



## CANADA SPECIALIST PROGRAM

# Yukon and Alaska Circle Tour

Introduce yourself to northern culture and history in Whitehorse, then relive Dawson City's gold rush by panning for gold. Learn about First Nations culture from Aboriginal people. Drive a highway at the roof of the world, paddle and raft remote rivers, hike, catch a summer festival or relax in hot springs under the Midnight Sun.

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| ① Whitehorse       | ⑨ Boundary (Alaska) |
| ② Braeburn         | ⑩ Chicken (Alaska)  |
| ③ Carmacks         | ⑪ Tok (Alaska)      |
| ④ Pelly Crossing   | ⑫ Beaver Creek      |
| ⑤ Stewart Crossing | ⑬ Destruction Bay   |
| ⑥ Mayo             | ⑭ Haines Junction   |
| ⑦ Keno             | ① Whitehorse        |
| ⑧ Dawson City      |                     |

Approx. distance =  
1073 mi (1728 km)  
11-12 days



## Start: DAY 1-2 – Whitehorse

### Yukon International Storytelling Festival

Celebrate the North's rich storytelling tradition under the Midnight Sun annually. Listen to performers from circumpolar countries and beyond. In October.

### MacBride Museum of Yukon History

Learn about the Klondike gold rush and the development of the Canadian north. Check out displays of First Nations traditions, the legacy of Canadian poet Robert Service, and the Mounted Police as they established law and order during the Klondike's glory days.

### Yukon Beringia Interpretative Centre

Journey back 2.6 millions years when woolly mammoths and tigers roamed Beringia, a land bridge that remained un-glaciated during the last Ice Age. A unique land of ice is brought to life with a giant mammoth's skeleton and Ice Age fossils. The center also explores the importance of the Yukon First Nations oral history.

### Northern Lights Tours

Mid-August through April, experience brilliant displays of the Aurora Borealis. Several tour operators offer excursions to see these celestial night shows when multi-colored streamers of light shimmer overhead while you watch from a secluded log cabin or while soaking in natural mineral waters at Takhini Hot Springs pools.

### Muktuk Adventures

Get to know sled dogs and puppies at a kennel and B&B. Meet the owner, a musher who takes part every year in the grueling 1,000 mi (1,600 km) Yukon Quest dogsled race.

### Mountain biking right out the back door

Explore the city's wilderness trail network, carving untamed miles of old mining and moose trails, or riding the double and single-track trails contouring the sage-covered ridges of the Yukon River Valley. The best part: at 11pm the sun is still shining and you're just five minutes from town.

## DAY 3

Travel north on Highway 2 (Klondike Highway) for 69 mi (111 km) to Braeburn.

### Takhini Hot Springs

Soak, swim and relax in the natural mineral waters of two hot pools surrounded by forest 18 mi (30 km) north of Whitehorse. There are over 300 ac (121 he) of Yukon wilderness as well as a 32 ft (10 m) high climbing tower for views and a zip line you clip to yourself to soar across a valley and lake.

### Braeburn, Yukon

#### Braeburn Lodge

Stop for giant cinnamon buns at this funky roadhouse. Travel north on Highway 2 for 43 mi (70 km) to Carmacks. Overnight in Carmacks.

## DAY 4

### Carmacks, Yukon

#### Carmacks Boardwalk

Stroll a boardwalk following the banks of the Yukon River and enjoy views of the mountains. Signs along the way point out the cultural and natural history of the area and a gazebo is a pleasant place to rest. From the historic Roadhouse, follow the Ridge trail over the hill back into town.

Walk the Nordenskiöld ridge and view First Nations spirit houses, tiny wooden houses atop burial sites. Built as homes for the ashes of the dead, they sometimes contain bones and personal effects. Considered sacred places, travelers are asked to respect Aboriginal culture and not take photographs.

#### Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre

The center showcases the past and present culture of the Northern Tutchone First Nations. There is a mooseskin boat and a dugout canoe, a rare collection of stone and bone tools and a beaded slipper and traditional costume collection. Aboriginal staff tells stories passed down through the generations on a walking trail that features outdoor exhibits. Travel north on Highway 2 for 111 mi (179 km) to Pelly Crossing.

#### Five Finger Rapids

At the 380 km marker on Highway 2 are the Yukon River's Five Finger Rapids created by five house-sized boulders in the river. During the Klondike Gold Rush, when thousands of prospectors navigated homemade boats and rafts 800 mi (1300 km) from Bennett Lake to Dawson City, Five Finger Rapids was a major obstacle. A half mile (850 mi) trail and staircase leads down to a viewing platform overlooking the rapids.

