Discovering Our Planet Together



Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition

Photograph Arctic Summer Wildlife in Churchill, Canada

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Trip Details:

Days
7 Days / Jul–Aug

Price
From $9995 (+Air)

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition

Photograph Arctic Summer Wildlife in Churchill, Canada

Few of nature's marvels match the intense aliveness of an Arctic summer. The Canadian Northland awakens with a frenzy of energy during long days when the tundra turns green, wildflowers burst into color, animals come forth in great flocks and herds, and belugas return for their summer feasting. What a thrill for nature photographers when more than 3,000 of these amiable white whales congregate in the mouth of the Churchill River—and our motorized rafts, kayaks and floating mats put us at eye level with them. We also listen to their songs via hydrophone. On the tundra, get shots of terrestrial wildlife, including Arctic fox and caribou—and we frequently spot polar bears, their creamy coats contrasting with the rocky shoreline and dark boreal forest. From the remote village of Churchill, our base on Hudson Bay, join professional photographer guides to capture a flurry of northern summer wonders.

Trip Highlights

Photograph Dozens of Beluga Whales Up Close

More than 3,000 beluga whales enter the Churchill River each summer—come within arm's reach by Zodiac, kayak and floating "beluga board" for underwater shots

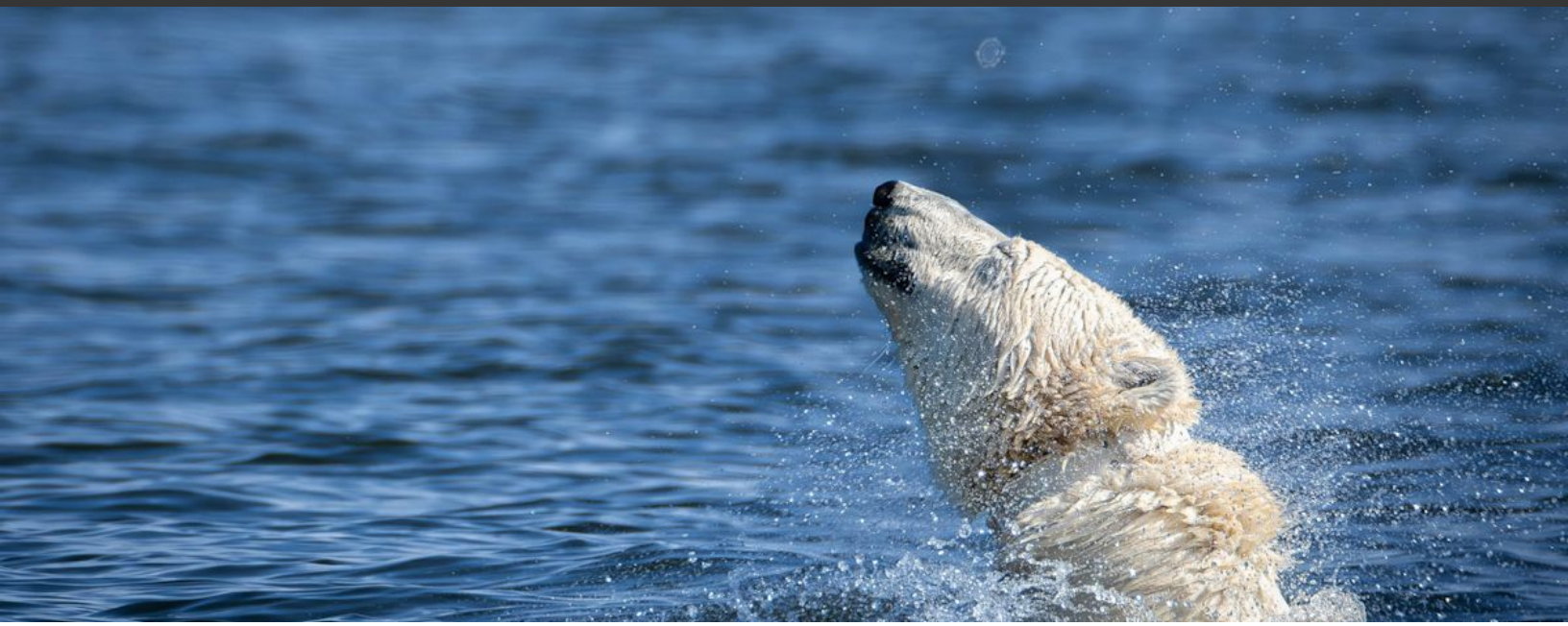
Tundra Photo Safaris & Sled Dog Ride

On foot and by vehicle, search for polar bears, Arctic fox, Arctic hare, snowy owl and ptarmigan, and ride in a dog-pulled cart with a local musher

