



Discovering Our Planet Together



Beluga Whales & Polar Bears: Churchill Summer Photo Expedition

Photograph Arctic Wildlife & Wildflowers on Canada's Hudson Bay



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Trip Details:

Days
7 Days / Jul–
Aug

Price
From \$9995
(+Air)

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears: Churchill Summer Photo Expedition

Photograph Arctic Wildlife & Wildflowers on Canada's Hudson Bay

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 and kayaks put us at eye level with them. We also listen to their songs via hydrophone. On the surrounding tundra, get shots of terrestrial wildlife, including Arctic fox and caribou—plus aerial images from a helicopter tour! We frequently spot roving or dozing 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

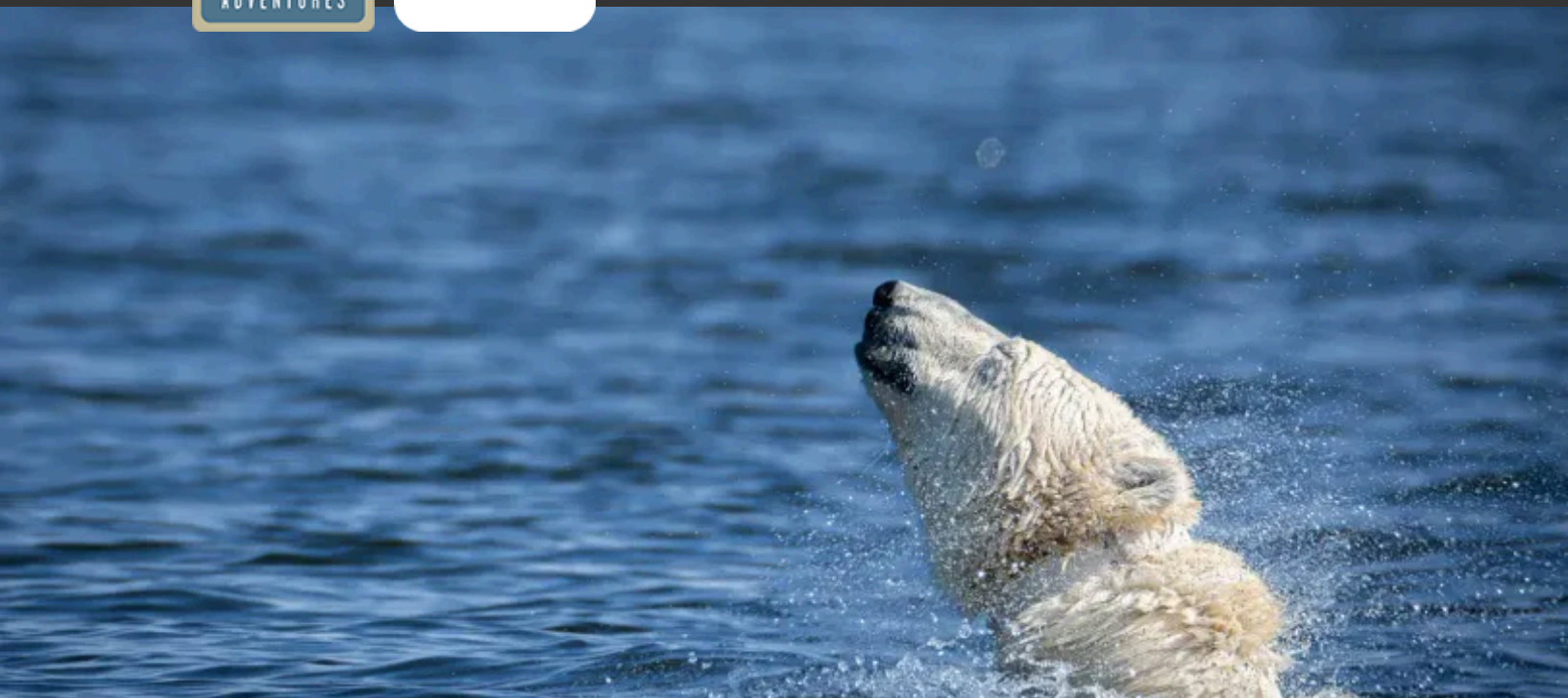
More than 3,000 beluga whales enter the Churchill River each summer—come within arm's reach by Zodiac, kayak and floating "beluga board" for underwater shots

Get aerial shots of wildlife on a helicopter flight over the tundra and taiga forest as we survey the vast expanse of this roadless wilderness on Hudson Bay

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



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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Day 2
Winnipeg / Private Chartered
Flight to Churchill / Town Tour

Days 3 - 5
Beluga Encounters, Wildlife
Watching & Helicopter
Flightseeing

Day 6
Sled Dog Experience / Private
Chartered Flight to Winnipeg

Day 7
Winnipeg / Depart

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears: Churchill Summer Photo Expedition Itinerary

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Day 1: Winnipeg, Manitoba

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 first-class 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.





Day 2: Winnipeg / Private Chartered Flight to Churchill / Town Tour

This morning, fly north 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 town, which lies near the site of Prince of Wales Fort, an important 18th-century Hudson's Bay Company fur trading post. Built in 1717, its remains 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. On the opposite bank of the river, the settlement of Churchill grew up when the rail line was built to Hudson Bay in 1929, facilitating the transport of grain grown on the prairies from a new port facility.

