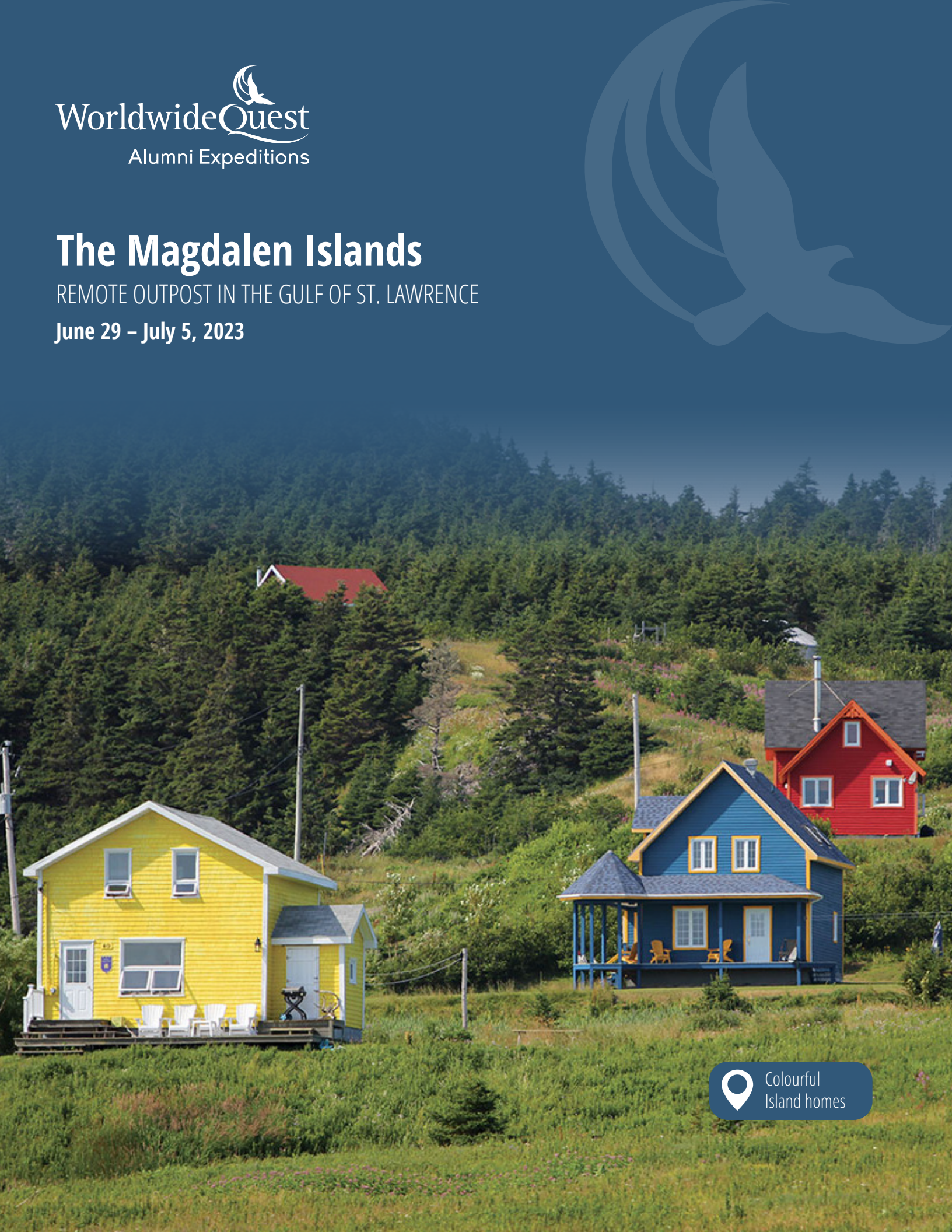
WorldwideQuest
Alumni Expeditions

The Magdalen Islands

REMOTE OUTPOST IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

June 29 – July 5, 2023



SINGLE LODGE STAY!

This tour is presented by the alumni associations of the University of Alberta, the University of Saskatchewan, Western University, McGill University, York University, and McMaster University. All are welcome!

Many miles from the closest mainland, the tiny crescent-shaped archipelago of the Magdalen Islands (Îles-de-la-Madeleine) feels remote in so many ways.

Here, far away from the outside world, a constant breeze sweeping over these 12 islands has sculpted red sandstone cliffs, dwarfed the forests, and formed sand dunes, connecting some islands together and enclosing a series of lagoons protected from the open seas. Settled permanently since the 18th century, the people here have also adapted to this remarkable environment and created a unique culture. Over the course of our week here based in our sea-view auberge, we'll have a chance to explore this world apart and experience a sense of solitude and connection where time seems to have stood still.

We'll walk sand-dune trails with delicate plants and explore the interdunal bogs, fens, and saltmarshes, watching for sundews and other fragile plant life. We'll attune to the sights and sounds of resident shorebirds and waterbirds such as the endangered Piping Plover and the highly localized Black-headed Gull as they pursue their breeding activities along unspoiled beaches and in the lagoons. We'll watch for Grey and Harbour Seals looking back at us as they course the shallows. As we walk along paths at higher altitudes, we may see a number of songbirds in a surprisingly boreal habitat and get sweeping views of the archipelago as we enjoy the fresh sea air. We'll also gain a sense of the cultural mosaic deriving from French-speaking Acadia and the British Isles as we visit the friendly island communities. Our meals are always a highlight, and we'll enjoy selections featuring seafood and more with local flair! Each day will yield something different.

