



The Road to Tuktoyaktuk

WHITEHORSE TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN

June 16 – 27, 2022

We've visited the Yukon many times in the past, and our visits have been timed to showcase this magnificent wilderness region during the long days of the northern midsummer, when wildflowers begin to carpet the alpine slopes, glacier-fed turquoise lakes gleam in deep valleys and snow-covered peaks of imposing mountains loom on the horizon. On this revamped tour, we take our discoveries one step further: to the Arctic Ocean and legendary Tuktoyaktuk, atop the recently completed Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway!

Our tour begins in the Whitehorse region in the Yukon's deep south. We'll explore Canada's smallest "desert" at Carcross, view fantastic canyon formations and become acquainted with the region's Gold Rush history. We'll visit Kluane National Park in the southwest corner of the Yukon. This land of superlatives has the highest mountain in Canada and the most extensive non-polar ice fields in the world. As we explore the wilderness fringes of northern highways, with fabled names such as Dempster, Klondike and Alasca, we'll look for Moose and Elk browsing in the dense willow thickets, snow-white Dall Sheep feeding on alpine grasses high among mountain peaks and Gyrfalcons atop steep faces of the front ranges.

As we move north from Dawson on the Dempster Highway we'll enter the tundra and carry on to the mighty Mackenzie River Delta, pock-marked by lakes and dotted with clumps of spruce. The fantastic pingos will greet us as we approach the Arctic Ocean and reach it at long last. This will be the quintessential Canadian North! All along we'll also be on the lookout for Black and Grizzly Bears as they graze on greens. With some luck, we may even spot Caribou and the elusive Canada Lynx! All throughout, the breeding activities of local birds will be at their peak.

Call Akriti to register for this incomparable Canadian experience!



Tour Leader

Pete Read is an educator and expert interpretive naturalist who has led Quest Nature Tours worldwide. Since retiring from his teaching career, he has been active as an environmental consultant doing field work throughout Ontario and designing and working on building projects for the preservation of the Loggerhead Shrike. He also takes part in many volunteer projects for his local naturalist group and other organizations. Pete has led our previous, 'wildly' successful tours to this region!

Signature Moments

- 🌿 Touching the Arctic Ocean
- 🌿 Seeing pingos on the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula
- 🌿 Watching for bears along the Top of the World Highway
- 🌿 Celebrating the gold rush days in Dawson City
- 🌿 Visiting the smallest "desert" in Canada

Our Route



Moose



Quest traveller panning for gold



Tuktoyaktuk
© Matt Trappe

Detailed Itinerary

Thursday, June 16: Arrival in Whitehorse

We'll arrive in Whitehorse and make our way to the hotel just a few blocks from the legendary Yukon River. After we get settled, we'll meet our leader and fellow travellers during our Welcome Dinner, after which we'll have a short orientation session. We'll have some daylight hours remaining for some ad lib exploring before we retire in anticipation of our adventures ahead!

Overnight: Best Western Whitehorse or similar, Whitehorse, YT

Meals: Welcome Dinner



Quest traveller at Miles Canyon

Friday, June 17: Excursion to the Carcross and the Carcross Desert

Today we will drive south towards the source of the Yukon. We'll visit the historic town of Carcross on the Yukon River. During the gold rush, Carcross became a supply centre and stopover point for prospectors on their way to the Klondike goldfields. One of the most prominent heritage buildings is the White Pass and Yukon Route station. The "railway built of gold" transported gold and goods between Skagway, Alaska, and Whitehorse. One point of main interest here will be the Carcross Desert, a puzzling formation of sand dunes set among the spruces and pines. Considered by some to be the smallest desert in the world, in fact it is not a true desert despite its appearance, owing to the too-high precipitation levels here. Despite their barren appearance, they do host many interesting plants including the Yukon Lupine. En route, either going or coming, we will have a chance to stop and admire the incredible crystal-clear waters of Emerald lake and will be passing through Miles Canyon through which White Horse Rapids pass. The canyon walls are lined with basalt in hexagonal columns, somewhat like the Giant's Causeway in Ireland. This is a wonderful spot to take a short hike and capture the beauty of the gorge in photos.

