natural habitat ADVENTURES

WWF

Discovering Our Planet Together

Northern Lights & Arctic Exploration

A Winter Adventure in Churchill, Manitoba—The Best Place on Earth to See the Aurora!

Table of Contents:

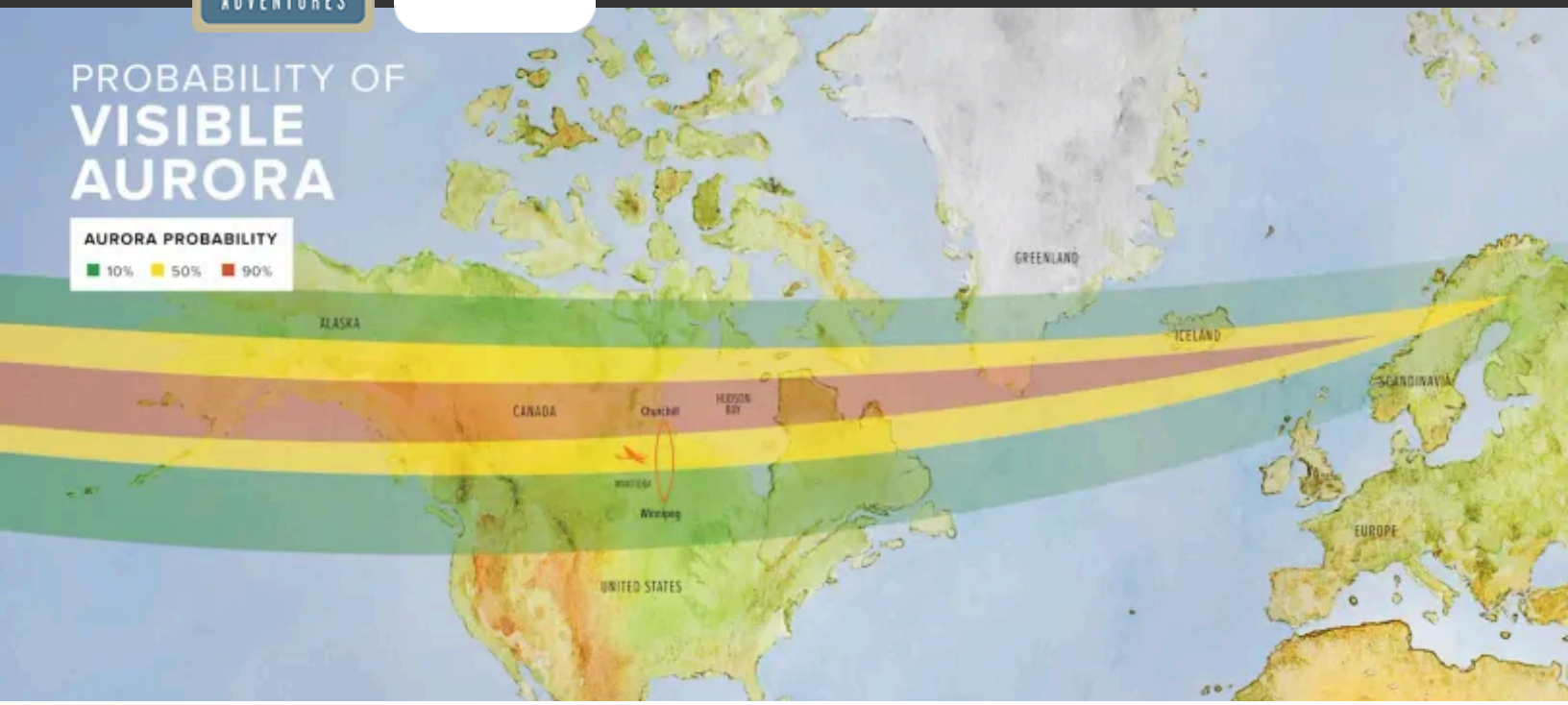
Trip Overview 3

Trip Itinerary 4

Trip Accommodations 7

What Makes Nat Hab Different? 8

Dates & Pricing Information 11



Trip Details:

Days
7 Days /
Jan–Mar

Price
From $8495
(+Air)

Northern Lights & Arctic Exploration

A Winter Adventure in Churchill, Manitoba—The Best Place on Earth to See the Aurora!

