



YOURS TO KEEP

ROUTE GUIDE WINNIPEG—CHURCHILL

This guide to the Winnipeg—Churchill route will introduce you to the beauty of the boreal forest and subarctic regions of northern Manitoba—the ideal place to observe belugas in summer, polar bears in autumn, and the aurora borealis in winter. Its plant and animal life is among the most distinctive and breathtaking on the planet.

Bon voyage!

Our Winnipeg–Churchill train travels through 1,697 kilometres of Canadian wilderness. As you roll along the only dry land connection to many of these unique communities, you'll enjoy 2 days and 2 nights filled with history, wildlife and unforgettable views.

01 WINNIPEG

Mile: 0.0

Population: 705,244

Known as the Gateway to the West, Winnipeg sits where the Red, Assiniboine and Seine rivers meet—right where the Canadian Shield ends and the Prairies begin. Manitoba's capital and largest city was founded in 1873 and quickly became the heart of Canada's fur trade. It eventually grew into the home of one of the world's major grain exchanges. A city with a distinctive character and rich history, modern-day Winnipeg is home to The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, The Exchange District, The Forks National Historic Site, Assiniboine Park Zoo, Royal Canadian Mint and the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

02 PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

Mile: 55.3

Population: 13,304

Just 70 km west of Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie is surrounded by fertile farmland. Incorporated in 1907, the city has undergone several boom-and-bust cycles. Its rich cultural history began in 1794 when the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company began maintaining trading posts there. Today, its proximity to Winnipeg and its rich agriculture make it one of Manitoba's most prosperous cities.

03 DAUPHIN

Mile: 121.7

Population: 8,457

Since its discovery in 1739, Dauphin Lake and its surrounding area have been attracting settlers. Built on the fur trade, Dauphin quickly grew from a fort into a town, and now has a population of nearly 8,500. It is bordered by Duck Mountain Provincial Park and Riding Mountain National Park, both of which offer a variety of recreational activities and help make it one of the most beautiful parts of Manitoba.

04 THE PAS

Mile: 83.4

Population: 5,369

Originally a Cree encampment, The Pas is located where the Pasquia and Saskatchewan rivers meet. Referred to as the Gateway to the North, The Pas is surrounded by countless lakes and endless rivers just waiting to be explored.

05 WEKUSKO

Mile: 81.2

Population: 1,763

Wekusko Falls Provincial Park is 88.23 hectares of historic wilderness. Shared by the neighbouring towns, aboriginal communities and logging companies, Wekusko is home to a campground, a beach and the breathtaking Wekusko Falls, which cascade 12 metres down the Grass River before emptying into Wekusko Lake.

06 WABOWDEN

Mile: 137

Population: 442 (Northern community)

Wabowden is not just another stop along the track—the railway played a major role in its growth. In fact, it is named after railway executive W. A. Bowden, and its Cree name, Mescanaganeek, means “steel road.”

Founded in the early 20th century as a meeting place for Hudson's Bay Company traders, Wabowden was built on trapping, fishing, logging and, more recently, mining. A small community nestled between Bowden, Bucko and Rock Island lakes, Wabowden is home to two must-see attractions—Kwasitchewan Falls and Pisew Falls.

07 THICKET PORTAGE

Mile: 137

Population: 148 (Northern community)

Originally known as Franklin Portage (after the Franklin expedition), the remote community of Thicket Portage has a population of 148 and is surrounded by Canada's northern landscape. The train provides the only year-round ground transportation connecting it to the rest of Manitoba.

08 THOMPSON

Mile: 199.8

Population: 13,678

Planned in 1956 by the International Nickel Company of Canada, the city of Thompson lies along the Burntwood River and is one of the largest fully planned communities in Canada. Surrounded by Manitoba's boreal forest, Thompson's rich culture and friendly residents help make it a destination that's one-of-a-kind.

09 PIKWITONEI

Mile: 137

Population: 98 (Northern community)

Accessible only by rail, boat or winter road, Pikwitonei is a beautiful, tiny, isolated community ready to be explored by those curious enough to get on board.

10 ILFORD

Mile: 137

Population: 43

Home to the War Lake First Nation, Ilford was founded during the construction of the railway and today its residents survive off of hunting, trapping and government services. Accessible only by rail, air or winter road, Ilford is the epitome of remote, and is ready and waiting for those adventurous enough to explore it.

11 GILLAM (NELSON RIVER)

Mile: 326.1

Population: 1,265

Located in northern Manitoba, above the 56th parallel, Gillam was named after Captain Zachary Gillam and his son, whose mission led to the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company on May 2, 1670. Today, Gillam attracts travellers searching to explore Canada's vast wilderness. It's many untouched lakes

and streams offer endless fishing and its fly-in lodges are perfect for hunters, anglers and other lovers of the great outdoors.

12 CHURCHILL

Mile: 509.8

Population: 899

Churchill's history begins well before the founding of Canada (evidence of human existence in the area dates back some 4,000 years). Today, it is accessible only by air or by railway, the latter having been built on the permafrost and muskeg in 1929. Erected on the banks of Hudson Bay, Churchill is the ideal place to spot birds, belugas and polar bears, and by night it is one of the world's premier viewing areas for gazing up at the aurora borealis.

RAILWAY SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

One of the many railway traditions—the milepost—provides the key to locating a train's current position. Mileposts may be on either side of a track, and are usually rectangular white signs with black numbers. Though Canada now uses the metric system, the original markers for railroads were in miles—and they still are today. Each line is subdivided at railway division points; these subdivisions are not a standard length, as they were based on the distance a steam locomotive could travel in a day.

MILEPOSTS

Milepost numbers increase as you travel from east to west and reset to zero at the start of each subdivision. Subdivisions are 43 to 146 miles (69 to 235 km) long.

SIDING AND STATION NAME BOARDS

Newer siding and station name boards are white with the name in black. Older station name boards are also white with the name in black, but the lettering is all uppercase and the signs are mounted on buildings.

Populations are approximate. All other information was accurate at the time of printing.

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