Overnight: Best Western Whitehorse or similar, Whitehorse, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Caribou

Saturday, June 18: Excursion to Kluane National Park

Today we'll drive a couple of hours west from Whitehorse along the Alaska Highway towards the legendary Kluane National Park. As we drive, we'll be ever watchful for charismatic megafauna such as Elk and either of the two possible bear species. We'll eventually reach Haines Junction, which sits on the doorstep of Kluane. Roughly half the size of Switzerland, Kluane is home to twelve of Canada's highest mountain include the very highest, Mount Logan. We plan to walk the Rock Glacier Trail, which overlooks the scenic Dezadeash Lake. Afterwards we'll enjoy a picnic lunch at Kathleen Lake where we can also have a little walkabout. We may also visit the Kluane National Park and Reserve Visitor Centre located in the Da Kų Cultural Centre. Time dependent, we'll travel a bit north to view the south end of the expansive Kluane Lake. Later, we'll return to Whitehorse.

Overnight: Best Western Whitehorse or similar, Whitehorse, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sunday, June 19: Yukon River / Klondike Highway / Dawson

We'll start out right after an early breakfast for what is largely a travel day. Leaving Whitehorse, we will follow the Yukon River north and stop at the scenic Five Finger Rapids, and other points along the Klondike Highway. Near Dawson City, we'll look at the geology of the Tintina Trench. In the evening we'll walk the boardwalks of this historic town.

Overnight: Downtown Hotel, Dawson City, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner



Dawson City

Monday, June 20: Dawson and the gold creeks

In Dawson City we will learn about the Gold Rush era history, celebrated in renovated historic buildings, lifeless dredging piles, and the Gaslight Follies. As we explore the “Creeks” where the gold is still mined, we will learn about the effects of mining on the nature and cultures of a far northern community. Travelling up Bonanza Creek – location of the original 1896 gold discovery – we stop to visit Gold Dredge Number 4, a National Historical Site and try our luck panning for gold.

Overnight: Downtown Hotel, Dawson City, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Tuesday, June 21: Top of the World Highway

After breakfast, we'll cross the Yukon River by ferry to take the breathtaking Top of the World Highway towards Alaska. A landscape untouched by glaciers, we will drive across the top of mountains as we make our way towards the “loneliest customs post in North America” at the Alaska border. The area hosts bright alpine meadows and rushing rivers. We will be on the lookout for Moose and Black Bears all along and make scenery stops.

Overnight: Downtown Hotel, Dawson City, YT

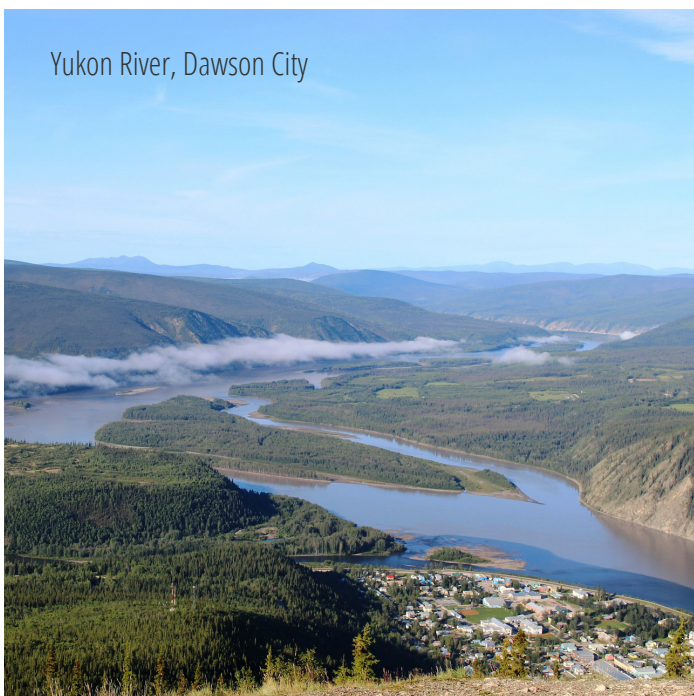
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Wednesday, June 22: Dawson City

Our activities today will depend on the interests of our group. You may spend the day at leisure in the city, enjoy its various attractions, or we may organize something more structured to take advantage of local events.

Overnight: Downtown Hotel, Dawson City, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner



Yukon River, Dawson City



Willow Ptarmigan

Thursday, June 23: Dempster Highway and Tombstone towards the Arctic Circle

Today we'll head north along the Dempster Highway through the Tombstone Range, the Blackstone Uplands, and on to the Arctic Circle. En route, we'll be passing Tombstone Provincial Park – the Yukon's newest park – where time permitting, we will take a short hike along the North Klondike River and visit the Tombstone Interpretive Centre. Stopping at Two Moose Lake, we may find many species of nesting waterfowl. As we continue to climb through the two mountain ranges and cross into the Beaufort Sea watershed, we'll drive along high ridges and below steep cliffs, keeping an eye out for nesting Gyrfalcons at Windy Pass and Dall Sheep on their lambing grounds high atop Anglecomb Peak. On the sub-Arctic tundra, we look for Trumpeter Swans, Grizzly Bears and Willow Ptarmigan. We will continue to ride up to Eagle Plains, an expansive area of relatively flat land with rolling hills between several mountain ranges, our resting spot for the night. From this high vantage we can see extensive alpine valleys spread out below us.

