



Travel Media Toolkit  
**Labrador's Culture History and Stories**

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# Who We Are

Destination Labrador is an established Destination Management Organization in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador originally founded in 1992.

As a partnership-based tourism industry association, we represent a diverse tourism sector with substantial public and private investments in recreational fishing, adventure cruises, outdoor adventure and sight-seeing tourism product sectors.

Our mandate is to support the continued growth and sustainability of the provincial tourism industry through regional marketing, product development and market readiness initiatives that will attract more visitors, increase length of stay and provide more experiences that are aligned with the Newfoundland and Labrador brand.

## Trade Support

### Business-to-Business

We Can Help. Through regional marketing, destination and market readiness initiatives Destination Labrador supports key travel trade activities such as fam tours, sales calls and marketplace attendance to educate and facilitate the sale of Labrador travel experiences. On the northeast coast of Canada, Labrador offers a different kind of tourism experience. Untouched beauty and vast wilderness are the backdrops for scenic communities, indigenous cultures and diverse wildlife. Unique coastal touring routes, world-class fishing, adventure cruising and winter sport tourism speaks to the explorer in all of us.

### Direct-to-Consumer

Through integrated and partnership based advertising campaigns with Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador, we influence consumer demand, trip planning and counseling for Labrador travel experiences online at [newfoundlandlabrador.com](http://newfoundlandlabrador.com) . Our website [destinationlabrador.com](http://destinationlabrador.com) and newsletter *the Kamutik* offers business-to-business messaging, sales tool and links to our social media platforms;

[Facebook](#)

[Flickr](#)

[Instagram](#)

We work directly with North American and European travel companies to develop and sell Labrador as a vacation destination. Receptive operators who represent Labrador's tourism products have a much greater likelihood to influence travel trade clients to visit Labrador. To this end, we partner with the Destination Canada and Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador to engage partners in key travel trade activities such as fam tours, sales calls and marketplace attendance to educate and facilitate the business and selling of Labrador travel product around the world.

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# Regions of Labrador

## Labrador North

Northern Labrador, or [Nunatsiavut \(Inuit name\)](#), stretches from Happy Valley-Goose bay to the [Torngat Mountains](#) and is the traditional home of Labrador's Inuit and Innu people. The communities are widely-dispersed along the remote coast and are accessible by air, sea and by snowmobile trails in winter months. Today, mineral exploration and development plays an important role in the region's economy.

## Labrador West

The interior region of [Labrador West](#) is far removed from the coast. Much of the economies of Labrador City and Wabush are centered on iron ore mining, while [Churchill Falls](#) is the site of a large hydroelectric station. In historical terms these towns are relatively "new arrivals." Prior to the 1960s when industrial development came to Labrador West, the interior country was occupied by Indigenous Peoples.

## Central Labrador

Central Labrador refers to a cluster of communities around Lake Melville. These include the Innu town of Sheshatshiu, the historical settlements of North West River and Mud Lake, and the slightly larger service centre of [Happy Valley-Goose Bay](#). The multi-national [military airbase](#) at Goose Bay played an important economic role in the region. A commercial airport at Goose Bay is a hub for air travel within Labrador, and a vital overseas link with the largest airport runway in Atlantic Canada.

## Southern Labrador

Southern Labrador is home to [NunatuKavut](#), a territory of Inuit who reside primarily in south and central Labrador. The region extends from Cartwright in the north to L'Anse au Clair in the south along provincial highway Route 510. These small communities, most with populations primarily in the hundreds, are located along the coastal region where commercial fishing was for centuries and still is the economic mainstay of the region. Labrador's three top attractions are located in this region.

# Travel Information

New, modern transportation networks have now expanded the vacation footprint of many destination visitors. In 2022, the completion of the Quebec-Labrador Highway has created a new itinerary named Expedition 51, a modern highway loop which connects Quebec and Labrador with all of Eastern Canada, the only one of its kind in Canada.

From Quebec to Labrador and over to the Island of Newfoundland, travelers on motorcycles, recreational vehicles, motorcoach and much more are travelling through Labrador and around Eastern Canada in one loop, eliminating the need for repeat ferry crossings from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland.

Traditional travel routes and popular itineraries like the Three UNESCOs continue to link Labrador with the Viking Trail, which are still attracting thousands of visitors to Newfoundland's UNESCO World Heritage Sites at L'Anse aux Meadows Viking site and Gros Morne National Park with the 16th century Basque Whaling UNESCO Site at Red Bay. Lately it is the adventure seekers and history buffs seeking bucket-list northern curiosities like icebergs, aurora borealis, and polar bears.

