

TRAVEL

FRENCH RIVER ONTARIO

Imagine birch bark canoes laden with beaver pelts as they plied the waters of this pristine wilderness carrying French explorers, fur-trading voyageurs and intrepid coureurs de bois, all playing a major role in the birth of our nation.

Today the French River is designated as a Canadian Heritage River offering a beautiful getaway destination for any nature-lover's romantic retreat. Birch bark canoes have been replaced by more modern modes of human-powered water transportation, but nevertheless, the quiet serenity of this protected area in northern Ontario remains the perfect spot to reconnect with history and with nature. A three-and-a-half hour drive north from Toronto's Pearson International or a one hour drive south from Greater Sudbury, this scenic landscape provides restful rejuvenation surrounded by the rugged beauty of rocky shores, clear blue waters and dense pine forests made familiar to all Canadians by the iconic paintings of The Group of Seven.

WHAT TO DO

Explore the year-round hiking trails, fish in the secluded coves, paddle through the morning mist, spend the day golfing at one of six beautiful golf courses, take in the magnificent views at French River Provincial Park, sign up for an informative cruise along this historic waterway, wander through galleries showcasing local First Nations, Métis and French artisans and absorb the beautiful sunsets and star-studded skies.

WHERE TO STAY

There are a few rustic fishing lodges and camps in the French River area, but for accommodations custom-made for newlyweds, investigate The Lodge at Pine Cove. Reserve your own beautifully-appointed private cabin in the woods with a view of the water. Have your breakfast of home-made granola, seasonal fruit, yogurt and freshly-baked croissants delivered to your door in a wicker hamper every morning. Eat in your cabin's screened-in porch and watch the otters play, or savour the sunset while you enjoy a gourmet meal at the lodge's restaurant. Or why not barbecue your own dinner, then cuddle by a bonfire on the beach to roast marshmallows while the moon rises? The Lodge at Pine Cove also offers a stunning setting for intimate weddings. Professional onsite staff will work with you to customize your plans to accommodate your every wish and to make your wedding, a day that you, and your guests, will always remember.

FRENCHRIVER.COM

SUSAN ROGERS (RIVER, CABIN, KAYAKER), LODGE AT PINE COVE (BRIDAL COUPLE), ROB STIMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY (LODGE)