Overnight: Eagle Plains Hotel, Eagle Plains, YT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Friday, June 24: Onward to Inuvik!

Today we'll carry on northward towards Inuvik. This is a long drive, and we'll take rest and scenery breaks whenever warranted. Approximately 36 km north of Eagle Plains lies the Arctic Circle, where we can stop for some views and photos at the marker sign. Then we'll carry on northward, winding our way through the southern part of the Richardson Ranges, enjoying the scenery and being watchful for any possible wildlife such as Grizzly Bears. Not long after we cross into the Northwest Territories, we will drop down to the southern Arctic lowlands and cross the Peel River and then ferrying the mighty Mackenzie River, watching for Caribou and other wildlife, before reaching Inuvik on the eastern edge of the vast Mackenzie Delta.

Overnight: Mackenzie Hotel, Inuvik, NWT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Saturday, June 25: Inuvik

Today will be a relaxing day. We will explore and may partake in an organized excursion here depending on conditions.

Overnight: Mackenzie Hotel, Inuvik, NWT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sunday, June 26: Tuktoyaktuk...and Pingos!

Today we plan to fulfill our dreams of seeing the Arctic Ocean! Our drive should take a couple of hours, and at some point, we will find ourselves on the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, which flanks the Mackenzie River Delta's eastern side. This area bears the celebrity of hosting the world's highest concentration of pingos, which are giant conical hills with an ice core that occur in areas with continuous permafrost ('pingo' means conical hill in Inuvialuktun, which is the language of the Western Canadian Inuit). Nowhere else in Canada can we see pingos with such ease – there are 1,350 pingos on the peninsula! Our route will take us by the Pingo Canadian Landmark, home to eight pingos. Of these, Ibyuk Pingo is Canada's tallest pingo at 49 m in height! Ice wedges are another fascinating formation we will watch for! Having reached Tuk, we can explore by vehicle and by foot and touch the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort Sea. Eventually we'll drive back towards Inuvik and enjoy of Farewell Dinner as we reminiscence on this incredible adventure.

Overnight: Mackenzie Hotel, Inuvik, NWT

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Farewell Dinner



Detail of pingo in the Mackenzie Delta (near Tuktoyaktuk)

© Matti&Keti

Monday, June 27: Departure

Today we will bid adieu to the Yukon as we take our flight from Inuvik onwards.

Meals: Breakfast

The itinerary and accommodation described in these notes are intended as an example only. In the event of weather changes, logistical arrangements, or other problems, we may make changes in the published itinerary.



Iron Rail Bridge of Carcross



Yukon Lupine
© Paul Tavares



Kluane Lake



Collapsed pingo (helicopter for scale)

Tour Details

Tour Cost (per person): Approx. C\$5125 + 5% GST
Includes gratuities

Single Supplement: C\$995 + 5% GST

*If you are travelling alone and you are willing to share, we will match you up with an appropriate roommate.
 If we cannot, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.*

Group Size:

11 – 12 participants

Included Features:

- Accommodations in double occupancy from Whitehorse in hotels listed or similar
- Gratuities for services provided by Quest
- Ground transportation
- Meals, as described in this itinerary
- Park entrance fees
- Services of Quest naturalist leader Pete Read

Not Included:

- Airfare from your home to Whitehorse and from Inuvik back to your home
- 5% GST (Goods & Services Tax)
- Fuel surcharge, if applicable
- Alcoholic beverages and bar expenses
- Phone calls and items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation

Payment Details:

A non-refundable deposit of C\$500 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second deposit of C\$1000 will be required six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

Kluane Lake lookout

What to Expect

Joining Instructions

This tour begins with our Welcome Dinner in Whitehorse on June 16. Please be at our group hotel no later than 5 PM. Our tour ends in Tuktoyaktuk after breakfast on June 27.