### Pelly Crossing, Yukon

#### Big Jonathan House

The Selkirk First Nation Aboriginal cultural centre at Pelly Crossing is housed in a replica of Big Jonathan House, a historic log building. There are works by local artists, beaded clothing, baby birch bedding and a model of a fish trap and rack to illustrate the catching, drying and smoking of the summer fish catch for winter use.

#### Fort Selkirk Historic Site

Dating from before the Gold Rush, Fort Selkirk is a First Nations trade and meeting place with archaeological evidence showing this site to be at least 8,000 years old. Listen to a First Nations interpreter share stories of the Selkirk people. There are 37 major buildings, two cemeteries and hundreds of artifacts. Guided and unguided tours and information booklets are available. Accessible only by boat or floatplane from Pelly Crossing. Open June to mid-October. Travel north on Highway 2 for 44 mi (71 km) to Stewart Crossing. A side trip to the mining communities of Mayo and Keno is an option here. Take Highway 11 east to Mayo 33 mi (53 km) and on to Keno for another 27 mi (43 km). Overnight in the area.

### Stewart Crossing, Yukon

### Mayo, Yukon

#### The Binet House Interpretive Centre

One stop on a self-guided historical walking tour of Mayo that includes dozens of heritage buildings including churches and log cabins, Binet House holds a photography collection of Mayo's residents and the local Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation. There is also a geology display explaining permafrost, glacial history and placer mining. Open May to September.

### Keno, Yukon

#### The Keno Mining Museum

Relating the area's gold and silver mining history that began in the early 1900's, there are tools and equipment as well as everyday artifacts from isolated mining communities. A photographic collection offers insights into the region through the eyes of photographers working in the Keno area. Part of the museum is housed in a 1920's dancehall. Open June to September.

## DAY 5

From Stewart Crossing travel north on Highway 2 for 112 mi (181 km) to Dawson City. Overnight in Dawson City.

## DAY 6-7

### Dawson City, Yukon

#### Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site

Stroll old time wooden boardwalks, step through bat-wing saloon doors and watch dancing girls as you gamble at Diamond Tooth's Gertie's, Canada's oldest casino. Take an entertaining tour with costumed Parks Canada interpreters and listen to tales of 19<sup>th</sup> century gold rush characters and the history of dozens of restored heritage buildings. Drop in for Robert Service poetry readings and visit the cabin of Jack London, author of Call of the Wild.

#### Panning for gold

Pan for gold in the creek where the world's biggest gold rush started. Meet a second-generation gold miner, hear his stories and watch him pan the traditional way. Explore the Klondike gold fields at Goldbottom mine throughout summer. With luck, you could strike it rich.

#### Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre

Experience the traditional and contemporary life of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation as guides share stories about life at a fish camp before the arrival of gold seekers. Learn about the steps the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in took to become a stronger self-governing nation.

#### Dawson City Music Festival

A down-home music festival that takes over the entire town of 1,800 every July. Venues for workshops, jamming sessions and concerts from light jazz to rock include the lawn of a residential park, churches, the restored Palace Grand Theatre and a riverside gazebo.

#### Yukon Riverside Arts Festival (mid August)

Local artists hold interactive workshops and demonstrate unusual artwork like carving, knife making, blacksmithing, spinning, glass lamp making, and caribou hair tufting. There is more traditional art as well, and a market for purchasing a treasure to take home.

#### Grayline of Dawson City Tours

Enjoy a gentle float trip down the Yukon River, or journey to the viewpoint atop the Midnight Dome. Head out of town to see Gold Dredge No. 4 and Discovery Claim where the first gold discoveries were made.

## DAY 8

From Dawson City travel on Highway 9 (Top of the World Highway) for 70 mi (112 km) to Boundary Alaska. Travelers are reminded to ensure they have proper identification to enter into the United States (passport and visa if required).

### Top of the World Highway

Skirting the crest of the hills overlooking valleys, this is one of the most northerly highways in the world and it connects Dawson City with the Alaska, USA border 66 mi (105 km) away. Until 1955, with the completion of the Klondike Highway, this was the only road access to Dawson City. Allow plenty of time as the road is winding and narrow. It is maintained spring to early fall and the customs offices are only open 9am to 9pm (Pacific Time in Alaska). There is a one-hour time zone difference at the border.