In the same land that hosts the beluga whales of summer and polar bears in autumn comes an amazing phenomenon that illumines the dark winter skies. The northern lights—also called the aurora borealis—brighten the night in an ethereal display of color. Churchill has some of the most intense auroral activity on Earth, with often-clear skies that make it the ideal viewing destination. Look for the lights from a selection of six heated vantage points exclusively for our guests. Your visit may include a cabin in the boreal forest that we access via private snowcoach over a frozen creek, or our custom-built Aurora Pod®, with a **360° view** of the night sky through its glass top and sides—and several other optimal vantage points. On this exciting Arctic adventure, our days are filled with distinctly northern activities like dog sledding, while nights offer potential for the best aurora viewing on the planet.

Trip Highlights

Watch the northern lights in comfort from a selection of six different viewing spots, all with heated interiors and located outside town in total darkness

Aboard our custom snowcoach, venture deep into the North Woods as we travel atop a frozen creek, keeping an eye out for moose, fox and Arctic hare

Learn about local lifestyles of Indigenous peoples on an array of winter activities, including snowshoeing and a traditional dog sled ride

Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Day 2
Winnipeg / Fly to Churchill—Town Tour & Northern Lights Watch

Days 3 - 5
Aurora Viewing by Night, Arctic Exploration by Day

Day 6
Churchill / Winnipeg

Day 7
Winnipeg / Depart

Northern Lights & Arctic Exploration Itinerary

A Winter Adventure in Churchill, Manitoba—The Best Place on Earth to See the Aurora!

Day 1: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Click here to see why Churchill is the best place on the planet to view the Northern Lights

Our northern lights tour begins in Winnipeg. Once a fur-trading hub and later a Canadian Pacific Railway boomtown, today Manitoba's capital is a vibrant cultural and commercial center on the eastern edge of Canada's vast prairies. On arrival, you are met and transferred to the distinguished Fort Garry Hotel, one of the city's most prestigious landmarks. Built in 1913 by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in the style of a French chateau, it remains the grande dame of Winnipeg hospitality.

This afternoon, head to the "gear room" at our hotel to get equipped with all the cold-weather clothing you'll need for our Arctic adventure. We provide heavy parkas, insulated snow boots, snow pants, fleece jacket, mittens, fleece hat, fleece neck gaiter, and hand and toe warmers. No need to buy and haul your own! This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner with your Expedition Leader and fellow adventurers.

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

Day 2: Winnipeg / Fly to Churchill—Town Tour & Northern Lights Watch

Board our chartered flight to Churchill this morning. On arrival, transfer to town, followed by a brief tour of this historic settlement that grew up around the site of a major Hudson's Bay Company fur-trading post established in the early 18th century. As night falls, we head out for our first quest in search of the northern lights. Also called the aurora borealis, meaning "north wind of the dawn," the display often begins as a pale glow low in the northern sky, which slowly begins to shift and undulate, frequently emerging as shimmering curtains of green. Sometimes pink, red or even violet colors appear. For centuries, the phenomenon of the northern lights was a mystery, inspiring a host of mythical explanations. While we know now that the aurora is caused by the interaction of the solar wind with Earth’s magnetic field, more poetic stories of their origin linger, including the Hudson Bay Inuit’s belief that the lights are the mystical display of their ancestors’ souls dancing in the sky.

Days 3 - 5: Aurora Viewing by Night, Arctic Exploration by Day

On these dark, icy nights in the Canadian North, we travel outside town where views of the aurora are best, away from artificial light. Yet you won't stand in the cold waiting for the lights to show—we have a collection of **six private vantage points** where you can relax in warmth and comfort as we anticipate the aurora's appearance.

