

PINES, PRAIRIES AND CITY LIFE

Travel time: 21 days, arriving in Edmonton, travelling through Saskatchewan, and departing from Calgary

Distance: approximately 2,516 km



Saskatchewan is big - a sweeping 652,000 sq. km, in fact. Breathtaking landscapes feature throughout the province. In southern Saskatchewan, vast tracts of prairie grassland beneath endless blue sky create the perfect backdrop for a western-style ranch vacation. In northern Saskatchewan, the picture is completely different. Pristine lakes (numbering almost 100,000) are framed by lush boreal forest. Exciting outdoor adventures and warm hospitality make every visit to Saskatchewan a remarkable experience.

Day 1: Arrive in Edmonton, Alberta

Welcome to Edmonton, Alberta's capital city. Pick up your rental car and explore Edmonton's downtown. End the day with a pleasant walk along the shore of the North Saskatchewan River.

<https://exploreedmonton.com/>

Day 2: Edmonton

Enjoy your day in Edmonton. Explore the Royal Alberta Museum, which pulls back the curtain on the province's landscapes and culture. The museum takes visitors on a remarkable journey from the time of prehistoric dinosaurs to ancient petroglyphs; through generations upon generations of First Nations Peoples to new beginnings on the windswept prairies.

For shopping fans, a trip to West Edmonton Mall is an absolute must. North America's largest shopping mall offers much to see and do. In addition to hundreds of shops, there is an indoor waterpark, amusement park, underground aquarium, ice rink and more than 100 coffee shops and restaurants.

Day 3: Drive to Makwa Lake Provincial Park (381 km)

Leaving Edmonton, head east on the Trans-Canada Yellowhead Highway (No. 16) to Lloydminster. Makwa Lake Provincial Park is 138 km northeast of the city via Highways 17, 3 and 26. Lush boreal forest and a string of five lakes provide a picture-perfect setting. The park features three campgrounds, multiple sandy beaches, service centres and hiking trails. Visit nearby Steele Narrows Provincial Park, the site of the final battle during the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

<https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/provincialpark/917/makwa-lake-provincial-park>

Day 4: Makwa Lake Provincial Park

Within the park and nearby are several lakes that are great for swimming and have beautiful beaches. Stroll along the park's nature trails and enjoy the company - the area is home to a variety of birds and wildlife species. Five hiking trails range in length from approximately 1-2.4 km.



Day 5: Drive to The Battlefords Provincial Park (159 km)

Located on the north shore of Jackfish Lake, The Battlefords Provincial Park is the perfect place to immerse yourself in the great outdoors. The park is known for its beautiful beaches, world-class fishing, 18-hole golf course and much more. Check out nearby attractions like Cochin Lighthouse or Fort Battleford National Historic Site. <https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/provincialpark/1930/the-battlefords-provincial-park>

Day 6: Drive to Prince Albert National Park (297 km)

Take your time and enjoy the drive to Prince Albert National Park (PANP). Opened in 1928, PANP delights visitors with its forests, lakes, beaches, trails and resident wildlife. Its centrepiece is Waskesiu Lake, which boasts long sandy beaches and an impressive marina. The park is also home to Canada's only herd of Plains bison in their historic range. <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/sk/princealbert>

Day 7 and 8: Prince Albert National Park

Hiking, canoeing, swimming, mountain biking, fishing, ziplining, wildlife viewing - PANP offers all of this and more. Explore nature through interpretive programs, guided hikes and outdoor theatres. Learn about Grey Owl, the famed conservationist, and journey to his cabin on the shore of Ajaawan Lake.

Day 9: Drive to Saskatoon (230 km)

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan's largest city, is described as being the best of both worlds - dynamic urban energy in sync with nature. Saskatoon delights with its picturesque cityscape. Seven bridges cross the South Saskatchewan River, which meanders through the city, earning it the nickname "Paris of the Prairies." In the evening, enjoy the sunset while strolling along the scenic riverside walks. <https://www.tourismsaskatoon.com/>

Day 10: Saskatoon

A recommendation for travellers to Saskatoon - come with an appetite. The city's food and drink scene is phenomenal. Start your day with breakfast in the popular Riversdale neighbourhood. A stroll through downtown Saskatoon offers plenty of shopping as well as cultural attractions. Art lovers will enjoy the Remai Modern Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Picasso linocut prints, along with nearly two dozen ceramic works by the Spanish master.

