

## **Northwest Territories Genuine Indigenous Experience in Northwest Territories September 13-17, 2020**

### **Theme**

The Northwest Territories is one of Canada's best kept travel secrets. It's spoiled with immersive Indigenous cultural experiences, spectacular Aurora Borealis and a diverse and pristine landscape, with vistas ranging from towering waterfalls to mountain ranges covered by the distinctive low-growing greenery of the arctic tundra.

### **Description**

The Northwest Territories are known for stunning Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). There are two Aurora seasons - Spring and Fall. The Fall/Autumn season occurs from mid-August to early October and is perfect timing for this itinerary! During this season you will see the beautiful fall colours and the Aurora dancing across the lakes. There is approximately a 97 percent chance of seeing the Aurora, the highest probability around the globe. Yellowknife is not only the capital of the Northwest Territories but also the 'Aurora capital of the world'.

During this four-night carefully curated itinerary, you will have time for interpersonal connections with local Indigenous guides who are committed to sharing their culture with visitors from around the world. Hand harvest and make an all-natural first aid product of spruce salve, utilized for thousands of years by Indigenous people. Visit [Aurora Village](#) and [Blachford Lake Lodge](#), part of the Canadian Signature Experience (CSE) collection, which are officially curated once-in-a-lifetime travel experiences recognized by Destination Canada.

### **Considerations**

- Cell phone coverage in the territory is limited to areas immediately surrounding major communities. This tour is based in Yellowknife, which has cell phone and wireless coverage but for day trips and at Blachford Lake Lodge, coverage will be limited. There will be Wi-Fi at Blachford Lake Lodge.
- A credit card will be taken at hotels upon check in to cover any personal incidentals such as laundry, long distance calls, movies, etc.
- While this adventure is not overly strenuous, participants must be of "fair" physical fitness. (e.g. must be able to walk on uneven terrain, and endure outdoor conditions. Hiking, and options of kayaking, canoeing, and fishing are included
- Dietary restrictions and food allergies should be provided in advance of the tour

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Sunday, September 13

Morning	Depart Victoria for Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
9:00 am	Depart on flight Air Canada AC #8060 departing YYJ to Vancouver
10:55 am	Depart on flight AC #8833 for Yellowknife, arriving at 2:25 pm Transfer to the <a href="#">Explorer Hotel</a>  Our Yellowknife hotel is your place to watch the Aurora, mush your sledding dogs, fish our crystal rivers and kayak with the flow. Your racing heart finds its calm here and in our warm hotel rooms after the outdoor excursions of the day.
4:00 pm	Free time
Evening	Dinner
9:00 pm	Aurora Hunting Tour by <a href="#">North Star Adventures</a> - Yellowknife is the best place in the world to view Aurora! Tonight, you will “hunt” for the Aurora. You will learn about the science of Aurora, identify some of the planets and star constellations, the Milky Way and look for shooting stars (make a wish!) and maybe even see wildlife!
Overnight	Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife

## Day 2 – Monday, September 14

Morning	Breakfast at the Explorer Hotel.
8:00 am	Sightseeing City Tour by <a href="#">North Star Adventures</a> . On this 1 ½ to 2-hour tour you will learn the rich history of Yellowknife. The tour starts off in Old Town and includes its historic sites such as Pilots monument, the Wildcat Café, Bullock’s Bistro and Weaver and Devore. Then, continue uptown to highlight the more recent areas of the city.
10:00 am	Hiking Tour to Cameron Falls by <a href="#">Aurora Village</a> - Cameron Falls is a destination for both locals and visitors alike. Located in Hidden Lake Territorial Park, the hike is a moderately easy 30-minute walk to the spectacular view of Cameron Falls. The trail leads through the boreal forest and along the rocky terrain, across streams and in and out of small valleys. Cameron Falls is down the Ingraham Trail Highway. (Drive time: 45 minutes)
1:30 pm	Lunch at the <a href="#">Woodyard, NWT Brewing Co.</a> The brewery is the second northernmost brewery in Canada, and has not only become a pillar in the Yellowknife community but was named one of the top 50 bars in Canada in 2018.
3:00 pm	Voyageur Canoe Tours by <a href="#">Narwal Northern Adventures</a> . Travel back in time along the scenic shores of Yellowknife Bay aboard our traditional 12-person canoes. Their superior stability paired with the exceptional skill of the guides provides an authentic canoeing experience with minimal prerequisite skill.
7:00 pm	ViTeepee Aurora Viewing and Dining at <a href="#">Aurora Village</a> - The ViTeepee allows you to enjoy a three-course meal in the comfort of a private Teepee. Choices like locally caught Great Slave Lake Whitefish or Slow Roasted Smoked Bison Prime Rib will have your mouth watering – traditional food with modern flair. Marvel at the wonders of the Aurora with the fire warming your private Teepee. (Drive time: 20-minutes).
Overnight	Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife

### Day 3 – Tuesday, September 15

Morning	Breakfast and check-out of the Explorer Hotel
9:00 am	<p>You'll spend tonight and the next two days out at the beautiful <a href="#">Blachford Lake Lodge</a>.</p> <p>Blachford Lake Lodge is only accessible by bush plane on floats or skis. Once there, they have it all in one location: Aurora viewing, outdoor activities, and true Canadian wilderness adventures just a few steps away from your room or cabin and all the amenities.</p> <p>The fall is a magical time at Blachford Lake Lodge. The lake is calm, and the trees are changing colours. You fly in to Blachford Lake from Yellowknife in a Twin Otter aircraft on floats. You'll be greeted on the dock by friendly staff and shown to your accommodation. Then, explore the lodge facilities. Lounge on one of the decks, or settle into a deck chair on the rock overlooking the lake and watch for moose by the island. Paddle a canoe or a kayak and go eye to eye with loons. Try your luck at fishing or hiking the nature trails.</p> <p>Upon your arrival the staff will greet you with a delicious snack and go over safety at the lodge and a full tour of the site to help you get the lay of the land.</p> <p>Lunch</p>
Afternoon	<p>There are several workshops that Blachford offers. This afternoon enjoy partaking in the handmade spruce salve workshop. This wild spruce salve is infused with hand harvested spruce from Canada's northern wilderness. Spruce is an all-natural first aid product utilized for thousands of years by the Indigenous people. The salve can be used topically for cuts, cold sores, burns, rashes and other skin infections such as eczema.</p>
Dinner	Dine together at Blachford Lake Lodge
9:00 pm	<p>Enjoy the beautiful evening watching the Northern Lights. Blachford Lake Lodge is the perfect spot for Aurora watching. Here, you don't need to head out on a bus or shuttle, the Aurora dance right above the lodge, located in the perfect wilderness setting.</p>
Overnight	Blachford Lake Lodge

### Day 4 – Wednesday, September 16

Morning	Breakfast at leisure and check-out of the Lodge
9:00 am	<p>This is your last day to enjoy the beautiful lodge setting. There are a number of fall activities available for you to enjoy such as: canoeing, kayaking, fishing, use of boat and motor, hiking, SUP boarding, bird watching, photography tips, hot tub/sauna use, and bonfire building.</p>
4:00 pm	<p>Depart for your charter flight back to Yellowknife.</p> <p>Arrive in Yellowknife and return to the Explorer Hotel.</p>
6:00 pm	<p>Enjoy your last dinner in Yellowknife at <a href="#">Bullock's Bistro</a>. This is a locals favourite, a unique historic building with great atmosphere and known for serving up locally caught fish.</p>
9:00 pm	<p>Aurora Viewing by <a href="#">Bucketlist Tours</a>, owned and operated by Tracy Therrien. This is your last night of Aurora Viewing and the tour will take you to Tracy's Cabin - an intimate and cozy location. Enjoy the beautiful Aurora and a light midnight snack, such as local fish soup, fresh bannock, tea, coffee, hot chocolate and sweets. (Drive time: 15 minutes)</p>
Overnight	Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife

## **Day 5 – Thursday, September 17**

6:00 am Breakfast at Explorer Hotel. Check-out, debrief and settle any incidentals.

Depart Yellowknife for home

## **Recommended items to bring**

- Remember, you are travelling to a northern destination and temperature and weather systems can change quickly. While we've outlined a few guidelines, we always recommend preparing for a change in weather during your stay.
- Fleece, fall jacket, wind breaker, jeans, thin layers, hat, sunscreen, bug-spray, sunglasses, and walking poles.
- Warm clothing (fall weather can range from 0C to 10C).
- Hiking boots.
- Good runners/ walking shoes.
- Camera – wide angle lens and tripod if you are planning on photographing the Aurora.