During our tour, we visit Churchill's Itsanitaq Museum, showcasing the region's Indigenous cultures with artifacts collected from centuries of habitation. 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 where Churchill is located. 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 to the north. In such a dynamic environment, summer wildlife flourishes, and we go in search of it to photograph over the next several days.



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Days 3 - 5: Beluga Encounters, Wildlife Watching & Helicopter Flightseeing

With Churchill as our base, spend four days chasing photo opportunities on the tundra, river and seacoast of Hudson Bay. On a private helicopter flight over the vast subarctic plain, scout for polar bears that roam the tundra. Killing time in the summer, they are waiting until the cold temperatures of late autumn freeze the bay once more, allowing them to return to the sea ice to hunt seals. From the air, gain a dramatic view on the beluga pods that gather at the mouth of the Churchill River. Each July and August, more than 3,000 of these small white whales congregate where the river meets Hudson Bay.

During our visit, we make four separate outings to photograph these gentle whales at thrilling close range. View belugas on two Zodiac trips, then meet them at eye level on a kayaking excursion—plus a chance to float the river on "beluga boards," buoyant mats that allow us to capture underwater shots with GoPros or other underwater cameras, while wearing a mask and snorkel. These gentle, inquisitive cetaceans often nudge close to 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. Spend time searching for wildlife on land, too, in search of Arctic fox, ptarmigan, caribou and polar bears. At this time of year, it is not uncommon to find mothers with cubs.

The tundra is vibrant in summer, and we'll walk amid a riot of wildflowers that carpet the green expanse with bright bursts of color. At the interface of the boreal forest and tundra, we investigate this nexus of ecosystems that's home to a variety of flora and fauna, exploring on short walks with our Expedition Leader. On later-season departures, when the sun sets earlier and dark night skies return, there's a possibility we could get photos of the northern lights if conditions are just right. Churchill lies directly beneath the auroral oval, one of the best places on Earth to photograph the aurora borealis when it is visible.

Day 6: Sled Dog Experience / Private Chartered Flight to Winnipeg

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 we 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. All too soon, 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 festive farewell dinner this evening.

Day 7: Winnipeg / Depart

After breakfast, our Arctic summer photo tour comes to a close with a transfer to the airport to meet homeward flights.

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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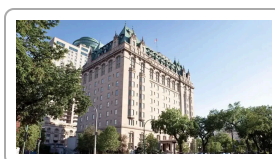
Accommodation Details:

Winnipeg & Churchill Hotels

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/alaska-northern-adventures/churchill-summer-photo-expedition/accommodations

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears: Churchill Summer Photo Expedition Accommodations

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Winnipeg & Churchill Hotels

In Winnipeg, stay at the historic Fort Garry Hotel, an elegant landmark built by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1913. In remote Churchill, our simple hotels are clean, comfortable and centrally located.



Why Choose Churchill for Your Arctic Summer Photo Safari?

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. And if you've never paddled a kayak before, don't worry—it's easy, your Expedition Leader will help you, and our first-time guests rave about the experience!

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!



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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 Aurora Photography? The Odds Could Be Good!

Located directly beneath the Van Allen Belt, a band of energy-charged particles that wraps the earth's polar regions, Churchill is one of the best places on Earth to see the northern lights. Originating in solar flares, these particles are carried by solar wind, becoming trapped in Earth's magnetic field to create the phenomenon of the northern lights. As days get shorter toward summer's end, our chances increase to witness the aurora in a darkening night sky.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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.



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12 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!



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Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$9995
(+Air)

Group Size:
Limited to 12
Travelers

Beluga Whales & Polar Bears: Churchill Summer Photo Expedition Dates, Pricing & Info

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2026 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Jul 23, 2026	Jul 29, 2026	\$9995 USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season
Jul 27, 2026	Aug 2, 2026	\$9995 USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season Habitat Club Pricing Available
Jul 31, 2026	Aug 6, 2026	\$9995 USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season
Aug 4, 2026	Aug 10, 2026	\$9995 USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season



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Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$9995
(+Air)

Group Size:
Limited to 12
Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
Aug 12, 2026	Aug 18, 2026	\$9995 USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season

2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Trip dates and pricing are not yet confirmed and are subject to change. * Date is not confirmed ** Price is not confirmed		
Jul 30, 2027*	Aug 5, 2027*	\$9995** USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season
Aug 3, 2027*	Aug 9, 2027*	\$9995** USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season
Aug 7, 2027*	Aug 13, 2027*	\$9995** USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season
Aug 11, 2027*	Aug 17, 2027*	\$9995** USD (+internal air) Wildflower Season



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Pricing

See <https://nathab.com/alaska-northern-adventures/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 assistants, Zodiac and kayak excursions, helicopter excursion, 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.
- **Internal air cost includes:** a chartered round-trip flight from Winnipeg and Churchill (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

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 and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), optional travel protection and medical evacuation insurance.

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.

A note regarding northern lights: In Churchill, you're located directly under the auroral oval at one of the world's best places to see the northern lights. Chances of spotting the aurora borealis increase later in the summer season if conditions are right, meaning there is no cloud cover while the complete darkness of August's "magnetic midnight" appears. Summer sightings are fleeting, but always magical.



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

In case of flight or weather delays, we recommend that you arrive a day early. Please schedule your flights to arrive by 5 pm in order to attend a 7 pm orientation dinner on Day 1 of your program. You are free to depart at any time on the final day.

