



TRIP OVERVIEW

Explore the Canadian wilderness along the Churchill River System in Canada's Saskatchewan province. You will be taken to unspoilt, remote locations, where clear and relatively warm freshwater swims, some in moving water and others across open lakes, will be sure to both challenge and enthrall you. Eagles, osprey, beavers, otters, pelicans and even the occasional bear are not an unusual sight out here in the wilderness.

We also take you back to a place in time when the river was essential to the survival of the local indigenous peoples. Experience the beauty of the boreal forest, visit white sand beaches, mighty river rapids and canoe portages that have been created by hundreds of years of travel. Enjoy breath-taking views of your swims from the air on a scenic transfer flight in the 'workhorse of the north' - a float plane - and listen to a talk about how survival in the North is simply a way of life. The meals on this trip are delicious, the people you'll meet are fascinating, and, of course, all the swims are staged in unique swathes of freshwater that truly put the 'wild' in wild swimming.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is for swimmers who want to experience off-grid adventures in remote, unspoilt locations. This is the perfect place to just switch off and focus on enjoying stunning swims in a gorgeous wilderness setting. While your days will be spent out in nature, evenings at Thompson's Resort will be your opportunity to enjoy all the comforts of home, including online connectivity.

Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of 3km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 6km (split over a minimum of two swims). **Please note**, some of the swims are current assisted so you will be swimming on average 5km/day.

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Churchill River

The Churchill River is more a series of lakes, joined by rapids or falls, which flows across Northern Saskatchewan and offers exceptional sites of natural beauty, set within pure wilderness. The river also meanders through boreal forest and the rock formations of the Precambrian Shield. During the summer, the water is surprisingly warm and excellent quality, which makes it ideal for swimming.

Keep an eye upturned for bald eagles flying overhead, beavers, otters and white pelicans fishing below the rapids, moose wading in the shallows, black bears wandering the shore and common loons that serenade you as you swim. You will also see ancient rock paintings by the Cree people (see below).



Saskatchewan

Known as the 'Land of the Living Skies', Saskatchewan offers abundant wildlife, vast expanses of open space and national parks a plenty. As its nickname suggests, the skies are a big draw and the northern lights are one of its biggest attractions. Undulating hills, boreal forest, and over 100,000 lakes and rivers all make Saskatchewan a delight for lovers of the great outdoors.

The Cree, First People of the Churchill

The Cree are the largest group of First Nations (indigenous population). The Woodland Cree, Nîhithaw, are the peoples living in this part of Canada around the Churchill River. They call their river Missinipe (*big water*). Archaeologists estimate that the Cree have been in this region for roughly 8,000 years. There will be opportunities to learn about their culture and way of life during the trip.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Alt Hotel , Saskatoon
Start Time	17:30 on Day 1
Finish Point	Alt Hotel , Saskatoon
Finish Time	15:00 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

Day 1

On arriving into Saskatoon airport you will make your way to the Alt Hotel - our base in this buzzing city, which is a cradle of Saskatchewan culture and welcoming prairie spirit. In the evening there will be a welcome meeting and drink while we discuss the plan for the week ahead in more detail.

Day 2

In the morning we depart for Thompson's Resort in Missinipe, SK. The 6-hour drive is a great opportunity to meet and chat with the group and your guides, who can answer any questions you may have. Breakfast is taken en-route. The view of the Saskatchewan countryside is often mesmerising as well.

After arriving at Thompson's Resort, which is in the heart of the boreal forest, we will sit for lunch before checking into your accommodation and then heading off for an acclimatisation swim. Following a chance to explore the resort we carry out our first significant swim of the trip as we strike out from the resort on a swim to the Walker Bay headland. As you cross, you may sight ospreys which are known to frequent these waters. On arrival, you have extensive views over Otter Lake as well, which is part of the Churchill River system and where several of our upcoming swims will be taking place. On return to the resort, there is a chance to relax before enjoying dinner at the main lodge.



Day 3

We start the day with a short boat ride to Paul Island and literally let the current help and take some of the strain as you swim towards Ball Island. The swim is in the centre of Otter Lake and as you pass through the narrow channel by Bennett Island (where walleye and pike sometimes gather) you will get an extra push along to the finish. On arriving you will enjoy a locally prepared lunch - where possible this will include a local fish fry.

Then it is back in the boats, and we ride to the eastern edge of Otter Lake and undertake a scenic swim starting off on Eyniew Island and culminating just above the stunning Upper North Falls. On arrival you can walk along the portage track to glimpse a view of the Lower North Falls, which mark the start of Mountain Lake. It has been a big day of exploration, so even more reason to soak up some free time at the main lodge and sit back and enjoy a glass of wine or beer while you relive the day.