All will enjoy a mix of coastal and continental climate zones featuring coastal hikes, warm sandy beaches, vibrant year-round community festivals, and people accustomed to extending local hospitality to visitors from all over the world. It's easy to get to Labrador. There are convenient connections by air, sea and land. Labrador borders the Province of Quebec in the South and West and is separated from the Island of Newfoundland by the Strait of Belle Isle.

## From Newfoundland via the MV Qajaq W

Newfoundland and Labrador are separated by a body of water called the Strait of Belle Isle. A [ferry service](#) operates across the Strait from St. Barbe, Newfoundland to Blanc Sablon, Quebec. Blanc Sablon is located just a few minutes drive from Quebec-Labrador border. This auto/passenger ferry service is operated by the Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador and is *the fastest and cheapest ferry service link* connecting the Island of Newfoundland to other destinations in Canada.

From the Island of Newfoundland, take the Trans-Canada Highway (Route 1) which spans the island of Newfoundland from Port aux Basques to St. John's – 905 kilometres. All highways off Route 1 are paved. Most coastal roads are paved with posted speed limits of 60–100 kilometres per hour. From Deer Lake, NL travel north via route 430 the Viking Trail, to the ferry service at St. Barbe, NL to Labrador via Blanc Sablon, QC. During peak season, the ferry runs several times each day, and the crossing takes less than two hours. The trip is a great opportunity to spot icebergs, whales and birds, so keep a lookout while you're on board. There's a switch in time zones as you cross between the provinces, be sure to double check crossing times (the schedule on the website uses Newfoundland Time for all departures).

## From Québec by Road to Labrador City

From anywhere in North America, arrive in Labrador via Québec highway routes QC 138 and QC 389 that connects with the Québec-Labrador border at Labrador City, NL. From there, follow Expedition 51° East to Happy Valley-Goose Bay then South to Blanc Sablon, QC to travel on the daily, year-round ferry service, or 1.5 hour trip, at Blanc Sablon, QC to St. Barbe, Newfoundland.

## Flying to Labrador

Commercial air carriers provide daily flights to Labrador with arrivals at Blanc Sablon, Goose Bay and Wabush. (Note that Goose Bay is part of the amalgamated community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.)

To Blanc Sablon: Flights are available to Blanc Sablon from Goose Bay, St. John's (Newfoundland) and Montreal. Located in Quebec, Blanc Sablon is just a few minutes' drive from Labrador. Blanc Sablon is served by PAL Airlines.

To Goose Bay and Wabush: Air Canada's in-line partner PAL Airlines provide daily flights to both communities from St. John's, Gander, Deer Lake, Halifax and Montreal.

## Flying Within Labrador

To Northern Labrador: Daily flights are available to North Coast communities from Goose Bay. [Air Borealis](#) serves these communities.



# Distinct Labrador Cultures

## Innu

Labrador has two Innu communities, Sheshatshiu & Natuashish. The people of Natuashish call themselves Mushuau Innu, while the people in Sheshatshiu call themselves Sheshatshiu Innu. Archaeological evidence suggests Innu ancestors inhabited Labrador over 7,000 years ago. Both groups of Innu stem from one culture of caribou hunters. Innu in both communities speak Innu-aimun, but have slightly different dialects.

The Innu were traditionally nomadic, traveling the interior of Labrador and Quebec in the winter to hunt mostly for caribou, and migrating back to the coast in the summer to fish. There is archeological evidence that Innu have been traveling the interior for thousands of years. You can experience the history of the Innu at the [Labrador Interpretation Centre](#) in North West River, NL.

Interestingly enough, the Labrador Innu have only really integrated with European settlers in the past 65-75 years. Flooding of traditional lands along the Churchill River during the building stages of the Upper Churchill Hydro Dam, among other modern day influences, have resulted in a shift to a more sedentary lifestyle in the communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish.

The New Dawn Agreement, signed in November 2011, provides compensation to the Labrador Innu for impacts associated with the Upper Churchill Falls development over the full project lifecycle and will also compensate the Innu for land loss because of the Lower Churchill damming project at Muskrat Falls and planned Gull Island project, currently being developed.



## Inuit

The Inuit in Labrador account for roughly 20% of the region's total population. In January 2005 a new era of self-government began for the Inuit people in Northern Labrador, a region now called [Nunatsiavut](#), "our beautiful land".

Archaeological evidence suggests that there were many different groups of Inuit living in Southern and Northern Labrador about four thousand years ago.

