

Riviere Mastigouche Nord

Vitals

Locale: Mandeville, Quebec

What It's Like: Big slides, steep but short. A recent classic.

Class: IV-V pool-drop

Scouting/Portaging: Easy.

Level: Online gauge found here: <http://www.cehq.gouv.qc.ca/suivihydro/graphique.asp?NoStation=052606>

Time: 2 hours for a first run.

When To Go: Spring and early summer.

Info From: May 2007 at 5.8 cms.

Other Beta: French canoe route guide: <http://192.77.51.34/~cleduc/Canot/05/MastigoucheNordFaubert.pdf>

Description

The Mastigouche is a river in Quebec that has only recently risen in popularity. It's a great run full of big slides and not much flat water, similar to the Blanche a few hours to the east. The main event is a huge, very photogenic, straightforward slide that will plaster a big smile on your face. It's well worth the detour off the highway to check it out.

This river has a convenient gauge that should be fairly accurate. 6 cms is a fine medium level with some shallow spots. It's been run down around 3, but it would be very scrapey. It would have to be really high to not be sliding on rock in some spots - a reasonable high level is probably 10-12 cms, although some parts of the river have been run much higher.

The river is located north of Berthierville, found on highway 40 east of Montreal about half way to Trois Rivieres. To get to the river buy a map as there is a complicated network of back roads leading there. The nearest town is Mandeville. The ultimate goal is to go up around the east side of Lac Maskinonge to Mandeville and get on a road called Rang Mastigouche that heads north into the Reserve Faunique Mastigouche, where the river flows.

These directions are not the best. Head north from Mandeville. The last bridge over the river - the furthest upstream - is a good take out. Another good take out is after the big slide. Although there is access upstream, this whole area is plastered with no trespassing signs, so use public property. The river right road offers great scout of almost the whole run and you can hike from the end of this road to the top of the first rapid. You can also enter the Reserve Mastigouche (river left) and start where a lake (called Lac de la Chute) comes near the road on the left. Paddle across the lake trending south to find the mouth of the river.

The whitewater starts right at the outlet from Lac de la Chute with some small stuff and then the first big horizon line - get used to it on this one. It's a long sliding drop.

After some more boat-scoutable stuff you'll reach the first big, not-so-straightforward drop on the run consisting of four or five stacked slides. After this is a nasty rapid that can be portage on the right, more slides and finally the main event monster slide, Chute du Calvaire. It's intimidating but very easy. Lap it by walking back up on river right.

After this the big rapids are over, but there is still some whitewater left on the river, plus a paddle out. This river is a good place to go when a lot of the high water runs are dropping out, and it runs in the summer after rain fairly often. Try not to make the locals angry by trespassing and go and run some big slides.

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