Capture History at Sloop Cove & Prince of Wales Fort

Cross the Churchill River by Zodiac to historic Sloop Cove for landscape photography, and walk to Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition Itinerary

Photograph Arctic Summer Wildlife in Churchill, Canada

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Winnipeg
Day 2	Winnipeg / Churchill
Days 3–5	Churchill
Day 6	Churchill / Winnipeg
Day 7	Winnipeg



Day 1

Winnipeg

Arrive in Manitoba's capital, bound north for the belugas of Hudson Bay

- Settle into the Fort Garry Hotel, a 1913 railway-era landmark in downtown Winnipeg
- Join your Photo Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner

Arrive in Winnipeg and transfer to the Fort Garry Hotel, built in 1913 by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The French-style chateau is still the grande dame of Winnipeg, offering gracious hospitality in Manitoba's capital. Once a fur-trading post and trade hub where the Assiniboine and Red rivers meet, today Winnipeg is a thriving cultural and commercial center on the eastern Canadian prairie. Gather with your Expedition Leader for a welcome dinner on this first evening of your northern summer photo safari.

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Day 2

Winnipeg / Churchill

Explore Churchill's Indigenous heritage and northern ecosystems

- Fly by private charter to Churchill, a remote community accessible only by air or rail
- Meet local residents who share stories of northern life
- Explore the boreal forest where taiga, Arctic tundra and Hudson Bay ecosystems converge

Fly north this morning by private chartered plane to Churchill, a remote community inaccessible by road and the gateway to Manitoba's Arctic. Spend the day exploring this frontier outpost that grew up when the rail line was built to Hudson Bay in 1929, facilitating the transport of grain from the prairies to a new port facility. Photogenic murals cover many of the town buildings. We also meet with local residents to gain insight into their cultural traditions and northern lifestyles. These captivating storytellers share tales from their personal histories, offering a window into the enduring cultures that have flourished in this daunting environment for thousands of years.

Our Expedition Leader offers an introduction to the natural history of the region as we explore the boreal forest, one of three ecosystems that merge around Churchill. This juncture is called an ecotone—the nexus of different ecologically and geographically defined areas—in this case, the boreal forest, or taiga, to the south, Arctic tundra to the northwest, and the marine environs of Hudson Bay on the north. In such a dynamic environment, summer wildlife flourishes, and we go in search of it to photograph over the next several days.

Days 3–5

Churchill

Photograph thousands of belugas where the river meets Hudson Bay

- Capture belugas at eye level from a kayak and photograph underwater from a floating beluga board
- Watch for polar bears, caribou, Arctic foxes and ptarmigans across the summer tundra
- Cross the Churchill River by Zodiac to Sloop Cove and historic Prince of Wales Fort

With Churchill as our base, spend three days chasing photo opportunities on the tundra, river and seacoast of Hudson Bay. Belugas are the uncontested highlight, as more than 3,000 of these small white whales migrate to the mouth of the Churchill River each July and August, congregating where the river meets the bay. We make four separate outings to photograph these gentle cetaceans at thrilling close range. View belugas on two Zodiac trips, then meet them at eye level from a kayak. You'll also have a chance to float the river on "beluga boards"—buoyant mats that allow us to capture underwater shots with GoPros or other waterproof cameras while wearing a mask and snorkel. These inquisitive whales often nudge our paddles or follow in our human-powered wakes. With their unusual ability to turn their heads from side to side, belugas seem to be as curious about us as we are about them. Through the use of a hydrophone, we can also listen to their otherworldly songs.

Search for wildlife on land, too, as we look for Arctic and red fox, ptarmigan, caribou and roving polar bears. At this time of year, it is not uncommon to find mothers with cubs roaming the tundra, waiting until the cold temperatures of late autumn freeze Hudson Bay, allowing them to return to the sea ice to hunt seals. The tundra is vibrant in summer, and we'll photograph a riot of wildflowers that dot the green expanse with bright bursts of color.