The Dorset people survived in areas of Northern Labrador until about 600 years ago when a second wave of arctic peoples arrived known as the Thule (Greenland), the ancestors of today's Inuit. The Inuit travelled as far south as the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland to trade with Europeans during the 17th and 18th centuries.

In 1752, Moravian Missionaries from Europe travelled to Labrador to set up missions or stations in the region. These missions had a strong





influence on the history of northern Labrador and are still vibrant with several communities today.

The Inuit of Nunatsiavut also play a strong role in preservation and public education in one of Canada's newest national parks - [Torngat Mountains National Park](#) located near the tip of the Labrador Peninsula.

## NunatuKavut

[NunatuKavut](#) Inuit, are primarily the descendants of early European male settlers and Inuit women, but these people also have and honor ancestors of Inuit, Innu, French, Scottish, Irish and English origins.

Many of these men who married Inuit women blended their traditional ways with those of Inuit ancestry in other regions of Labrador. Winters were spent in sheltered bays where there was timber for firewood and construction as well as easy access to the interior for trapping and hunting. Summer places, in carefully chosen harbors or on islands provided easy access to the sea for cod, salmon and seal fisheries.

Today Southern Inuit traditions still resonate with the ways of their elders. Southern Inuit people occupy and use land throughout Labrador and most live in the Lake Melville and Southern Labrador regions.

## Settlers

Some say [Settlers are ancestors of European countries](#), others say that Settlers are all 'non indigenous' who live in Labrador, including those who come from the Island portion of the province as well as other areas in Canada. In either case, the origin of all Labrador settlers is vast and culturally diverse.



Fishermen from France came to Labrador's south coast in the 1700's for cod and seal fisheries. Many of the communities on the coast still bear French names. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763 most of New France, including Labrador, became part of British North America.

Later, fishermen from England and the island of Newfoundland, who had previously used Labrador as a seasonal home, established permanent residence along the bays and inlets along the Atlantic coastline of Labrador.



# Labrador Story Ideas

## Spirits of the Dead

▲ The greatest natural light show on earth, the [Northern Lights](#) (Aurora Borealis) fill Labrador's night sky with undulating curtains of light, an average of 243 nights per year. Science tells us the Northern Lights are caused by charged particles from the sun which become trapped in Earth's magnetic field. When you witness this incredible phenomenon, you might be tempted to believe that they are the spirits of the dead, dancing and waving in the sky, as Labrador's indigenous peoples once believed.

▲ [Torngat Mountains National Park](#) at the near tip of northern Labrador has been dubbed the place of spirits - its traditional Inuit name, 'Torngait,' translating to exactly that.

## Romancing the Stone

▲ [Ramah](#), on the north coast of Labrador, is the only place in the world where one can find deposits of Chert. This 15-million year old stone was used by the ancient peoples for tools and weapons. It is not uncommon to come across an arrowhead made of Ramah Chert while hiking, especially in places like Torngat Mountains National Park. Actively quarried from 5,000 to 600 years ago by several ancient First Peoples cultures of the northeast, Ramah chert was used in the manufacture of everyday tools and other objects. The most widely traded tool stone known in the Canadian Northeast, it figured in long-distance exchange networks that extended throughout eastern Canada and into New England. The stone itself resembles black glass, and is as beautiful as it is useful.

▲ [Labradorite](#) is a crystallized stone unique to Tabor and Ramah Bay on Labrador's remote north coast. It looks like an ordinary stone until it is turned to the right angle; like magic, it suddenly glows a brilliant hue of blue, green, gold, purple and pink, precisely emulating the Northern Lights. Labradorite is used in many crafts, including jewelry, tiles and sculptures.



## Don't Miss the Boat!

▲ An ocean cruise with a twist! Instead of heading to tropical climates, cruise the Labrador Sea to Nunatsiavut. Experience unique indigenous culture and breathtaking Arctic scenery. Interact with local residents, artisans and learn traditional activities in Labrador's remote isolated indigenous communities. This 5-day passenger/freight ferry adventure has modern on board amenities and is likely the cheapest voyage on the Arctic coastline in Canada. A new modern vessel is planned to operate this service in 2019 replacing the MV Northern Ranger (pictured here).

## Legends of the Land

▲ Ancient spirits, elusive animals, strange lights, haunted traplines - fact or fiction? Labrador's unique folklore is perfect for an evening around the campfire. The [Torngat Mountains](#) are known to the Inuit as the 'abode of

the master spirit' in their mythology. Their name for the region, Torngait, means a place of spirits and is derived from the presence of Torngarsoak who was believed to control the life of sea animals and took the form of a huge polar bear.

