

Premier Polar Bear Classic Itinerary

Day 1: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Our Churchill polar bear tour begins in Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba. Once a center of fur trade and a Canadian Pacific Railway boomtown, Winnipeg today is a major cultural and commercial center on the eastern edge of the vast Canadian prairie. Overnight at the historic Fort Garry Hotel, grande dame of Winnipeg hospitality and one of the city's most prestigious landmarks, where we gather with our Expedition Leader for a welcome dinner this evening.

Day 2: Winnipeg / Private Chartered Flight to Churchill

Transfer to the airport to fly by chartered plane to Churchill this morning. This hospitable frontier town, originally a Hudson's Bay Company fur trading post, is our base for adventure. On the 6-day trip we head to the tundra this evening for our first glimpse of the bears, although we sometimes see them from the bus as we leave the airport, even before boarding our Polar Rover. The 7-day trip opens with an evening presentation on polar bears and the northern environment by our professional naturalist staff.

Days 3 & 4: Polar Bear Viewing

Custom-built Polar Rovers are our mobile means for spending time among the bears. Though they can accommodate more than 30 passengers, we take a maximum of 16, ensuring everyone has a window seat and plenty of space to move about. Our Expedition Leaders know the best places to observe polar bears, which congregate here each fall as they wait for Hudson Bay to freeze, signaling the start of the winter seal-hunting season. As we watch them interact, we're delighted by their antics and rugged beauty. We may see mothers with cubs, young males play-fighting, or a lone bear ambling over the silent tundra. Our Expedition Leader interprets all we observe, explaining the bears' behavior and how they thrive in such a harsh environment. In the evenings, we gather for dinner and presentations on wildlife and local cultures.

Day 5: Exploring Churchill / Evening on the Tundra

On the 7-day trip, tour historic Churchill today, then head out to the tundra for evening bear viewing and dinner aboard the Polar Rover. During the day we follow the coastal road on a drive to Cape Merry, often spying Arctic fox and Arctic hare. Look closely for them, as their winter-white coats offer excellent camouflage later in the season when the ground is covered with snow. If the skies are clear, our nighttime tundra excursion might reveal one of nature's most exhilarating experiences—a chance to view the northern lights away from town. Though never predictable, the auroral display typically starts as a pale glow in the northern sky. The lights often begin to undulate in shimmering curtains of color, most typically green but occasionally red or violet. On the 6-day trip (during which your nighttime tundra outing takes place on Day 2), there is free time in Churchill, or choose an optional helicopter excursion over the vast expanse of frozen tundra before boarding our flight back to Winnipeg.

Day 6: Churchill—Dog Sledding / Private Chartered Flight to Winnipeg

Our return flight to Winnipeg is scheduled to depart mid- to late afternoon, offering as much time as possible for exploring Churchill today. A highlight this morning is an authentic dog sled ride. We meet a local musher and his team, spending time with the lively and affectionate dogs before taking turns riding behind them on an exhilarating trot through the boreal forest. If time permits, you may be able to pick up some locally made handicrafts or take an optional helicopter tour over the tundra before we depart. We'll have a farewell lunch together before flying back to Winnipeg, where a final reception concludes our adventure together.

Day 7: Winnipeg / Depart

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flights home.

Please note: Itineraries may vary slightly and activities may happen at times different from what is listed, but inclusions are the same. On the 6-day trip, our sled dog excursion typically takes place on Day 5 with a return to Winnipeg that afternoon, and flights home are scheduled for Day 6. On the 7-day trip, the nighttime tundra trip occasionally alternates between Day 4 and Day 5.

An important note on polar bear viewing: Since 1989, we have operated approximately 1,500 departures to Churchill to view polar bears, and we've missed seeing them on only a handful of occasions. Some of our sightings are up close while others are from afar, or even from a helicopter. It's important to remember that while there is no better opportunity to see polar bears in the wild than our Churchill trips offer, the experience is weather-dependent. That means viewing polar bears—and the distance at which we may see them—is unpredictable and not guaranteed. Check out more details on the ebbs and flows of the Churchill polar bear viewing season.

Physical Rating: Easy to Moderate