We'll cross the Churchill River by Zodiac to reach Sloop Cove, once a sheltered haven for wooden sailing vessels used by the Hudson's Bay Company during the fur trade for exploration, whaling expeditions and northern trading attempts with the Inuit, Dene and Cree. Iron rings, which were driven into the rocks to secure the sloops, are still visible today, as are names carved into the lichen-covered stone by Company men. From the cove, take a scenic guided walk along the shoreline to view the exterior of Prince of Wales Fort, an important 18th-century HBC trading bastion that is now a National Historic Site. Built in 1717, its ruins occupy an area first scouted by Danish explorer Jens Munk in 1619 on his quest for the Northwest Passage. The fort became an important commercial hub and a key locale in the opening of the Canadian West as British and French forces vied for territorial control.

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Day 6

Churchill / Winnipeg

An exhilarating dog cart run through the boreal forest

- Ride behind a local musher's dog team in a wheeled cart outside Churchill
- Browse Churchill's locally owned shops for handmade mukluks, caribou-hair sculptures and other Indigenous crafts
- Fly from Churchill to Winnipeg by private charter before a farewell dinner

Our chartered flight back to Winnipeg leaves this afternoon, allowing plenty of time to do more in Churchill today. Meet a local musher and his lively team of sled dogs, learn about this historic mode of northern transportation, and snap action shots as you ride in a wheeled cart pulled by the avid huskies. Pick up some last-minute gifts or souvenirs on the town's main street, where several shops sell locally made handicrafts from leather and beadwork to caribou fur sculptures. Eventually, it's time to head to the airport for our chartered flight back to Winnipeg. Transfer to the Fort Garry Hotel, where we gather for a farewell dinner this evening.

Day 7

Winnipeg

Depart Winnipeg after your Arctic adventure

- Enjoy a final breakfast before your airport transfer
- Connect with homeward flights from Winnipeg

Enjoy breakfast at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg. Then, transfer to the airport for flights home.

Please note: *Specific itinerary timing may vary and activities may happen in a different order from what is listed, but inclusions are the same.*

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Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition Accommodations

Photograph Arctic Summer Wildlife in Churchill, Canada



Fort Garry Hotel

The grande dame of Winnipeg hospitality and one of the city's most prestigious landmarks, this historic downtown hotel provides a genteel welcome before and after our northern adventures in Churchill.



Churchill Hotels

In remote Churchill, our simple hotels are clean, comfortable and centrally located, offering a convenient base for exploring this subarctic frontier town.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/canada-northern-nature-travel/churchill-summer-photo-expedition/accommodations.

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The Heart of an Unforgettable Arctic Summer Photo Expedition

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition

Churchill may be best known for its autumn polar bear tours. But summer here is a whole different discovery, filled with vibrant wildlife, colorful wildflowers, thousands of beluga whales, and often sightings of polar bears and caribou roaming the tundra. If you're looking for a northern photo safari off the typical track, Churchill delivers. More than one tour operator offers summer trips in the Churchill area. We're confident ours is a cut above the rest for nature photographers, with elements you won't find elsewhere:

1. **Small Groups for Better Wildlife Photography**
   With no more than 12 guests, you can expect low-impact wildlife encounters and plenty of personal interaction with our photographer-naturalist Expedition Leader. And we split our small group in half when we travel by Zodiac to see the belugas, for the most intimate encounters.

2. **Two Private Zodiac Excursions Among the Whales**
   We use our own private motorized rafts, chartered from Churchill's highest-quality and most reliable boat company, to visit belugas in the mouth of the Churchill River—with no more than seven passengers per boat. This ensures clear viewing, easy photography access, and a flexible timetable.

3. **Opportunity to Paddle with the Pod**
   When the tides are right, we offer you a chance to kayak among the belugas—an up-close encounter in silence broken only by the splash of your paddle and the whales' inquisitive interactions as they approach your boat.