▲ Recall a time of war when a [German submarine](#) grounded itself deep inside the Churchill River, the longest river in Atlantic Canada. Step back in time with [Elizabeth Penashue](#), an Innu elder who keeps the tradition of her people alive with an annual canoe/camping expedition down the Churchill River.

▲ Experience a unique sport honoring the traditions of the Labrador trapper with the annual [Trapline Marathon](#), ran each Thanksgiving Weekend between North West River and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Trapline is a certified Boston Marathon qualifier at 42.2km and has three different starting points - full marathon, half marathon and 10km.

## Land of the Splake and Flummy

▲ Labrador's indigenous foods are both ambrosia to the gourmet, and sustenance to the campfire aficionado. Smoked [Arctic char](#), blue mussels, raw and cooked scallops, partridgeberry tarts and bakeapple syrup, flummies and

ptarmigan are all served up with an extra helping of Labrador hospitality. If you're lucky you might also enjoy a fresh meal of brook trout or lake trout, and if you're really fortunate, it may even be a splake, a hybrid of two fish species resulting from the crossing of a male brook trout and a female lake trout.

### Canada's First "Factory"

▲ Quick...What was Canada's first factory? A saw mill? A steel mill? Wrong and wrong. Actually, the first industry to be established in the country now known as Canada was a seasonal whale oil factory built by Basque fishermen in [Red Bay, NL](#), way back in the 1500s! The story is one of hardship, profit and exploitation, and is Canada's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site, inducted in June 2013.

### Remnants of an Ancient Age

▲ A quiet, unassuming [patch of field](#) in L'Anse Amour, NL, is actually one of the most important archaeological finds in North America. For this is where a young Maritime Archaic Indian child was buried, with ceremony, some 7,500 years ago - evidence of the first 'funeral' ever held on this continent.



### Chronicling the Past

▲ The history and traditions of Labrador are being preserved in a unique quarterly publication called [Them Days Magazine](#). In addition to a multi-media archive housing a trove of stories, there are photographs and transcripts from tape-recorded conversations with long-time Labrador residents. Together it provides a fascinating glimpse into Labrador's past. *Them Days* editor, Aimee Chaulk, carries on the work of first editor Doris Saunders - recipient of the Order of Canada for her work with this magazine.

### Iceberg Alley

▲ Every spring and summer, visitors to the magnificent [coast of Labrador](#) are treated to an incredible sight: a grand parade of hundreds of sky-scraper sized icebergs! In fact, the icebergs are so numerous off Labrador's coast that this area has been nicknamed "Iceberg Alley." Iceberg season runs from June to August. You can track icebergs floating in Iceberg Alley, right [here!](#)

### One of the Largest Underground Powerhouses in the World

▲ In the midst of one of the world's greatest wilderness frontiers is one of the greatest human technological achievements: the [Hydro Electric Generating Plant](#) at Churchill Falls. Here the underground turbines at Churchill Falls are the second largest in the world, and produces at capacity over 5,000 mega watts of electricity to Quebec and the northeastern United States.

▲ After touring the powerhouse, view a waterfall twice as high as Niagara Falls on a 20 min hike off route 500, along the Churchill River on the trail to Bowdoin Canyon - the massive canyon left after the rerouting of water for the hydro dam.



### Missionaries and Medicine

▲ Years before roads, advanced marine transportation and frequent flights, people living in smaller towns and villages along the northern Labrador coastline had to rely on dog teams and infrequent trips by small freight boats for travel, mail, and most importantly, medical services. Labrador's history tells the tale of hardships amongst Indigenous Peoples and [European Missionaries](#), and the death-toll of many lost to diseases such as Tuberculosis and the Spanish Flu influenza pandemic.

## Precious Traditions Preserved

▲ A visit to Labrador is a chance to collect one-of-a-kind, handmade crafts. Inuit soapstone carvings, Innu tea dolls, duffle parkas, moccasins made from hand-tanned caribou hide, grassworks, beadwork and embroidery, are just some of the crafts produced by Labradorians. Some do it merely to keep the tradition alive, others have it as their main source of income, and many have kept it as a highly skilled hobby. These crafts can be seen in many places in Labrador, including Torngat Arts & Crafts in Nain, the Lighthouse Gifts at Point Amour Lighthouse, the [Craft Shop](#) in Rigolet, the [Makkovik Craft Centre](#) in Makkovik, [Mealy Mountain Gallery](#) in Cartwright and at Slippers and Things in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.



