. Events include a festive gathering on Aug. 29 featuring chairlift rides, food and music, all abiding by the rules of COVID-19.

"We have moderate cross-country trails, difficult 'enduro' routes, plus climbing trails at all levels and single- and double-track trails," said Patrick Ménard, a board member of the volunteer-driven Plein Air Sutton. Two practice zones have opened at Mont Sutton where parents can watch with pride: a kiddies' "pump track" of small bumps and jumps (built in 2019) and a beginner bike course for lessons (new this year). This season, intermediates have a three-kilometre trail that travels deep into the woods.

Rookies can sign up for group classes on weekends, with special rates for juniors (age nine and up) and families, as well as a rental package. If you really want to learn the terrain, a new guide service also operates on weekends.

All facilities are at the ski mountain's base, where experts can outfit you with a mountain bike, an electric bike or a junior ride. A casual restaurant is open Saturdays and Sundays, serving smoked meat, poke bowls, fish and chips, poutine and veggie burgers.

The newest ride is the Fantic double-suspension electric mountain bike, available both for rent and for sale.

"Mountain biking is a hot sport, so I recommend reservations for equipment and lessons," said Nadya Baron, Mont Sutton's marketing director. "There is excitement every minute, and the views from the mountain are epic."

Fall activities will unfold every weekend from Sept. 12 to Oct. 12.

Hiking: Hikers have a heavenly experience in Sutton, too. The Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton (PENS, or Parc Sutton), a conservation area high atop Mont Sutton, has more than 50 kilometres of trails for all abilities.

General manager Patricia Lefèvre recommends beginners start on the Village Mountain Trail, a relaxed route around town that is accessible at no charge. You can graduate (for a



If you're hesitant about surviving the rustic life, Huttopia Sutton has you covered with glamping accommodations on a mountaintop only two kilometres away from the town's main street. **HUTTOPIA SUTTON**

fee) to Parc Sutton's mountain-top Spruce Lake Trail, the Great Lake Tour and, perhaps one day, the challenging 13.8-kilometre Loop of Ridges.

IF YOU GO
Huttopia Sutton: 844-488-8674, canada.huttopia.com; 297 Maple St., Sutton. Pet-friendly.

Some services end on Labour Day, but guests can use the indoor pool at Hôtel Horizon.

Price range covers low season (spring, fall) to high season (summer, winter). Glamping tents operate May-Oct., three sizes, \$67-\$230. Chalets, year-round, \$169-\$265; including bedding, walking trails, pool, Wi-Fi at reception. Extra: firewood, \$10; second parking, \$5; baby equipment, \$5. Bring-your-own-tent camping pitches available.

Mont Sutton: 866-538-2545, 450-538-2545, montsutton.com; trails open Mon.-Sun., 671 Maple St.

Plein Air Sutton: 450-538-6464, pleinairsutton.ca; 429 Maple St.

Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton: 450-538-4085, parcsutton.com; 900 Réal Rd.
Sutton Tourism: 800-565-8455, 450-538-8455, tourismesutton.ca. Eastern Townships: 800-355-5755, easterntownships.org.



Mountain bikers can explore a network of more than 30 kilometres of linked trails through the forest. **JOCELYNE TRUDEAU/MONT SUTTON**

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Designated pilot to lead pub crawl

An Australian travel firm that normally specializes in overseas safaris is promoting a new type of wild life with an aerial pub crawl of the country's vast outback. Adventurous drinkers, in a maximum group of 10 and willing to shell out \$7,400 a person for the five-day journey, will be flown on a Cessna Caravan to eight taverns over 4,000 kilometres of remote townships. "What could capture the frontier spirit of Australia more than a shady veranda and beer taps running icy cold?" says the Classic Safari Co., which is organizing the trip. "You'll stop off at iconic watering holes including the Tiobourra Hotel, dating back to the gold rush era of 1882, and the famous Birdsville Hotel where your plane will taxi you right to the front door." Beers will also flow at the Pink Roadhouse in Oodnadatta, located in a remote corner of the South Australia state, and at the William Creek Hotel in New South Wales, where travellers have left mementoes from across the world.