### Boundary, Alaska (Latitude: 64.08 & Longitude 141.01)

Boundary, Alaska is the first community after crossing the border. The hamlet has a few rustic buildings including Boundary Lodge, one of Alaska's first roadhouses. Be sure to refuel your vehicle here. Travel on Highway 5 (Taylor Highway) for 39 mi (63 km) to Chicken.

### Chicken, Alaska

Named in 1902 after the flightless ptarmigan, now Alaska's state bird, which looks like a chicken. (No one knew how to spell "ptarmigan".) Daily town tours including Tisha's Schoolhouse leave The Goldpanner Gift Shop at 9am and 2pm during summer. Downtown Chicken has a bar, gift shop, cafe, and salmon bake. Travel southwest on Highway 5 for 77 mi (124 km) to Tok. Overnight in Tok.



## DAY 9

### Tok, Alaska

#### Naabia Niign

In Northway, south of Tok, this native-owned crafts gallery offers a selection of locally made birch baskets, beadwork items, and fur moccasins and gloves.

#### The Burnt Paw

Shop at The Burnt Paw for jade and ivory, Alaskan ceramics, crafts, paintings, smoked salmon—even sled-dog puppies. See log cabins with traditional Alaska sod roofs.

#### The Tetlin Refuge

This 730,000-ac wildlife refuge is located along the Alaska-Canada boundary between the Alaska Highway and Wrangell-St. Elias. It has one of the highest densities of nesting waterfowl found in Alaska including trumpeter swans and ospreys. The visitor center has a viewing deck with spotting scopes to watch for moose, caribou, Dall sheep, grizzly and black bears, wolves, wolverine and lynx. *Travel South on Highway 2 for 113 mile (182 km), crossing the US-Canada border at Beaver Creek. Highway 2 changes to Highway 1 upon entering Canada. Overnight in Beaver Creek.*

## DAY 10

### Beaver Creek, Yukon

Just a few miles from the Alaska border, this is Canada's most westerly settlement, a border post and service centre for the Alaska Highway. *Travel south/southeast on Highway 1 for 105 mi (169 km) to Burwash Landing.*

### Burwash Landing, Yukon

#### Burwash Landing Walking Tour

Learn about the heritage and history of Burwash Landing by visiting historical buildings and attractions like the Kluane Lake Boats, Moose Horn Cabin, and Jimmy Johnson House.

#### Kluane Museum of Natural History (Open from mid-May to mid-September)

See a wildlife exhibit and the artifacts of the First Nations Southern Tutchone people including beaded ceremonial clothing and 18,000-year-old mammoth teeth. Explore the craft shop for locally produced souvenirs. See the world's largest gold pan, measuring 27 ft (8 m) high. *Travel on Highway 2 for 10 mi (16 km) to Destruction Bay.*



## **Destruction Bay, Yukon**

An Alaska Highway construction camp that is now a village of 50 - mostly Southern Tutchone of the Kluane First Nation - on the shore of glacier-fed Kluane Lake. Its deep blue color is due to suspended particles of glacial silt. Go fishing, paddling and camping on the shore. Tachäl Dhäl (Sheep Mountain) Interpretive Centre is just 30 minutes south and focuses on Kluane National Park and Reserve's most abundant large mammal, Dall Sheep, seen from the viewing deck from late August to mid-June. *Travel south on Highway 2 for 66 mi (107 km) to Haines Junction. Overnight in Haines Junction.*

## **DAY 11**

### **Haines Junction, Yukon**

#### **Kluane National Park and Reserve**

In this UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to Mount Logan, Canada's highest mountain at 19,551 ft (5,959 m), go hiking to wildflower-draped alpine meadows and watch the rocky slopes for Big Horn Sheep. There are trails throughout the park, long and short, for experienced backpackers and daytrippers alike. Or canoe the waters of Kathleen Lake, surrounded by mountains.

#### **Rafting on the Upper Tatshenshini**

One of the world's top rafting rivers, the Tatshenshini offers scenic and thrilling grade II to IV runs as you plummet down drops with names like The Whirlpool and The Nozzle. Paddle for a single day or take on a long river run. From June through to late August.

#### **Flightseeing tour**

In a bush plane, skim over mountains and the world's largest non-polar glaciers, a sea of ice stretching to the horizon in Kluane National Park and Reserve. *Travel east on the Alaska Highway (Highway 1) for 94 mi (151 km) to Whitehorse. Check into the Whitehorse Airport for your flight home or extend your stay in the area.*

### **End of tour!**

