

CHURCHILL POLAR BEARS

November 1, 2016 - 7 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$8175 double/twin

\$9085 single

tour
a more intimate travel experience



- > Please add 5% GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$200 discount on first 8 seats; \$100 on next 4
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 150 points from this tour.
Redeem **150 points** if you book by **June 29**.

Includes

- Transfers from Kamloops, Salmon Arm and most Okanagan cities to Kelowna airport and return
- Flight from Kelowna to Winnipeg and return
- Air transportation taxes and security fees
- 3 nights accommodation in Winnipeg & taxes
- Mini-coach transportation in Winnipeg
- Locally guided tour of Winnipeg
- The Forks
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights **OR** Manitoba Museum
- Flight from Winnipeg to Churchill and return
- 3 nights accommodation in Churchill & taxes
- Local transportation in Churchill
- Town tour of Churchill with Cape Merry
- Manitoba Conservation's Polar Bear Holding Facility
- Churchill Eskimo Museum
- 2 full days in Tundra Buggy watching polar bears
- Parks Canada Interpretive Centre
- Dog sledding excursion
- Professional naturalist guides in Churchill and on Tundra Buggy
- Gratuities for Churchill guides and drivers
- Wells Gray tour director
- Luggage handling at Winnipeg hotels
- **14 meals:** 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners

Kamloops > 250-374-0831
Kelowna > 250-762-3435
www.wellsgraytours.com

Penticton > 250-493-1255
Vernon > 250-545-9197
Toll Free > **800-667-9552**



More than just Polar Bears...

Experience one of the world's most wonderful natural phenomena — the annual polar bear migration on the Hudson Bay Coast. The world's largest polar bear denning area is 40 km southeast of Churchill and has been protected in the Wapusk National Park. The bears occupy this area through the summer and early fall. With October's snow and approaching winter, the polar bears start to migrate north to Churchill and wait for the ice to form on Hudson Bay where they spend the winter hunting seals. Therefore, early November is the prime viewing season and polar bear sightings are at their peak. While some tour companies offer only bear viewing, our tour is more diversified so you gain a full perspective of the region, history and eco-systems. As well as two days of polar bear viewing from a Tundra Buggy, we include museum visits, a town tour, Manitoba Conservation's Polar Bear Holding Facility, and a dogsled excursion. Our Churchill tour operator has been arranging tours here for three decades and boasts excellent naturalist guides with extensive experience in the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Get ready for the experience of a lifetime!

Tour Notes:

Tundra Buggy: The tour spends two days in a Tundra Buggy, a large six-wheel drive vehicle specially designed and built for off-road travel in a cold climate. Riding on huge low pressure agricultural tires, the Tundra Buggy can move safely over the snow and ice. It has comfortable seats and is equipped with a heater, restroom, and radio communication to Churchill. Sliding glass windows permit an unobstructed view. With the floor at a height of about seven feet and the windows opening at about ten feet, passengers are high enough to be safe from curious polar bears. We have booked a private Tundra Buggy to serve only our small group (two for 25 travellers) and this gives plenty of space to move around between windows and on the rear open deck. The public tundra vehicle tours, by contrast, carry up to 40 people.

Limited accommodation: Accommodation in Churchill during the bear viewing season is very limited and the demand for rooms is far greater than availability. Wells Gray Tours has not offered this tour since 2012, and the tour is limited to 25 people. Accommodation is best described as basic and comfortable.

Cancellation policies: The hotel, Tundra Buggy and airline all impose strict cancellation policies due to the high demand for services during polar bear viewing season and the difficulty of re-selling space if a late cancellation occurs. All payments that Wells Gray Tours makes to the Churchill tour operator are non-refundable, starting in November 2015. We must fully commit to using all contracted services by August 2, therefore early booking on this tour is vital. Travel insurance on your deposits and final payment is available.

Activity Level: Moderate activity including medium distances to walk and some steps. You must be able to climb a short steep set of stairs to board the Tundra Buggy. There is no luggage handling service in Churchill. There can be longer walks in the airports; request a cart in advance if this could be an issue for you. This tour is not appropriate for people with canes or walkers. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.



Itinerary

Tuesday, November 1:

Transfers are provided from Kamloops, Salmon Arm, and Okanagan cities to Kelowna airport. We fly on Westjet to **Winnipeg**. Our accommodation for the next two nights is at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel near the airport.

Wednesday, November 2:

Meals: D

Winnipeg is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada with a fascinating history. A locally guided sightseeing tour enlightens us on the

French-English relationships and includes sights like Manitoba Legislative Building, Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, Assiniboine Park and St. Boniface Cathedral. There is free time for lunch at **The Forks** public market with time to browse the many interesting boutiques. During the afternoon, you have a choice of two renowned museums (included):

Canadian Museum for Human Rights is Canada's first new national museum since 1967 and the first outside the Ottawa region. The spectacular landmark opened in fall 2014 and cost \$350 million to

build. There are 10 permanent galleries which contain superb exhibits about human rights through the ages.

Manitoba Museum has seven interpretive galleries which explore the history and environment of Manitoba from the Arctic Coast to the southern grasslands.

A welcome dinner is included with a talk about our upcoming Churchill adventure.

Thursday, November 3: *Meals: B,L,D*

An early morning flight gets us to Churchill before 10 am. Founded by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1717, **Churchill** is today a remote outpost of 600 year-round residents. A sightseeing tour of the town with a local guide includes the historic gun batteries of Cape Merry, the Port of Churchill (Canada's only Arctic grain terminal), the shipwreck of the Ithaca, and a coastal drive along Hudson Bay. Cape Merry provides an excellent vantage point for spotting polar bears. We also visit Manitoba Conservation's **Polar Bear Holding Facility** which handles problem bears captured during bear alert season. Five air-conditioned cells are used during the summer and a heated holding cell is available for orphaned bear cubs. Next is the **Eskimo Museum** which houses a superb collection of Inuit carvings and artifacts dating from pre-Dorset, Dorset, Thule, and modern Inuit times. We stay three nights in Churchill (hotel name to be advised later).

Friday, November 4: *Meals: B,L,D*

We embark on the **Tundra Buggy** for a full day in the Arctic wilderness near the shore of Hudson Bay to watch the polar bears. Often, curious bears approach the vehicle providing wonderful close range encounters and excellent photos. Other animals and birds are frequently spotted as well, including the Caribou, Lemming, Ptarmigan and White-phase Gyrfalcons.

Saturday, November 5: *Meals: B,L,D*

Our morning begins with an exciting **dog sledding excursion**. As well as the actual dog sled ride, we are introduced to a northern way of life where dog teams have historically played a prominent role. There may be sightings of local wildlife such as the Arctic Fox, Arctic Hare, and Snowy Owl. After lunch, we visit the **Parks Canada Centre** which presents exhibits and a show about the natural history and human settlement of this region.

Sunday, November 6: *Meals: B,L,D*

This is a second full day devoted to viewing the polar bears from the **Tundra Buggy**. Our flight back to Winnipeg departs tonight and we stay overnight at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

Monday, November 7: *Meals: B*

A mid-morning flight takes us back to Kelowna and transfers are provided to our home cities.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due June 29, 2016.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 8 seats and \$100 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after June 29.

Cancellation Policy: Up to December 15, 2015, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From December 16, 2015, to March 15, 2016, the cancellation charge is \$500 per person. From March 16 to June 29, the cancellation charge is \$1,000 per person. From June 30 to August 2, the cancellation charge is 30% of the tour fare. After August 2, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credit: Frontiers North

Tour 25: This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

e-points: This tour earns 150 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until June 29.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924