Kites damaging plane engines

Kite flyers are sending an ill wind through the balance sheet



An Australian travel company is putting together an aerial pub crawl that will cover five days and more than 4,000 kilometres of the country's world-famous outback.

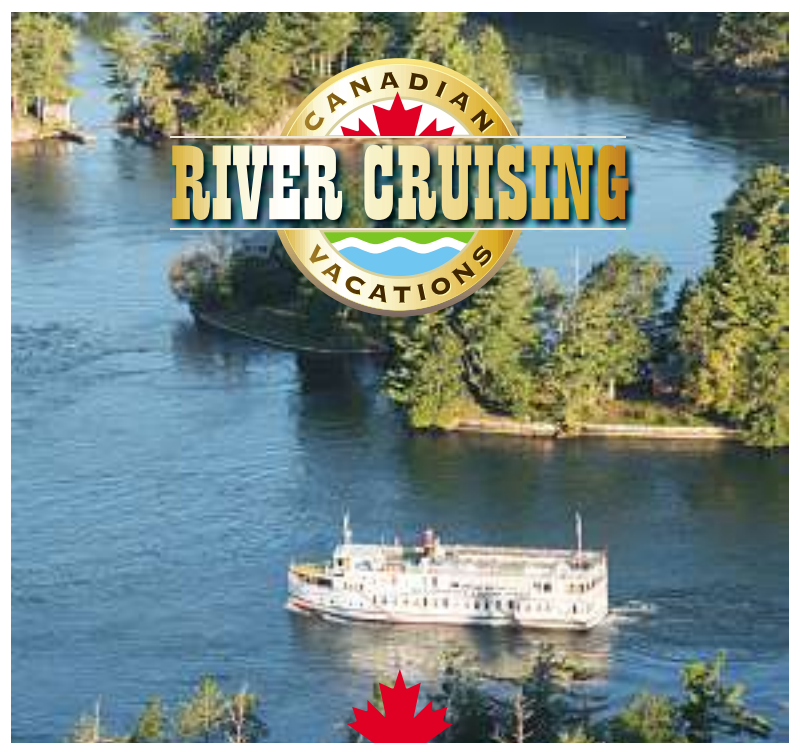
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of Indonesia's national airline. Garuda Indonesia says it is spending thousands of dollars repairing aircraft damaged by kites that get entangled in engines on the approaches to Soekarno-Hatta Airport in Tangerang. "The cost we incur for both the inspection and repair is around US\$4,000," airline spokesperson Bernard Partogi Sitorus told the Jakarta Post. Bernard said the kite-related disruptions are not only a costly inconvenience, they also put passengers and crew at risk. In at least one case reported last month, a kite sucked into a plane's engine nearly caused a crash at the airport west of the capital Jakarta, the website kompas.com said. There were no injuries but authorities reportedly

found bamboo sticks and string tangled in the plane's propellers.

Endangered sites digitally repaired

Modern technology is being harnessed to breathe new life into endangered cultural landmarks, giving a boost to armchair travellers stuck at home. Using GIF animation techniques, a team assembled by a travel insurance firm has restored six UNESCO World Heritage Sites from a list of 53 attractions described by the agency as "in danger." Budget Direct Travel Insurance worked with architects and industrial designers to winnow the list to man-made sites that had elements missing but that could be reconstructed virtually to their original appearance. "By definition these structures are significant to 'all the peoples of the world,'" the insurers said. "But most of us won't get to see them in person." Among the reconstructions on the firm's online blog are Hatra, a fortified city in modern-day Iraq believed to have been constructed between the 2nd and 3rd century BC; Leptis Magna in Libya, one of the most stunning cities of the Roman Empire, with harbour, public monuments and theatre; and the ancient cultural centre of Palmyra in Syria.



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