

# THE KING OF THE ARCTIC



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## *A Legacy Circle Journey to Canada’s Hudson Bay and Churchill with Elisabeth Kruger, WWF’s Arctic Wildlife Senior Program Officer*

**October 22 – 27, 2019**

Please join Elisabeth Kruger, WWF’s Arctic Wildlife Senior Program Officer on an exclusive journey for WWF’s Legacy Circle Members to Churchill, Manitoba to experience one of the most remarkable natural wonders on Earth—the congregation of hundreds of polar bears awaiting their annual return to the ice.

Positioned on the shores of Hudson Bay, Churchill is a unique Arctic community with a rich history and spectacular scenery. High levels of polar bear activity are typical this time of year. From spirited play-fighting between males, to the powerful show of force that a protective mother displays when sheltering a young cub, you will see firsthand how the bears’ behavior is dynamic, regal and whimsical. Since 1992, WWF’s Global Arctic Program has been working with our partners across the frozen north to combat threats to the region and preserve its culture and rich biodiversity.

In Canada, WWF mitigates conflicts between polar bears and local people by taking measures to keep the bears away from local villages—saving the lives of both bears and people. We also support projects to monitor and research polar bear populations that are showing signs of stress as climate change eats away at the summer sea ice the bears need to survive.

### **Itinerary at a Glance**

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation
1	October 22	Arrive Winnipeg, Manitoba	Fort Garry Hotel
2	October 23	Winnipeg / Churchill	Hotel in Churchill
3 – 4	October 24 - 25	Churchill	Hotel in Churchill
5	October 26	Churchill / Winnipeg	Fort Garry Hotel
6	October 27	Depart Winnipeg	



## Itinerary in Detail

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### **Day 1: Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Our tour begins in Winnipeg, once a fur-trading post and boomtown for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Today it is Manitoba's cultural and commercial capital at the eastern edge of Canada's vast prairies. Transfer to the historic Fort Garry Hotel, the grande dame of Winnipeg hospitality and one of the city's most prestigious landmarks. Meet your Expedition Leader and WWF Expert at an orientation dinner this evening.

*Overnight: Fort Garry Hotel*

(D)

### **Day 2: Winnipeg / Churchill**

Fly to Churchill this morning. This hospitable outpost town, originally a fur-trading post and seaport, is our base for adventure. In the evening, after arriving and checking into our rooms, we head to the tundra aboard a Polar Rover for our first glimpse of the bears, though we often see them from the vehicle as we leave the airport. If the skies are clear, our nighttime tundra excursion might reveal one of nature's most exhilarating experiences—a chance to view the Northern Lights away from the glare of town. Though they are never predictable, the auroral display often starts as a white glow in the northern sky, then begins to flicker and dance in shimmering curtains of color.

*Overnight: Hotel in Churchill*

(B,L,D)

### **Day 3 & 4: Polar Bear Viewing**

WWF's uniquely-designed Polar Rovers are our mobile means for spending time among the bears. Though they are built to accommodate up to 35 passengers, we take a maximum of 14 guests, ensuring everyone a window seat. Our Expedition Leaders know the best places to see polar bears, which congregate in the region each fall as they wait for Hudson Bay to freeze, signaling the start of the winter seal-hunting season. As we watch them interact, we're delighted by their antics and rugged beauty. From the warmth of our vehicle we may see mothers with cubs, young males play-fighting, or a lone bear ambling over the tundra in solitary majesty. Your knowledgeable expedition leader and WWF expert offer interpretation along the way, explaining the bears' behavior and how they thrive in such a harsh environment. In the evenings we'll meet for dinner followed by presentations on wildlife or local cultures.

*Overnight: Hotel in Churchill*

(B,L,D)

To register or if you have, please contact Court Whelan at Natural Habitat Adventures at 888-993-8687, (Int'l) 303-449-3711 or [courtwh@nathab.com](mailto:courtwh@nathab.com).



### **Day 5: Churchill / Winnipeg**

This morning we have the option to learn about a distinctly northern pastime: dog sledding. We'll meet a local musher and hear all about this traditional means of Arctic transportation, interacting with the lively dog team as we learn about their care and training. Then we take turns enjoying an exhilarating ride as the dogs whisk us down a trail through the boreal forest. There is also an opportunity for an optional helicopter excursion over the frozen tundra before boarding our flight back to Winnipeg. Prior to our return flight, we'll stop at the "polar bear jail" where recalcitrant polar bears found in town are held before being re-released far away in the outskirts of the conservation area. On occasion, there may be a bear lift, which occurs when a bear needs to be transported by helicopter to a distant release site. Once back in Winnipeg, we'll return to the Fort Garry Hotel for some free time before our farewell dinner this evening.

*Overnight: Fort Garry Hotel*

*(B,L,D)*

### **Day 6: Depart Winnipeg**

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flights home.