On the city's northern edge sits Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a National Historic Site that has yielded evidence of human occupation dating back 6,400 years. Traces of every cultural group that existed on the Northern Plains have been discovered here. Authentic First Nations culture and traditions are experienced through dance performances, exhibitions of Indigenous art and hands-on activities. An onsite restaurant serves traditional First Nations cuisine with a contemporary twist. <https://wanuskewin.com/>

Day 11: Drive to Manitou Beach (125 km)

At Manitou Springs Resort and Mineral Spa, relax and rejuvenate in the indoor mineral pool. The soothing water, drawn from Little Manitou Lake, is noted for its unique healing properties. An abundance of salt and minerals makes swimming effortless. It is impossible to sink in this water. Play a round of golf on the 9-hole grass greens course or enjoy a drive-in movie. Saturday night dances and licensed dining make for a delightful evening of entertainment at the world-famous Danceland - an historic dancehall with a horsehair-cushioned floor. <https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/community/288/manitou-beach>



Day 12: Drive to Regina (180 km)

Saskatchewan's capital city, Regina, is home to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The iconic Mountie in red serge is Canada's most recognized symbols, next to the Maple Leaf flag. The RCMP Academy "Depot" Division is the sole training centre for those aspiring to join the force. Visitors can take a guided tour of the training camp and visit the interactive RCMP Heritage Centre. <https://tourismregina.com/>

Day 13: Drive to Moose Jaw (70 km)

Moose Jaw is, by far, one of the friendliest cities in Canada. Its downtown is characterized by heritage buildings, boutique-style shops, and unique attractions that examine the city's fascinating history. The Tunnels of Moose Jaw are actual tunnels beneath downtown streets that, according to legend, were a hangout for the infamous gangster Al Capone during the Prohibition era. Temple Gardens Hotel & Spa is famous for its natural geo-thermal mineral pool. <https://www.visitmoosejaw.ca/>

Day 14: Drive to La Reata Ranch (250 km)

Today's drive takes you through the rolling prairies to La Reata Ranch. German-born host and owner George Gaber and his ranch hands introduce guests to the "cowboy way of life." Accommodations are comfortable log cabins with private bathroom - the perfect "home away from home." <https://www.lareataranch.com/>

Day 15: La Reata Ranch

Discover your inner cowboy. Ranch activities are suitable for beginners or experienced riders. Explore the open range and enjoy the picturesque landscapes along Lake Diefenbaker. La Reata Ranch is a working ranch. Guests are welcome, but not required, to help with traditional ranch duties.

