

OUJÉ- BOUGOUMOU

Oujé-Bougoumou means “the place where people gather” in Cree. Located 58 km west of Chibougamau, this Cree community settled on the shores of Lake Opémisca in 1992. The 2017 census evaluated its population at 900 inhabitants. The history of the Cree of Oujé-Bougoumou throughout the better part of this century is a sad story of abuse and dispossession. About 70 years ago, prospectors entered their territory in search of gold and copper. At first the Cree people helped the prospectors, but the mining industry quickly took over the region. The community was forced to relocate the village 7 times in 50 years. After long negotiations, an agreement was reached in 1990 which included, among other things, the construction of a new village on land chosen by the community elders. Today the economy of Oujé-Bougoumou revolves around mining, trapping, fishing, tourism and blueberry cultivation. Sharing lies at the heart of the community’s way of life: you are sure to receive a warm welcome!

LABRADOR TEA ON FIRE

WHAT TO DO

AANISCHAA-UKAMIKW / INSTITUT CULTUREL CRI

Aanischaaumikw means “heritage centre”. The centre’s mission is to capture, maintain, share, celebrate and practice Cree culture. This institute is at once a museum, an archive, a library, a place of learning and a cultural centre. It first opened its doors in 2011. With its curved wooden beams and open plan, the interior of the building references traditional Cree culture. Guided tours are available, as well

as “virtual” tours using a wireless hand-held device. Open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. During summer (July-August), the institute is open Tuesday-Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed the first Monday of the month for general maintenance). Hours may vary.

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CREECULTURALINSTITUTE.CA/FR

THE REALIZATION OF A COLLECTIVE DREAM

To ensure that the new village reflected the cultural heritage of the Cree people, the community engaged the services of renowned aboriginal architect Douglas Cardinal to design the main public institutions of the village, in close collaboration with the community. Oujé-Bougoumou was built in 1992 in accordance with the elders’ vision: a sustainable, modern community, respectful of its environment and with a focus on healing and self-sufficiency.

INNOVATION

The community implemented a housing program providing affordable, comfortable and energy-efficient housing to all community members with an emphasis on local labour for the construction.

An innovative alternative energy system was also installed. Waste sawdust from sawmills operating in the region is converted into energy to provide heat and hot water for the entire village.

WHERE TO EAT ?

Naturally, restaurants are practically non-existent in Oujé-Bougoumou. Meals are offered at Auberge Capissisit (1 Wastawshkootaw), or you can pursue your cultural immersion by eating at home, like the locals, or enjoy a picnic in nature.



AERIAL VIEW OF OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU

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