4. **Get Underwater Whale Shots from Floating Mats**
   An exclusive Nat Hab opportunity! Gear up with a mask, snorkel and your GoPro (or other underwater camera), then float on our flexible, buoyant mats on the Churchill River for true eye-level encounters with belugas, and incredible photo opportunities under the surface!

5. **Listen to Belugas by Hydrophone**
   Belugas are delightfully vocal whales. And while it is thrilling to see them up close, our experience is enhanced by the chance to hear them as well. Most boat excursions don't offer the opportunity to listen in with hydrophones—but we do!

6. **Take a Ride Behind Local Sled Dogs**
   Just because it's not winter doesn't mean you can't have an authentic sled dog encounter! We meet a local musher to learn all about this historic form of northern transportation and recreation, then take a ride behind his enthusiastic team as they pull us in a wheeled cart.

7. **Cultural Interactions with Local Residents**
   Through years of developing close relationships with local people, we are able to offer our guests the exclusive opportunity to meet revered elders of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures in Churchill. These Indigenous storytellers are some of the last of their generation in their communities, sharing their knowledge of past and present with our travelers.

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8 **The Finest Naturalist-Photographer Guides**

Natural Habitat Adventures is known worldwide for employing the highest-quality guides in the industry. Our Churchill Expedition Leaders have been guiding tours in this region for an average of more than 10 years, honing their skills as wildlife photography pros and instructors. And they receive additional training and resources from WWF's top scientists, ensuring the best interpretive experience available. Expedition Leaders meet each guest in Winnipeg and travel with the group the entire way, sharing their photography tips and techniques, and their natural history knowledge and insight, at every turn. Our philosophy is pretty simple: a nature adventure is only as good as the guide, so we simply must provide the best! See Expedition Leader bios and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

9 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Superior Arctic Photo Safari**

Natural Habitat Adventures offers an exclusive guarantee, clearly stating that we will meet the lofty expectations we set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise.**

10 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

11 **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures as its worldwide travel partner, a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $9995 (+Air)

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears Photo Expedition Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jul 30 - Aug 5, 2027	**$10295** +internal air	Wildflower Season · Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Aug 3 - Aug 9, 2027	**$9995** +internal air	Wildflower Season
Aug 7 - Aug 13, 2027	**$9995** +internal air	Wildflower Season
Aug 11 - Aug 17, 2027	**$9995** +internal air	Wildflower Season
Aug 15 - Aug 21, 2027	**$9995** +internal air	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Aug 1 - Aug 7, 2028	**From $9995** +internal air	

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Aug 5 - Aug 11, 2028	**From $9995** +internal air	
Aug 9 - Aug 15, 2028	**From $9995** +internal air	
Aug 13 - Aug 19, 2028	**From $9995** +internal air	
Aug 17 - Aug 23, 2028	**From $9995** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/canada-northern-nature-travel/churchill-summer-photo-expedition/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Trip price includes: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and operations staff, Zodiac and kayak excursions, beluga boarding, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), optional travel protection and medical evacuation insurance.

Internal air: a chartered round-trip flight from Winnipeg and Churchill (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Important Information About This Trip

In summer, the tundra around Churchill bursts into life with grassy, green tussocks and a carpet of wildflowers. Animals, including caribou, are on the move, and birdlife is abundant, with the return of many migratory species. The most impressive phenomenon is the migration of some 3,000 beluga whales into the Seal and Churchill rivers, where we observe these ghost-like creatures at close range, often at arm's length. We may also have opportunities to view mother polar bears with cubs, as they remain in the area all summer long. Be aware that at times black flies or mosquitoes may be present—if you're sensitive to bites, take precautions and wear repellent.

Meals

Meals in the far north are hearty and tasty, but they also require special planning and preparation well in advance. With ample notice, we can meet dietary requirements that accommodate serious medical conditions or strict personal restrictions; however this restricted meal plan must continue to be adhered to while on the adventure. If you have a highly restricted diet, we recommend you bring along some of your preferred snacks and an appreciation that certain foods are limited in this part of the world.

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Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Because weather delays are possible, **we recommend that you arrive at least one night prior to Day 1** to rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. For guests who come in early, our recommended hotel will be included in your pre-departure materials. If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you must arrive in Winnipeg by 5 pm in order to attend the 7 pm orientation dinner.

You are free to depart Winnipeg at any time on the final day.

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Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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