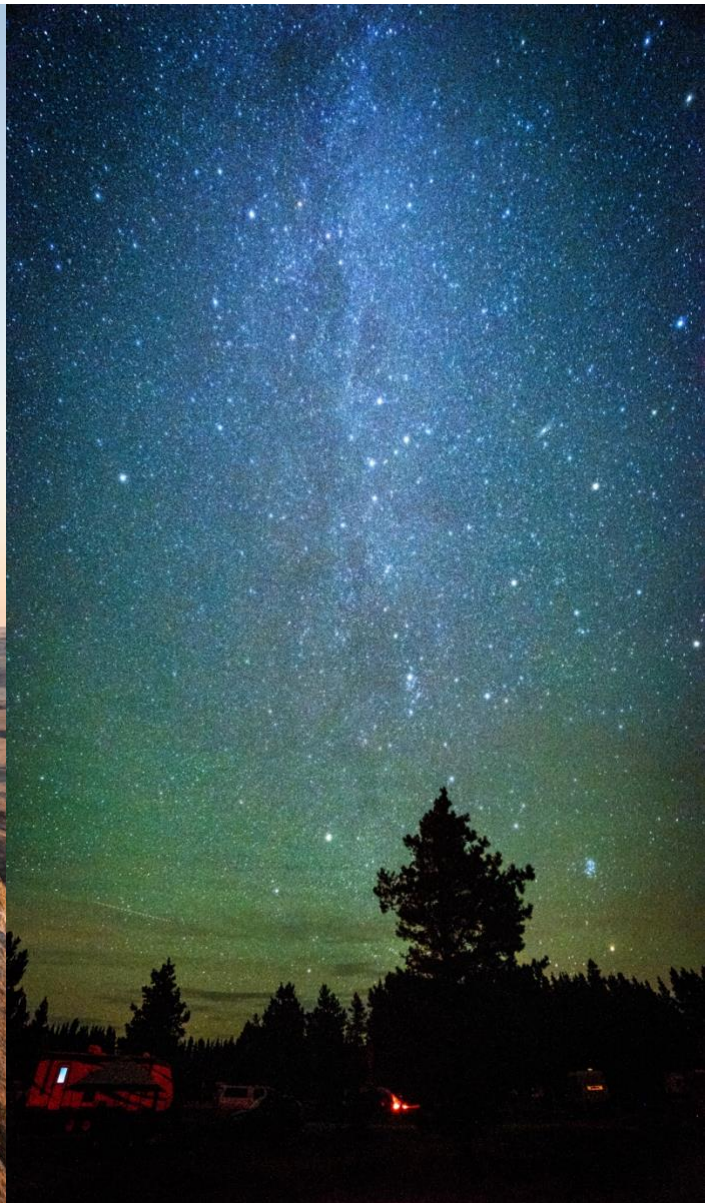
The ranch stretches more than 14 km along the lake. Activities such as canoeing, fishing, water skiing, swimming or relaxing on the beach offer a welcomed change after riding the range. In the evening, gaze at the starlit prairie sky or swap tales of your adventures of the day at La Reata Saloon.

Day 16: Drive to Val Marie (197 km)

Throughout southwest Saskatchewan, the vast tracts of prairie, colourful wildflowers, rustling native grasses and the earthy aroma of wild sage provide a feast for the senses. Grasslands National Park preserves the landscape and reflects a time when bison roamed the plains. Spanning more than 730 sq. km, the park is split into two blocks, each with a distinct personality. The West Block Visitor Centre is located in the village of Val Marie, a welcoming community that is the gateway to Canada's only national park that represents prairie grasslands. <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/sk/grasslands>

Day 17: Grasslands National Park

The West Block of Grasslands National Park showcases the prairie landscape in all its beauty. Explore the Frenchman River Valley and see some of the rarest wildlife in Canada. Drive the Back Country Loop for a spectacular view of the area. You'll discover a true appreciation for the remote landscape. A hike to 70 Mile Butte, one of the tallest buttes in the park, is an adventure all of its own. The park has its own resident bison herd. Catching a glimpse of these rare, majestic icons of the North American plains is a treasured experience.



Day 18: Drive to Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park (200 km)

The first interprovincial park in Canada, Cypress Hills is characterized by towering lodgepole pine and white spruce forests, and fescue prairie. The breathtaking views provide gorgeous photo opportunities. The area is the largest Dark Sky Preserve in Canada and offers unobstructed views of the beautiful starlit sky.

<https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/provincialpark/3033/cypress-hills-interprovincial-park>

Day 19: Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

Enjoy a day of exploring. The “Hidden” Conglomerate Cliffs are well worth the hike for the great photo opportunities. Fort Walsh National Historic Site transports visitors back in time to the 1870s. Take a guided tour of the fort and hear the stories and legends from this fascinating period in Canadian history. For a taste of cowboy culture, drive to Maple Creek, which was named Canada’s Greatest Western Town in 2014.

Day 20: Drive to Calgary (427 km)

Heading west, your final Canadian destination is Calgary, Alberta’s largest city. Western hospitality and traditions blend with ultra-modern features and an array of cultural attractions. For the best view, visit the Calgary Tower. The 190-m high landmark has a viewing platform and rotating restaurant. During Calgary Stampede week (starting the first Friday in July), the city boasts the largest rodeo show in the world. <https://www.visitcalgary.com/>

Day 21: Departure

A remarkable vacation with manifold adventures has come to an end.