## History on the Edge of the Labrador Current

▲ Imagine being one of the few men and women tucked inside the salt store on historic Battle Island when Commander Robert E. Peary held a press conference to announce his successful journey at being the first person to reach the North Pole. Experience both the quiet beauty and the boisterous history of [Battle Harbour](#) from the comforts of your own authentically restored, historic accommodation, the only National Historic Site in Canada you can overnight. Unwind at the lounge or spa after a day of hiking historic islands and properties, watching majestic icebergs drift in the Labrador Current and whales circle your tour boat. Battle Harbour and the St. Lewis Inlet are feeding grounds to upwards of 17 species of whales and many species of seabirds migrate through or breed in the area.

## Worth a Thousand Words

▲ Labrador offers many exciting [photo opportunities](#) for professionals and amateur photographers alike! An abundance of wildlife, sea life, people and unique places form a colorful mosaic - the very essence of Labrador. Each region of Labrador is so diverse you won't know what to focus on first. Watch our [Picture Perfect](#) video for just a few ideas on what to capture.

## Nothing Fishy About These Stories

▲ Labrador is world-renowned for its [sport fishing](#)...and for good reason! The countless lakes, rivers and streams crisscrossing Labrador are teeming with trophy-sized salmon and trout; in fact, a record-breaking 22lb ouananiche "wan-an-ish" (land-locked salmon) was caught in Labrador West at Lobstick Lake. With a catch like that, fishermen don't have to make up stories about "the one that got away."

## Thar She Blows!

▲ In the 1500s, fishermen from the Basques provinces of France and Spain braved the North Atlantic in pursuit of valuable whale oil in the Labrador Straits. Today, whales still attract people from all over the world, but now, they're not being hunted but showcased beautifully as a main attraction when touring Labrador. Whales can be admired from





most all coastal communities, right from shore on the historic [Labrador Pioneer Footpath](#)! The viewing is particularly spectacular in Southern Labrador around the [Point Amour Lighthouse](#), [Red Bay](#) and [Battle Harbour](#).

### Over 30 Years of Folk Music - the North West River Beach Festival

▲ Relax & enjoy 20+ hours of non-stop live entertainment by Labrador recording artists and performers at the [North West River Beach Festival](#). Other family activities include square dancing, handicraft auction, swimming, children's games & the widely acclaimed Sunday evening fireworks show! Each July this beach festival features an array of traditional and non-traditional foods and is fun for the whole family.

### Beneath the Surface

▲ It is in Northern Labrador that the Canadian Shield soars to its highest peak in eastern North America. Here, some of the oldest exposed rock on the planet are found at [Torngat Mountains National Park](#) with an approximated age of 3.9 billion years.

▲ In Southern Labrador, you can find the [burial site](#) of a young Maritime Archaic Indian child who had died about 7,500 years ago and was buried at L'Anse Amour.

▲ In Central and Western Labrador, you'll find a myriad of treasures

hidden beneath the earth's crust - untold deposits of iron ore, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth minerals. Exploration abounds, business is steadily growing, and Labrador is poised to lead the way.

### An Exotic Language

▲ The rugged mountain ranges of Labrador's North Coast have exotic names such as Kiplapait, Killinek, Kaumajet and Torngat. These names are Inuktitut, the ancient [language of the Inuit](#). Kiglapait, pronounced 'kill-la-pight' describes the mountains as having many holes or craters; Killinek, pronounced 'kill-ee-nick' means 'the edge'; Kaumajet, pronounced 'how-ma-yeet' means 'the shining mountains'; and Torngat, pronounced 'toong-aught', refers to the 'Tungait', powerful spirits who, according to Inuit legend, lived in the mountains that bear their name. Learn of this ancient language, a language that is striving to survive in Labrador.

### MUSH! -A 'Commanding' Four-letter Word.

▲ While the snowmobile is the most common means of transportation through Labrador's vast interior, the excitement of a 'close to nature' trek by [dog team](#) is the traditional way.

Combined with ice-fishing, snowshoeing, snow sailing and cross-country skiing, this is truly an experience to tweet about.



### Cain's Quest – Snowmobile Endurance Race

▲ Not just any race, Cain's Quest is one of the most extreme snowmobile races in Canada. The race route is through the untamed Quebec Labrador Peninsula, the backdrop for the world's largest and toughest snowmobile endurance race covering over 3,000 kms with 30 or more teams competing for a prize purse of \$100k Cdn.