Day 4

After breakfast at the main lodge, we catch a boat to the barren and regenerating landscape of Utie Island (ravaged by a 2015 forest fire) and towards Rattler Bay with steep cliff sides scrawled with several ancient pictographs. While here an indigenous elder will explain the significance of the paintings and the importance of the boreal forest to the community.

After a locally sourced lunch we head to the Nelson Channel and Neheyow Island. From here we carry out a unique swim as we journey through the narrow gulley which separates Neheyow from Reid Island. You'll enjoy some assisted swimming through the channel as the current guides you towards the top of Robertson Falls. On getting out at the portage route, we can walk a short distance to the Twin Falls so we can explore both sets of waterfalls. Before our homely meal at the Twin Falls Lodge for dinner, we will enjoy a fantastic nature walk. After dinner we will catch the boat back to Thompson's Resort.

Day 5

Prepare yourself for a SwimTrek first as we literally catch a plane to today's swim site! As if Otter Lake wasn't remote enough - we'll venture out to uncover the secluded wonder of Dead Lake. We depart after breakfast by float plane (think sea plane) which leaves from just outside our resort. Enjoy the scenic 15-minute flight that will drop you at a beautiful white sand beach at Dead Lake Outpost Camp. From here we take a boat to the outflow of the Lower Chief Rapids. We then swim across Dead Lake towards the camp. Keep your eyes open as pelicans are often spotted here. On arrival at the camp, we enjoy a traditional shore lunch of fresh caught fish while relaxing in front of the campfire. It is an excellent spot to while away a few hours of R&R.

The afternoon swim takes us to the headwaters of Hood Creek, which is an excellent place to finish with far-reaching- views across the majestic lake. It is then back in our float plane to return to Thompson's Resort and enjoy supper at the main lodge.

Day 6

After breakfast we take the boats up the river. Your morning swim will be from Grandmother's Bay Church to Taylor Island with the current. We return by boat to Grandmother's Bay Church, relax and enjoy a hearty lunch before we hike to the top of the powerful Otter Rapids. We then take to the water for our second current-assisted swim as we head down the Churchill River - you literally feel its power



as it carries you downstream! It is a unique final swim of the trip before our journey carries us back towards Grandmother's Bay, where you will be picked up and transported to Thompson's Resort for our final evening.

Day 7

An early start to bask in the beauty of a sunrise swim before enjoying your final breakfast at Thompson's Resort. Then you say goodbye to your fellow travellers and the friendly staff. Sit back and enjoy the return ride to Saskatoon with a scheduled stop at the famous Robertson's Trading Post, one of the last remaining active trading posts in Canada. Arriving in Saskatoon and the Alt Hotel you can head to the airport, or extend your stay if you wish.

TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

Swimming Distances

Swim	Distance	Swim	Distance
Walker Bay - Thompson's Resort	2½ km	Paul Island - Ball Island	3km (ca)
Neesokat Island - North Falls	3½km (ca)	Utie Island - Rattler Bay	4km
Nelson Channel - Robertson Falls	4km (ca)	Lower Chief Rapids - Dead Lake Camp	2km (ca)
Dead Lake Camp - Hood Creek	2km	Grandmother's Bay Church - Taylor Island	3km (ca)
Otter Rapids - Grandmother's Bay	2½km (ca)		

*"ca" = Current assisted swim

Swimming Conditions

The lakes and wider river system are fresh water with decent visibility and excellent water quality. On some of the swims you will have the current assisting you. However, as with any lakes around the world, water quality can vary. If you do feel unwell at any stage after the trip, you should go to your medical practitioner immediately and let them know what you have been doing.

Walking Distances

Walk	Distance
Robertson Portage	500m
First North Falls Portage	300m
Nature Walk at Twin Falls	2km



There are also some lovely trails situated around the area, you can choose to enjoy small hikes on before or after the swims. Some walks are along rocky and unstable.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
July	19-21°C / 66-70°F	20-26°C / 68-79°F
August	20-22°C / 68-72°F	20-26°C / 68-79°F

* Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. Therefore, open water swimming holidays requires a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.

TRIP INFORMATION

Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 15. The group will be split into a maximum of two groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

Boat Support

Boat support on this trip includes two pontoon boats with pilot plus a guide on an SUP. At Dead Lake we use two motorboats piloted by your SwimTrek guides. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

Extra Activities

Evenings are spent at the idyllic Thompson's Resort with optional evening activities such as canoeing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, or you can even take a scenic flight. Excursions such as scenic flights, paddling or fishing are available from Thompson's Resort but your itinerary is quite full so there is little time to take part during the SwimTrek itself.

