



Churchill Winter

Photographic tour with tour leader Danny Green

2nd - 11th November 2027

Trip Overview

Group size:

The trip accommodates a maximum of 12 guests.

Due to the nature of the trip we will have to take an interim payment of £1,500 on the 26th February and the amount will be deducted from your final balance.

This includes:

Internal flight to Churchill, all accommodation, all transport to/from Winnipeg airport, Tundra Buggy, 4x4 Vehicles, Local Guides, and all meals.

Cost excludes:

International flights to Winnipeg, alcohol, sundry items and tips for drivers and guides and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

Accommodation is based on a twin room basis dependent on which hotel/ lodge we are at during our travels. It will all be typically comfortable US hotel accommodation. Single supplement is available but expensive.

Level of fitness:

The weather here can be very cold indeed and obviously snowy too, so suitable clothing & footwear will be necessary. This will need to be proper arctic gear not UK winter weather in nature, particularly boots, coats, gloves, and headwear. There are no major treks planned because of the safety aspect of encountering Polar Bears so not much walking involved, and the days are relatively short too, so not there's not too much of the early mornings & late nights either.

LEVEL 1-2



Trip Overview

The town of Churchill in the Canadian Arctic is world famous for the high concentration of Polar Bears that head to the southern shores of the Hudson Bay each Autumn. The Bears are waiting for the ice to reform so they can head out to hunt their preferred prey of ring seals during the winter months. This Polar Bear spectacle is an ancient tradition, as along these shores of the Hudson Bay this is the first place that the sea ice starts to form. This really is one of the best places in the world to photograph this iconic bear the king of the Arctic.

To find the Bears we must head out onto the Tundra, and we do this by using a very special vehicle called a Tundra Buggy. We will be working from our own exclusive Tundra Buggy for just our small group and so we won't be jostling for places with other guests, and we will have complete flexibility of where we can go, and we won't be under pressure to move on. Play fighting adult males, females with young cubs and bears just chilling out on the many frozen ponds of the Tundra are what we will be concentrating on over the course of the week. The light can be very special at this time of the year and so will be looking to work with this golden arctic light.



Itinerary

Day 1: We are all due to arrive at Winnipeg Airport from our chosen destinations and it will be in the late evening. Flight recommendations will be sent out nearer the time.

Day 2: It's a very early start in the morning and breakfast is a buffet type affair which is served from 6.15am. This time might change and if it does, I will let you know nearer the time but generally we meet in the hotel reception at 6.00am with all our bags packed and ready to go. We will then have breakfast and join a bus at 7.00am to take us to the waiting plane. We don't have to go through any security checks as the bus takes us directly to the special chartered plane. Arriving in Churchill is not like a normal airport route, and we won't have to wait for our luggage. I will give you a special tag for your hold luggage which means your luggage will get delivered to our hotel in Churchill. You will need to wear winter gear ready for the flight up to Churchill as you won't see your luggage until you get to the Tundra Inn in Churchill. For the duration of the trip, we are governed by the weather conditions, so the overall shape of the itinerary is determined by this, so we must make the most of our photographic opportunities. The flight up to Churchill takes around 2 hours and so we will arrive around mid-morning. A minibus will take us on a short journey to visit some locations en-route to Churchill, and we might even see our first bear along the way, we have done in the past. Our first afternoon will see us in the town of Churchill which we can explore at will and visit some of the well-known sites and local gift shops. We have lunch booked at a local restaurant at 1.00pm. Please note that we don't have to wait for our suitcases at the airport, the special tag means that they will directly to the hotel, but this can take a couple of hours especially if the weather conditions are adverse. So, make sure you have your winter gear and boots on and any medication that you might need too.



Itinerary

Day 3: It will be an early start and after a hearty breakfast we will head out on to the tundra in our specially designed tundra buggy. We have secured our own tundra buggy for our small group so won't be sharing with other people or groups and because we have exclusive use there will be lots of space which photographers need. This really is the best way of working from the Tundra Buggies as everyone has a window on both sides to shoot from and so no waiting your turn for other people to finish, basically you won't miss a shot. If we come across a good situation as well, we won't be in any rush to move on either and so can wait for the action to unfold instead of searching for it. This is the best way of working in Churchill and during our sorties on to the tundra we will come across many different bears in many different situations. We will also be looking out for the beautiful arctic and red foxes. We will be out until dusk which again gives us the opportunity of working in the best possible light. Packed Lunch and hot soup are provided for our daily Tundra Buggy Trips

Days 4 – 5: We have secured our tundra buggy for four full days for our exclusive use and so these days will follow the same pattern of day 3. Our main target will be the polar bear, and we will be searching for mothers with dependent young, young male bears which spend a lot of time play fighting and spending time looking out for arctic and red foxes. We have timed our trip to run with the best possible chance of capturing these iconic arctic species in the winter landscape. We will be out all day and so a packed lunch will be provided, the days will last until dusk.