*(B)*

## **Meet Our Expert**

### **Elisabeth Kruger, WWF's Arctic Wildlife Senior Program Officer**



As WWF's Arctic Wildlife Senior Program Officer, Elisabeth Kruger leads WWF's efforts to help polar bears and other Arctic marine mammals co-exist alongside indigenous communities, in what's becoming an increasingly warmer and ice-free Arctic. Prior to joining WWF, Elisabeth travelled to Russia as a Fulbright scholar, landing in Irkutsk, where she spent the next four years immersed in the culture, ecology, and natural beauty of the Siberian wilderness. Still enamored with life at the edge of civilization, Elisabeth then moved from Siberia to Alaska and began her work with WWF. She is always excited to travel with our closest friends to share our accomplishments and the challenges we face in protecting the species and communities of these extraordinary and still natural regions.

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## Accommodations

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**FORT GARRY HOTEL** In Winnipeg, we stay at the Fort Garry Hotel, one of Canada's lavish railway hotels built by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1913 and long a symbol of the prairie city's importance as a transportation and commerce hub. Located downtown, one block from Union Station, this historic landmark and gracious accommodation built in the French chateau style is Winnipeg's finest hotel, exuding an atmosphere of opulence that prevailed during the glory days of the development of the Canadian West. Relax in the lounge, enjoy a drink in the antique bar or indulge in a sumptuous treatment at Ten Spa, an authentic Turkish-style bath and spa located in the hotel.

**HOTEL IN CHURCHILL** In the Arctic frontier outpost of Churchill, hotels are small and simple. While they certainly would not be considered fancy by any means, they are clean, comfortable and conveniently located in the center of town. Every room has its own private bathroom with a shower. Please be aware that hotel space in Churchill is scarce, and to accommodate demand we must use a variety of local properties. Room size, amenities and range of services may vary among hotels despite comparable pricing.

## What to Expect

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This polar bear expedition requires very little walking. Travelers must be able to walk up/down stairs. Our Polar Rover vehicles, designed to travel over the tundra for polar bear observation, can sometimes offer a bumpy ride. Travelers must be prepared for below-freezing temperatures and slippery surfaces.

Churchill offers, as well as the appeal of our subarctic environs and broad introduction to the natural and cultural history of the Hudson Bay region and daily life in the Canadian North that this trip provides. Two Polar Rover day trips and a night excursion are complemented by time spent exploring the frontier outpost town of Churchill, with expert interpretation from our naturalist Expedition Leaders.

Regarding polar bears: They are typically in the Churchill area year-round. The highest concentration occurs in October and November as the bears gather to await freeze-up on Hudson Bay and the beginning of their winter hunting season. But bear viewing is never predictable. Sometimes the best viewing happens at the beginning of the season, sometimes it occurs in the middle, and sometimes it's at the end—we never know for sure. Once the bay freezes, many of them depart. Please be aware that conditions vary, and polar bears here live wild and free: we can never guarantee that you will see them, or promise exactly what your experience will be.

## About WWF Legacy Circle Journeys

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WWF Legacy Circle Journeys is an invitation-only conservation travel program for our closest supporters, along with friends and family, to see firsthand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making.

These custom-designed journeys are led by WWF experts and offer exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work; and immerse yourself in the worlds of our field staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

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## About Our Travel Partner

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Discovering Our Planet Together

This journey is being arranged by Natural Habitat Adventures of Boulder, Colorado. For more than a decade, WWF has partnered with Nat Hab to take travelers to view nature's greatest sights. WWF selected Natural Habitat as its partner because of its long-standing commitment to conservation and the exceptional quality of its adventures.

## RESERVATION INFORMATION AND TRIP DETAILS

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For reservations and additional information, please contact Court Whelan at Natural Habitat Adventures at 888-993-8687, (Int'l) 303-449-3711 or [courtwh@nathab.com](mailto:courtwh@nathab.com).

**DATES:** October 22–27, 2019.

**COST:** \$6,395 per person, based on double occupancy (+\$795 per person for internal air)

**GROUP SIZE:** Limited to 14 participants.

**INCLUDED:** Airport transfers in Winnipeg, accommodations, all meals, cold-weather gear including a parka and boots during your trip, services of Expedition Leaders and staff, some gratuities, all activities/entrance fees, evening presentations, comprehensive pre-departure materials, all taxes and service charges. **Internal air cost includes:** Round-trip private charter flights from Winnipeg to Churchill. (Internal air cost and trip cost are listed separately)

**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.

**PAYMENTS:** A deposit of \$500 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to Natural Habitat Adventures. A completed waiver of liability form and participant questionnaire are then due within 14 days.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS:** Cancellations must be received in writing at Natural Habitat Adventures by US mail, email or fax. At the time Natural Habitat Adventures receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: On or before 120 days before the trip: Full refund minus \$100. On or before 60 days before the trip: Forfeit 50% of tour cost. After 60 days before the trip: No refund.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Trip insurance is highly recommended but not required. A quote will be provided at the time of booking.

**GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:** In case of weather delays, we recommend arriving a day early and either participate in our Extra Day in Winnipeg program or stay on your own. The tour begins at 5 p.m. on Day 1. You are free to depart any time on the final day.

**Extra Day in Winnipeg:** For travelers who want to arrive a day early, we offer a guided Extra Day in Winnipeg program. It takes place prior to the tour and includes hotel accommodations, breakfast and lunch, a tour of the city highlighting historical and cultural points of interest.

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