Level of Activity: Easy to Moderate

While this is not a particularly strenuous trip and none of our walks are particularly long or fast, you should bear in mind that walking on rough paths is sometimes more difficult than on hard ground or pavement. Walks will be short (less than 2 kilometres) but do involve occasional steep ascents and descents, usually assisted by stairs or maintained trails. Good firm walking shoes, and perhaps a trekking pole for extra balance, should maximize your enjoyment of this trip.

Accommodation

We will be staying in motel/hotel accommodations throughout the tour. All are very clean and comfortable and are among the best available in the area.



Downtown Hotel, Dawson City



Mackenzie Hotel, Inuvik

Transportation

We will be using a 20-passenger chauffeur driven minibus for this tour. To increase your enjoyment of this trip, we limit our maximum number of participants to 12. This means extra comfort for you as we travel, for there will be ample room in the minibus for luggage and personal belongings. The main roads of Yukon and Alaska are generally in good condition, although when we leave the main road, we will usually be driving on graded gravel roads. We are covering quite a bit of distance on this tour; however, every effort will be made to break up any of the longer drives with frequent stops.

Weather

The weather in June is usually warm and pleasant but quite changeable and will be cooler at higher elevations. We recommend dressing in layers, which can be added to or discarded as needed. A good waterproof outer shell will be useful. As long as one is dressed appropriately, the weather will not prevent us from carrying on with our planned program.

Travel Documents

Canadians will require valid government-issued photo identification for their trip.



Additional Info

Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.



Worldwide Explorers Club

Travel twice with us and you become a member of the Worldwide Explorers Club. Earn 5% off all your subsequent, catalogue-advertized group tours. The bonus is non-transferable and cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount or credit. Note that some exceptions may apply. Members also get access to special offers and exploratory tours!

**Can't make the
dates of this tour?**
Make it a Private Journey!

We can plan this tour:

- For your dates
- For your specific interests
- And we deliver all our signature touches...

We'll tailor most of our small group tours to suit your time frame, budget, and interests, or plan a completely customized itinerary to suit your exact specifications. With a Worldwide Quest Private Journey, you have the same attention to detail, logistical expertise, and imaginative details of our small group tours, expertly designed especially for you, as a couple, a family, or a group of friends. Private Journey are surprisingly affordable. *Please call us to get started.*

How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666 | travel@worldwidequest.com



TICO#: 2667946

The Quest Nature Tours *Experience*

We aim to contribute to nature conservation by providing our travellers with the chance to experience wild spaces and learn about wildlife in natural habitats. We're delighted to welcome back our many repeat travellers who enjoy our unique programs, our expert leaders and our style of travel. We're equally delighted to introduce our programs to a growing number of Quest first-timers who enjoy learning about the wildlife and natural environments we share. Our tours are all about exceptional and educational nature experiences, camaraderie and fun. We're small and we plan to keep it that way. **We focus on the elements we call the Quest Essentials:**



Small Groups

Our groups are typically in the size range of 8 – 16 participants. On our daily excursions we may divide into even smaller groups, so that you can be with fewer than eight others as you explore. Our small group size allows us to be attentive and quiet, giving us greater opportunity to observe wildlife. Our logistics are flexible. We use smaller vehicles and vessels to limit our environmental impact. All our activities, such as talks, meals and gatherings are enjoyable and focused.

Expert Leaders

Every Quest tour is led by one of our team of expert Canadian naturalists. They are knowledgeable, congenial and extraordinarily capable. Their objective is to ensure that our Quest travellers get the most out of the nature experience. A local naturalist also accompanies all tours outside North America. Each is a highly trained expert with exceptional knowledge of the flora and fauna of his or her local region. Local guides help us to find and identify wildlife and share their knowledge of the habits of the creatures we encounter as well as the dynamics of the environment as a whole.

More Time Exploring

Our tours are carefully conceived and executed to maximize your time in the field. Our daily itineraries are full, but not exhausting, and we build in ample opportunities for rest. There is nothing routine about our days. While we travel with a goal and destination in mind, we always give priority to field observations by choosing routes that allow us to maximize wildlife viewing along the way and modifying our itinerary as necessary and possible.

All Taken Care Of

From the moment you call our office, we'll take care of all the details from pre-departure information to post-tour species compilations. Virtually everything is included in the tour cost: accommodations, meals, transportation, activities and gratuities. We travel off the beaten path without sacrificing comfort. Our meals can be simple but are always of good quality. And we place the focus on where it should be: discovering our natural world.

We invite you to call us, email us or visit us in our Toronto office and let your travels begin...

1-800-387-1483 | travel@worldwidequest.com