Day 6: We will have the use of our minibus to transfer us around the Tundra surrounding the Churchill area. Our mornings will consist of an early start so we can head out on to the tundra looking for subjects in the very best light. After breakfast we will head out for our first full day. We will hopefully be coming across some of the other smaller Arctic specialists of the tundra like arctic fox, arctic hare, and ptarmigan. All these species will be in their winter finery of white coats and plumage. We should also come across the beautiful red fox too. If we find a subject, we will be looking at spending as much time with it as possible. We will also have to be always on the lookout for polar bears though. We feel by adding the chance to work from the smaller vehicles gives us a much better chance of finding the smaller subjects and gives us a different perspective for our images. Lunch will be provided in town, and we will spend all morning and afternoon on the tundra so it will be a long day. At dusk we will head back to town for a deserved hot dinner.



Itinerary

Day 7: We will again have access to our minibus and driver which will give us a completely different perspective from the tundra buggy. We will again be searching for arctic and red fox, arctic hare, and ptarmigan. The unique opportunity to work from a small vehicle will give us some amazing opportunities to capture more intimate images too. Safety is paramount though and so we will constantly be on the lookout for polar bears.

Day 8: After breakfast we will be heading back out onto the tundra in search of these iconic arctic species for one more day on the Tundra Buggy. After our last day on the Tundra, we are due to catch our internal flight back to Winnipeg. Our main suitcases will be collected directly from the Tundra Inn with our new tags to explain where we are so again you won't see your suitcase until you get back to Winnipeg and back to the Lakeview Hotel. We will have an overnight stay in this hotel in Winnipeg. We won't be arriving until 8.30pm but Dinner is provided after a long day. The restaurant should still be open but will mean a quick turnaround if we want to get dinner.

Day 9: Unfortunately, we will be heading home from Winnipeg after our stay in this Canadian Arctic outpost but hopefully with some amazing images and memories of these iconic species of the far north. Most people are on different flights out at different times so breakfast on this last morning is not included in the overall price of the trip.

Day 10: After a long flight we arrive back in the UK/Europe.



Itinerary



Please Note:

We must be very flexible with our itinerary for this trip so timings can change at the last minute. We can of course bump into anything along the way, polar bears are our top target throughout this trip, but we will also be targeting some of the smaller Arctic species like arctic and red fox, arctic hare, and ptarmigan. The best opportunity for polar bear images will undoubtedly be from the tundra buggy as these unique vehicles allow us to photograph in complete safety. We have timed this trip, so we maximise our chances with the polar bears and the winter conditions. Too early and the first snow hasn't arrived making the environment look unnatural for the bears. If we leave it too late then the ice would have reformed on the Hudson Bay, and the bears will have disappeared from the surrounding tundra. It is therefore a fine line in choosing this trip and is something you must take into consideration. Over the past 10 years winter has arrived later in the Churchill area than has previously been recorded and therefore the bears have usually started to head out onto the ice by late November.

Things to bring



Our accommodation is very clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided so you simply need to bring yourself. Please let me know if you have any special dietary requirements. In terms of clothing, you'll obviously need plenty of warm and weatherproof clothing. Most of your time will involve spending time in the vehicles with the windows open. The following are very much recommended - a good pair of strong waterproof walking boots (thermally lined very much recommended), a decent fleece coat with hood designed for sub-zero temperatures is essential and good waterproof over-trousers. For the top half you will need several layers – like a t-shirt, jumper/fleece and then a thinner down jacket. Then a thick down overcoat will complete the layers and a good hat and skiing type gloves/mittens. You'll know your own cold thresholds, but it really is a question of build it up in layers. The weather is difficult to predict at this time of the year it could be very cold or just cold. We would usually be expecting to work in temperatures of around minus -15 to -20. It could be much colder than this though if winter has really set in and the wind chill in Churchill is legendary, you must be prepared. Don't under-estimate how cold it can be in Churchill so be prepared.

Camera equipment



In terms of camera kit you'll need the longest lens you have (300mm or 500mm + convertor would be my recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that you don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. You'll get the chance to decide what you want/need for each outing anyway and we won't be walking any distances from the vehicle anyway, so you won't be burdening yourself with it all the time. A good beanbag is a must for this trip as we are mainly shooting out of a window on the Tundra Buggy. I take a full bean bag with rice but if you don't want to carry a heavy bean bag from the UK take an empty one and we can fill it up in Churchill as there is a supermarket that sells rice or pasta. A tripod is not really needed for the trip. It is highly recommended to always have a few spare batteries with you as in extreme cold conditions they do lose their charge much quicker and people in the past who have only had a couple batteries and have regretted it as they lost their power halfway through the day.

Useful Contact Information

My contact number for the build up to and for the duration of the trip is:

Danny: +44 (0) 07951 945433



Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question, I'm here to help.



Address

4 Deer Park Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB

Tel: 01952 411436

Email: mark@natures-images.co.uk

Web: www.natures-images.co.uk

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