During your trip, you will visit a selection (though not all) of the following: Nat Hab's new Boreal Lounge is a two-story structure with a curved clear top and multiple outdoor decks, offering vantage points on the sky from different levels. Our custom-designed Aurora Pod® features a **360° view** on the night sky through a glass ceiling and half-walls. Our private Aurora Sphere is a geodesic dome tent with clear panels and a wood stove-heated interior that provides cozy lounge space throughout the evening. Aurora Domes with Plexiglass roofs offer another angle on the heavens—climb the ladder to the upper level for a view in the round, or head outside for a totally clear vista of the sky, then come in and warm up on the ground level with comfortable sofas, snacks and hot drinks. At a local dog musher’s camp, stay warm by a campfire in a traditional tepee as we wait for the lights to appear. Farther afield, view the lights above our isolated cabin deep in the boreal forest, which we reach via an overland snowcoach expedition atop a frozen creek. Regardless of which locations you'll watch from, your comfort is our top priority as we position ourselves for prime observation of the dark winter skies.

While our nights are devoted to the aurora, daytime excursions focus on distinctly northern adventures, local cultures, and the austere beauty of our subarctic environs. A highlight is a journey aboard our custom-built snowcoach deep into the North Woods. This vehicle, designed exclusively for our use, allows passage over wild, roadless terrain, offering a true wilderness experience outside Churchill. We'll also track hardy northern wildlife on a snowshoeing outing, looking for signs of Arctic hare, Arctic and red fox, ptarmigan and more. The historic town of Churchill offers encounters with local people and unique northern culture. While the Hudson’s Bay Company established a fort near here in 1717 as part of its fur-trading network across the Canadian North, Indigenous cultures had already been flourishing in these challenging environs for thousands of years. Explore their heritage on a dog sled ride through the boreal forest, during a visit to the Itsanitaq Museum, and via cultural programs featuring the arts and traditions of the Inuit, Dene and Metis peoples.

Day 6: Churchill / Winnipeg

The morning is free to wander Churchill's main street, where several shops sell authentic local handicrafts, from traditional mukluks to sculptures made of caribou hair. We then transfer to the airport for our chartered flight back to Winnipeg. Gather for a farewell dinner this evening to celebrate our aurora adventures.

Day 7: Winnipeg / Depart

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flights home.

Important Note: *Scheduling for all activities in Churchill is flexible in order to accommodate varying weather conditions and other contingencies. Your itinerary may vary slightly and activities may happen at different times from what is listed here, but inclusions are the same. Please also be aware that each group will visit a sampler of aurora-viewing sites but not all of them, and we do not know in advance which locations will be included on which departure—but be assured that every spot offers an excellent viewing opportunity, away from any light pollution from town, and all are enhanced with heat for your comfort. For safety's sake and to ensure your chance to sleep, we return to town after each night's activities, and we are unable to stay out all night. When conditions allow and energy levels permit, we may extend viewing time for particularly enthusiastic groups. However, as our aurora viewing happens in a group context, we strive to balance the needs and energy of all participants across the four-night experience.*

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Accommodation Details:

> **Winnipeg & Churchill Hotels**
>
> For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/alaska-northern-adventures/northern-lights-tour/accommodations

Northern Lights & Arctic Exploration Accommodations

A Winter Adventure in Churchill, Manitoba—The Best Place on Earth to See the Aurora!

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.

The Best Way to Witness the Wonder of the Aurora

If you're planning a trip to see the northern lights, why not go where they are most often on view? Churchill, Manitoba, is arguably And this Arctic winter adventure includes so much more. Check out the many features that set our northern lights tour above the rest:

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1 The Best Place on the Planet to See the Northern Lights

We maximize your chance to see the northern lights in Churchill, because it is located directly beneath the Van Allen Belt, a layer of energy-charged particles that wraps the earth's polar regions. Originating in solar flares, these particles are carried by solar wind, becoming trapped in Earth's magnetic field to create the phenomenon of the aurora. Winter skies are also clearer in Churchill than in other popular aurora-viewing destinations like Iceland and Lapland, upping your odds of seeing the lights. Our trips run in midwinter when nights are long and skies are dark, enhancing your chances for the best views.

