

SASKATCHEWAN'S NORTHERN WILDERNESS AND SOUTHERN RANCH HOSPITALITY

Travel time: 14 days from/to Edmonton

Distance: approximately 2,300 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 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.

Day 2: Drive to Meadow Lake Provincial Park (410 km)

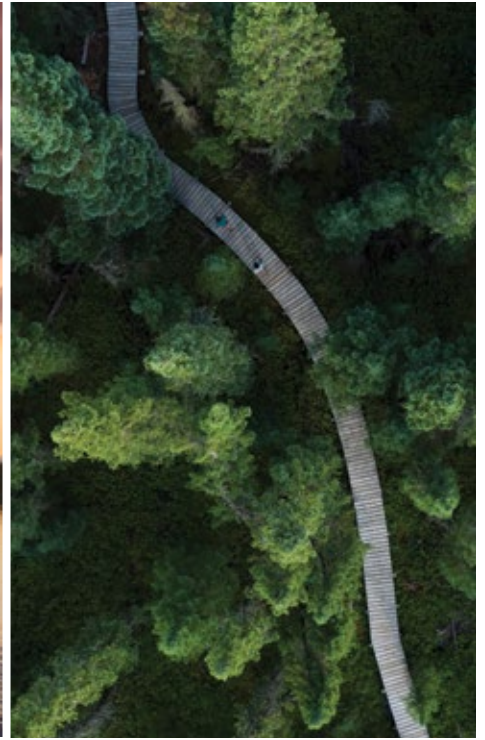
Leaving Edmonton, head east on the Trans-Canada Yellowhead Highway (No.16). About 45 km from the city, you will reach Elk Island National Park. It is situated in a wooded stretch of the Beaver Hills, a natural hillside landscape with numerous lakes, swamps and ponds. The park offers some of the best wildlife viewing in North America, including herds of Plains and Wood bison. Continuing east, you will soon cross the border into Saskatchewan. Your destination for today is Meadow Lake Provincial Park.

Day 3: Meadow Lake Provincial Park

Covering 1,600 sq. km, Meadow Lake Provincial Park features more than 20 lakes, rivers and streams. Consider a canoe adventure on the Waterhen River, which winds its way through the park and connects the string of lakes. The 120-km Boreal Trail traverses the wild and varied ecosystems within the northern forest.

Day 4: Drive to Missinipe, Lac La Ronge Provincial Park (500 km)

Your travels will lead you through the wilderness of northern Saskatchewan to Lac La Ronge Provincial Park.



Day 5: Lac La Ronge Provincial Park

Today is all about canoeing and you are in the right place. Lac La Ronge Provincial Park is Saskatchewan's largest provincial park and boasts more than 100 lakes. At the centre is Lac La Ronge, which is 64 km long and home to more than 1,000 small islands. Otter Rapids and Nistowiak Falls are must-see sites within the park. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, a Provincial and National Historic Site, is situated along the Churchill River at Stanley Mission and can only be reached by boat. Travellers without their own paddling gear are in good hands with the pros at Churchill River Canoe Outfitters. The company offers equipment rental and single- and multi-day guided canoeing tours.

If you want to focus on canoeing and extend your trip, you can book a multi-day canoe expedition with Churchill River Canoe Outfitters (e.g. to Forest House Wilderness Lodge, a luxurious eco-lodge secluded from the outside world in the heart of the boreal forest, accessible only by canoe or floatplane).

Day 6: Drive to Waskesiu, Prince Albert National Park (260 km)

Take your time and enjoy the drive south to Prince Albert National Park (PANP). Opened in 1928, PANP delights visitors with its forests, lakes, beaches, trails and resident wildlife. The park is also home to Canada's only herd of Plains bison in their historic range.

Day 7: Prince Albert National Park

A day of outdoor adventure awaits. Hiking, canoeing, swimming, mountain biking, fishing, ziplining, wildlife viewing – PANP offers all of this and more.

Day 8: Drive to Saskatoon (240 km)

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan's largest city, is described as being the best of both worlds – dynamic urban energy in sync with nature. 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.

Saskatoon itself 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.



Day 9: 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. At the Western Development Museum, stroll through Boomtown – a replica of a 1910 Western Canadian village with turn-of-the-century shops and interactive experiences. Enjoy a cruise on the South Saskatchewan River aboard the Prairie Lily and be captivated by the beauty of the city.

Day 10: Drive to La Reata Ranch (230 km)

Today's drive takes you through the rolling prairies along to southern Saskatchewan. Your destination – 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."



Day 11: 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 relaxing 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 12: Drive to North Battleford (270 km)

Leaving southern Saskatchewan behind, you head to North Battleford, a community with a rich history. Fort Battleford, established in 1876, played a significant role in the conflict known as the Northwest Resistance. Now a National Historic Site, Fort Battleford tells the difficult history between settlers, members of the North West Mounted Police, and First Nations and Métis peoples. Five of the fort's original buildings are preserved.

Further North, Cochin Lighthouse stands watch over beautiful Jackfish Lake. The structure is a novelty for Saskatchewan, a landlocked province, and is a much photographed attraction. Visitors climb 153 steps to reach the lighthouse. The spectacular view of Jackfish and Murray Lakes, and the surrounding prairie are well worth the effort.

Day 13: Drive to Edmonton (390 km)

Back in Edmonton, you still have plenty of opportunities to become acquainted with Alberta's capital and its many attractions. Consider a visit to the Royal Alberta Museum, which shares stories relating to the province's people and natural environment. The museum's collection includes approximately 18,000 objects of Indigenous origin.

Day 14: Departure

For shopping fans, a visit to the West Edmonton Mall is a must before departure. 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 and more than two dozen restaurants.