Essential Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweater / Fleece



<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2) *	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Boots / Aqua Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Drink Bottle (x2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Warm Hat & Gloves		

For more information, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website.

*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

**A towel will be provided in your room, please feel free to bring your own swim towel.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water and electrolyte drinks. The guides will no longer distribute shared drinks bottles but will fill your personal drink bottles. Please ensure these are clearly marked to help our guides identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to the start of your trip is to fly into John G. Diefenbaker (YXE), Saskatoon's international airport. The airport is serviced by a large selection of flights most routing through Toronto or Calgary. From the airport make your way to the Alt Hotel in Saskatoon, a 16-minute taxi drive from the airport.

The SwimTrek transfer to our accommodation leaves from the Alt Hotel early on the morning of Day 2 and takes around 5 hours by road. We have breakfast on the way up and a packed lunch on the return journey.

As SwimTrekkers come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out our SwimTrek flight tips page on the website.

Whichever route you choose to take, we recommend confirming your flights and other travel arrangements as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues.

ACCOMMODATION

On the first night we stay in the 3-star Alt Hotel located at the heart of downtown Saskatoon on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. A comfortable, functional hotel handy for our short stay in Saskatoon.

For five more nights, we stay at the secluded Thompson's Resort, sitting on the banks of Otter Lake within the Churchill River System. The resort offers an assortment of suites and cabins scattered around



the property. There is also a restaurant in the main lodge and a small grocery store on site.

Our accommodation is in the lakefront Walkers Bay Cabins. They have a large deck looking towards the lake and firepit area, a kitchenette, TV, gas fireplace and laundry. Each cabin has 3 bedrooms, one with a queen-double bed, one with a double bed and the third bedroom has both a single bed and bunk beds. There is one bathroom and an additional toilet in each cabin. Twin-share and single occupancy rooms can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

Due to the small size and popularity of the resort, our accommodation is booked well in advance, and we have limited opportunity to change accommodation options, even if the resort has availability.

Further information about the Thompson's Resort accommodation can be found [here](#)

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you would like to extend your stay with additional nights' accommodation before or after your trip at Thompson's Resort, please contact the resort directly via sales@adventuredestinations.ca. Please note that if extending your stay any additional transfers will need to be arranged and paid for separately to your SwimTrek Trip.

Food and Drink

Thompson's Resort has an onsite restaurant where we take breakfasts and dinners. All meals are included in this trip except for dinner on Day 1 in Saskatoon. Day 7 is a packed lunch on the return journey to Saskatoon. The close by Churchill River Trading Post sells an assortment of snacks and other groceries.

Thompson's Resort can accommodate vegetarian diets. We will endeavour to meet other special dietary requests but as this is a remote area and any special ingredients required must be brought in in advance and may not always be available. SwimTrek must be notified of any special dietary requests in advance.

For more information, please visit our [food and drink](#) page on the website

TRAVEL ADVICE

For more information on any of the following sections please visit the [Travel Advice](#) page of our website

Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as souvenirs and drinks. The local currency is Canadian Dollars (CAD). Beer and wine are available on site at the resort, payable locally. There is nowhere to exchange money once we leave Saskatoon. Debit and credit cards are accepted at Thompson's Resort, Churchill River Trading Post and Robertson's Trading Post.

In some countries tipping, gratuities, is not part of the culture in others it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you have been provided with excellent service, it may be something you wish to do. Your SwimTrek guides can advise on local norms for service providers like boat crew, waiters or taxis. Nothing is expected for your SwimTrek guides but many



groups like to present something to the Guides at the end of the trip.

Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.

For more information, please visit our [Responsible Travel](#) page on the website.

Passports and Visas

Citizens from several countries, including all EU member states, UK, Australia and New Zealand, will require an electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) to enter Canada. US citizens do not require an eTA to gain entry into Canada, but must carry proper identification, such as a valid US Passport.

Non-residents of Canada will require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Please also be aware that a scanned copy of the photo page of your passport will be required by local authorities.

Please note, visa regulations are always subject to change, and it is important that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

Travel Insurance

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information, please visit our [Travel Insurance](#) page on the website.

Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations Travel Health & Vaccinations

Here at SwimTrek we pride ourselves on our focus on safety and the well-being of all our guests. As we operate in some beautiful and remote locations medical facilities are not always easily accessible. SwimTrek Guides, and many staff working for our local partners, are first aid trained. However, we ask that you read our [Travel Health](#) page to ensure that you are informed about general Travel and Swim Health precautions.

Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs

There is Wi-Fi available at the main lodge (restaurant) and there is cellular service at the Resort and on much of Otter Lake.



For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit www.worldstandards.eu/.