2 Churchill is the "Accessible Arctic"

While Churchill is technically subarctic, lying below the Arctic Circle, its location on the edge of the frozen expanse of Hudson Bay gives it a distinctly Arctic climate and cultural identity. Yet unlike getting to the top of Norway or Siberia or into the interior of the Yukon to see the northern lights, Churchill is easy to reach by air from Winnipeg, Manitoba's capital and largest city, which is served by many direct flights from the U.S.

3 Private Chartered Flights to and from Churchill

We charter roundtrip flights to Churchill from Winnipeg, ensuring you get more time in Arctic nature and less time navigating security lines and waiting around airports.

4 Unique Private Settings for Aurora Viewing & Photography

Each of our **six private aurora-viewing locations** is situated well away from the lights of town, and guests will visit a selection of settings (though not all) during their tour. Your mix of heated viewing destinations may include our Boreal Lounge, a two-story structure with a clear curved top and multi-level viewing spots; our **Aurora Pod®** with a clear glass roof and half-sides; the intimate **Aurora Sphere**, a furnished geodesic dome with clear panels that's heated by a wood stove; Plexiglass-topped Aurora Domes offering a circular view on the night sky; a cabin tucked deep within the boreal forest; and in the photogenic setting of a dog musher's camp where an illuminated tepee and campfire provide an evocative foreground for photos. **See 3-D views of our aurora-viewing locations**

5

A Wilderness Snowcoach Expedition—for Our Guests Alone

Exclusively for Nat Hab travelers! Ride on a new custom-built snowcoach into the boreal forest, crossing a frozen creek to reach our isolated private cabin. No one else has this access to roadless wilderness! As we head deep into the North Woods, look for moose and wolf tracks and sightings of elusive winter wildlife. Gather at our cabin, tucked within the forest and warmed by a wood stove, to spend an evening spent searching for the northern lights.

6

Explore Our Arctic Environs on an Exclusive Slate of Adventures

The aurora may be top draw, but you'll enjoy a whole host of northern activities for a comprehensive Arctic adventure. From an authentic dog sled ride to local museums and cultural encounters with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples whose presence in the region extends back centuries, you'll gain wide-ranging insight into the history and traditions of the Canadian North. Through our 35+ years in Churchill, we've built relationships that provide experiences other travelers simply won't get.

7

No Need to Buy Heavy Winter Gear—We Provide It All!

Don't worry about shelling out for a heavy parka, cumbersome Arctic snowboots and insulated mittens you may only wear once—we supply this cold-weather expedition gear to use during your time in Churchill, along with snow pants, fleece jacket, fleece hat, fleece neck gaiter, and hand and toe warmers. We've got you covered (literally!).

8

See the Northern Lights with a Stellar Guide

While it's possible to travel on your own to Churchill to view the aurora, there is no way to get the quality experience you'll have with our naturalist guide by your side. Our Expedition Leader is an expert on the Canadian North, offering in-depth interpretation of the region's geology, biology, history, cultures, and, of course, the aurora. We take pride in hiring the best guides in the industry—Nat Hab Expedition Leaders average 15 years' experience, and with additional training and resources provided by WWF's top scientists, your trip is sure to be a learning adventure. **See Expedition Leader bios** with traveler comments regarding the quality of our expert guides.

9

An Expedition Leader Plus Local Guide Equals Flexibility & Personalized Attention

In addition to your naturalist Expedition Leader, we also have the services of a local staff member dedicated exclusively to our group. This arrangement allows us to finesse our schedule and activities so that, for instance, guests who wish to stay out longer for snowshoeing can do so, or we can bring guests who wish back to the hotel earlier and allow others to stay out later in search of the northern lights, etc. When we have two guides available, we can offer service well "above and beyond" what you'll find elsewhere.