For a short, restorative trip to an out-of-the-way part of Canada, join us as we enjoy a week of discoveries on the Magdalens!

Study Leader

A veteran global explorer, **Doug McRae** has been fortunate to turn his lifelong fascination with nature into an exciting and varied career involving research studies, biological inventories, guiding, consulting, and education. In his early years, Doug was a Seasonal Park Naturalist at Ontario's world-renown Algonquin Park. Since then, he has pursued his exploratory interests around the world. Doug has published extensively in newspapers, scientific, and popular journals. He was a founding member of the Ontario Field Ornithologists and the Ontario Bird Records Committee and has served on the Board of several conservation organizations. Presently he is a Director of the Northumberland Land Trust, a local group that acquires and manages land in Northumberland County, Ontario. Doug will be joined by an expert local guide to add extra depth to your discoveries.

Signature Moments

- Enjoying views from the cliffs of île d'Entrée
- Spotting a Piping Plover on a beach of singing sand
- Exploring patches of boreal forest
- Embracing the delicious local gastronomy
- Photographing the colourful island architecture

Our Route

Black-headed Gull

Red Fox

Willet

© Kate Perez

Detailed Itinerary

Thursday, June 29: Arrival on the Magdalen Islands

This afternoon we'll be met upon arrival at the airport in the Magdalens and transported to our lodge on Grosse Île. We'll have an orientation with our Quest leader, met our local hosts and then enjoy a Welcome Dinner. Depending on time and daylight, we may have some time to begin casual explorations of the landscapes right at our doorstep.
Overnight: La Salicorne
Meals: Welcome Dinner

Friday, June 30 – Tuesday, July 4: Exploring the Magdalens

We will spend the following 5 days exploring various habitats and elevations on several of these islands, most of which are connected by road or sand dune but for one (Entry Island or Île d'Entrée), which we will reach by ferry. We may also visit some museums and artisan's workshops, with a chance to speak with the locals and learn about life on the islands. Lunches may be had in the field, at local establishments, or back at our lodge depending on the day's activities. On one afternoon, we'll take some time to visit the Seal Interpretive Centre (Centre d'interprétation du phoque), which is located right inside our lodge. This museum showcases the several seal species that reside in the archipelago as well as the relationships the human residents have with them.
Overnight: La Salicorne
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Wednesday, July 5: Departure

Today after breakfast and depending on the flight schedules, we may have a chance for some light explorations around our lodge before heading to the airport for our flights onward. Farewell, fair isles!
Meals: Breakfast

Note: The itinerary and accommodations described in these notes are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.

Piping Plover

Island scenery

Tour Details

Tour Cost (per person): Approx. C$2395 + 15% GST
Includes taxes and gratuities.

Single supplement: C$575
Single accommodation for this trip is limited. If you are travelling alone and you are willing to share, we will try to match you up with an appropriate roommate. If we cannot, then the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.

Group Size:
10 – 14 participants

Included Features:

- Accommodation in double occupancy in the Magdalen Islands
- Gratuities for services provided by Quest
- Ground transportation
- Meals as described in this itinerary
- Park entrance fees
- Services of Quest naturalist leader Alan Watson and of a local guide

Not Included:

- Return airfare from your home to the Magdalen Islands
- Fuel surcharge, if applicable
- Alcoholic beverages and bar expenses
- Phone calls and items of a personal nature
- Additional transport required due to any emergency situation
- 15% Goods & Services Tax

Payment Details:

A non-refundable deposit of C$500 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour, and a second non-refundable deposit of C$1000 per person is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

What to Expect

Joining Instructions

This tour begins at noon at the Îles-de-la-Madeleine Airport on June 29. Travellers will be met by our local hosts. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, you will have to make arrangements for transportation to your pre-trip hotel. The tour concludes with a single included transfer to the airport on July 5. Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements.

#SafeTravels

Worldwide Quest has been awarded the World Travel and Tourism Council's #SafeTravels Stamp for adopting health and hygiene global standardized protocols. Learn more.

Weather

Temperatures in the Magdalens are refreshing and moderated by the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We can expect temperatures ranging from 17°C (64°F) during the day to 9°C (37°F) at night. We expect mostly sunny skies with some possible rain but and very minimal precipitation with a comfortable amount of humidity in the air.

Transportation

We use a comfortable 24-passenger minibus for our tour. This should allow for plenty of spacing and our leader will organize a daily seat rotation.

COVID-19 Entry and Travel Requirements

All travellers on Worldwide Quest tours are required to be fully vaccinated and prepared to show proof of vaccination as per local regulations. Please refer to these websites for current requirements:

Canada: https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid

Level of Activity: Easy to Moderate

While this is not a particularly strenuous trip and none of our hikes are particularly long or fast, you should bear in mind that walking on rough paths is sometimes more difficult than on hard ground or pavement. Good firm walking shoes, and perhaps a trekking pole for extra balance, will maximize your enjoyment of this trip.

Accommodation

We will be using a comfortable lodge with private facilities during our stay on the Magdalens.

Travel Documents

Canadians must have a government issued photo ID to board a plane for flights within Canada. British Subjects and citizens of the USA must have a valid passport to visit Canada. Before booking, please refer to the Canadian government website to obtain travel advice for the destination(s) you are visiting: www.travel.gc.ca

Additional Info

Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946). See full details here.

Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing. See full details here.

Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.

Local mussels

How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666
travel@worldwidequest.com

tico.ca
Travel Industry Council of Ontario
TICO#: 2667946

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