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10

Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Aurora Adventure

Natural Habitat Adventures offers you our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company.

11

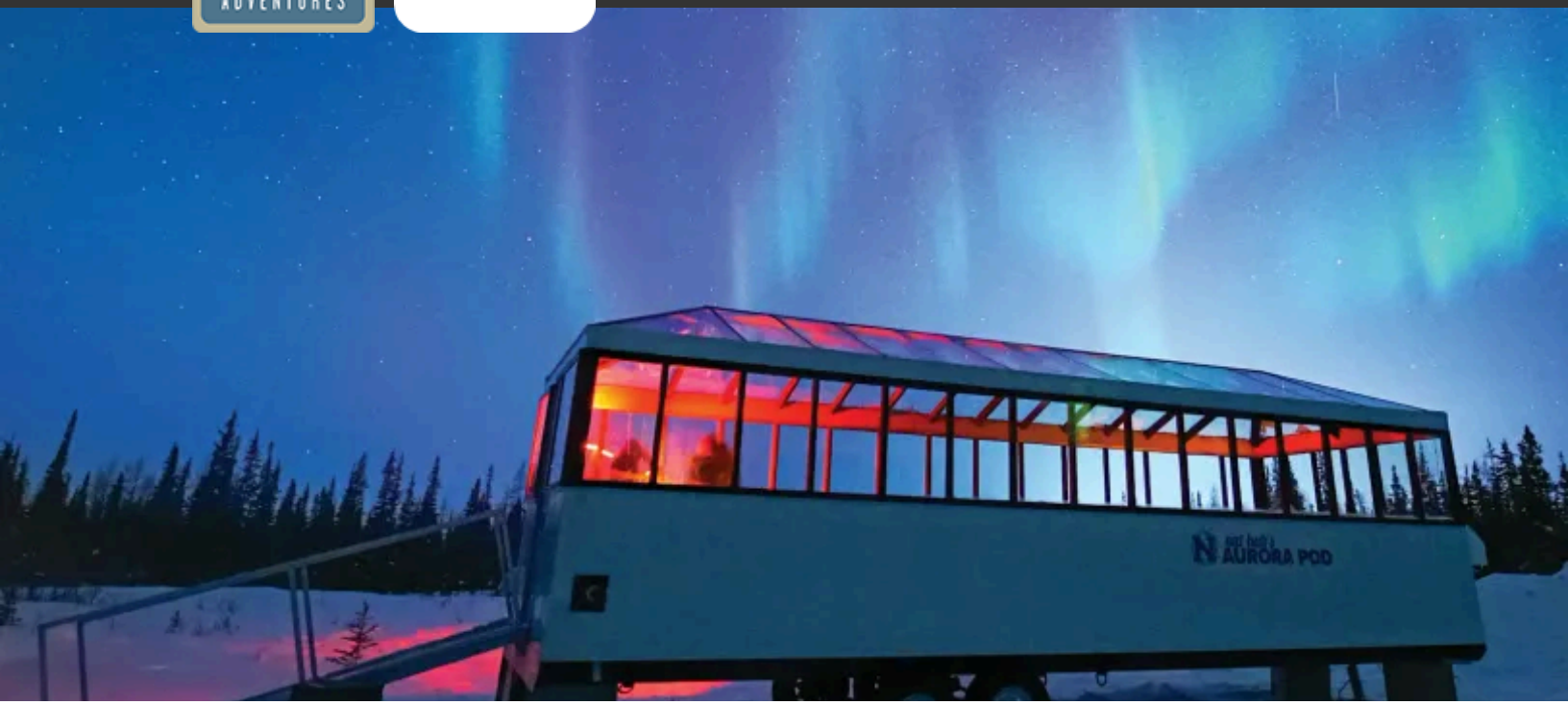
Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey

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.

12

Natural Habitat Adventures Is World Wildlife Fund's Travel Partner

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



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From $8495 (+Air)

Group Size:
Limited to 15 Travelers

Northern Lights & Arctic Exploration Dates, Pricing & Info

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