

Bounty of the Past

Welcome to the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands self-directed tours. These itineraries guide you through the history and geography of this beautiful and interesting landscape. Several different tours, featuring driving, cycling and walking, lead you on an exploration of four historical and cultural themes: Agriculture, Settlement, First Nations, Métis and the Fur Trade; and Arts and Nature.

The purpose of this route description is to provide information on a self-guided drive and walk. The walking described includes public lands and trails. While enjoying yourself, please drive and walk carefully as you are responsible to ensure your own safety and that any activity is within your abilities. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date. However, we are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained as a result of anyone relying upon this information.

Come on an adventure of discovery through the northern Assiniboine River Valley. Learn about unique agricultural practices and witness the pioneer ways that helped shape the modern agricultural industry. Pass through beautiful rolling countryside as you drive along the Assiniboine River Valley, stopping at places you might otherwise never see.

Today's tour takes you from Roblin, Manitoba to Veregin, Saskatchewan. It is intended to take about a half a day but could be extended depending on the length of your stops and any additional detours you may wish to take. For a shorter version, explore the sites around Kamsack or Roblin only. The tour can also be done in reverse from Veregin to Roblin. Check out "Potash, Pioneers and the Prairie Giants" tour for a full-day option that runs from Roblin to Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, which you could link to this tour for a multi-day trip.

There are restaurants, cafés and grocery stores in Roblin and Kamsack. All Saints Anglican Church and Picnic area and Broda Park in Kamsack are pleasant spots for a picnic. You will find several others along the way. Keep in mind the time difference between Saskatchewan and Manitoba from mid-March until the beginning of November, when Manitoba is one hour ahead of Saskatchewan.

On Today's Trip You Will Visit the Following

Keystone Pioneer Museum

Located 7 km east of Roblin, MB on Hwy 5

Phone: (204) 937-2935

Open the last weekend in May to September

Call for hours. Fees by donation

Call ahead to book a demonstration of pioneer farming practices.

Northern Quinoa Packaging Plant

Corner of Queen Elizabeth Blvd and Fort Pelly Ave
Kamsack, SK

Call ahead to book a tour of the packaging facility

Northern Quinoa Corporation Store

Located at 428 3rd Street, Kamsack, SK

Phone: (306) 542-3949

Open daily 8:00 – 5:00

<http://www.quinoa.com/index.html>

Parkland Crop Diversification Foundation

Located 5 km south of Roblin, MB on Hwy 83
Phone: (204) 937-6467
Open daily year-round
<http://www.mts.net/~pcdfnw/index.htm>

Kamsack Powerhouse Museum

Located in Broda Park off Hwy 5, Kamsack, SK
Phone: (306) 542-4415
Open May to September
Call for hours and fee information

National Doukhobour Heritage Village

Located in Veregin, SK
Phone: (306) 542-4441
Open daily May to September 10:00 – 6:00
Off season by appointment only
Call for fee information

Your excursion begins in Roblin, Manitoba. To reach Roblin, follow these directions:

- From Saskatoon, head east on Hwy 16 to Yorkton, then continue east on Hwy 10. At the Manitoba border, Hwy 10 becomes Hwy 5. Continue on Hwy 5 to Roblin.
- From Winnipeg, take Hwy 1 west then Hwy 16 northwest to Russell. From Russell head north on Hwy 83 to Roblin.

Before you begin the tour, take some time to explore Roblin's downtown. The start point is Sundial Park, which is adjacent to Station Café, an Austrian restaurant located in an historic former railway station. Take a brisk stroll around town to see buildings from the early days when the town of Roblin was just starting to take shape. Within a few blocks you can see the Roblin Life & Arts Centre set in a former Presbyterian Church, the original movie theatre and Millennium Park, where a large diamond monument welcomes you to "Roblin, the Jewel of the Parkland!"

km to next location	Directions	Total km
0.0	From the Sundial Junction in Roblin, MB at the intersection of Hwy 83 and Hwy 5, turn left out of the parking lot so that the park is on your left and Roblin Auto Body is on your right.	0.0
0.1	Turn left at the stop sign onto Hwy 5 East and head east out of town.	0.1
6.6	Turn left onto PR 591 following signs for Keystone Museum.	6.7
0.05	Turn right onto 153 N following signs for museum.	6.75
0.5	Museum is on your left, check in at the trailer first.	7.3

Stop in at the Keystone Pioneer Museum to walk around several historical buildings that include Charlie Dunlop's log cabin, the old Makaroff United Church built in 1910, and the restored Elashuk House made of clay with a thatched roof. Call ahead to make

arrangements for a demonstration of pioneer farming practices including threshing, bread making in clay ovens, and log sawing.

The Elschuk House is one of the few remaining examples of an early Ukrainian farmhouse. Take a look and see if you notice anything unusual about this house compared to any other house. There's no chimney! How did these pioneers heat their house through cold Manitoba winters and cook their food without a chimney for the stove? They directed the smoke up to the ceiling where it filtered through the thatched roof. The heated attic helped to keep the house warm and also served early pioneers as a smoke chamber to cure meats.

7.3	Return to Sundial Junction in Roblin the way you came. Turn left at intersection with Hwy 83 South.	14.6
5.4	Turn right onto the dirt road at sign for Parkland Crop Diversification Foundation. This road appears to be a farmer's access road to fields and is located soon after the junction with PR 583.	20.0

The Parkland Crop Diversification Foundation (PCDF) is an applied research foundation, which was established as a non-profit, non-share corporation in 1996. PCDF has a full range of plot equipment and the facilities for applied research activities.

A producer Board of Directors, along with Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives staff, help set the mandate for PCDF activities. Crops grown at the site include new or different crops, such as hemp or soybeans that are not traditionally grown in the area, to test their suitability to the region. Traditional crops like wheat, flax and barley are grown to test and demonstrate their value added capabilities.

In the green mailbox at PDCF you can find a brochure and information sheets for a self-guided tour of their current projects. Maps or plot plans will show you what crops are planted and where in the fields in front of you. Feel free to take a bit of time to wander around and check out these new developments. Please drive on the pathways and look but don't touch.

5.4	Return to Sundial Junction in Roblin the way you came. Turn right onto Hwy 5 East.	25.4
0.1	Turn left onto Hwy 83 North.	25.5
0.8	On your right is St. Vladimir's College and Holy Redeemer Ukrainian Catholic Church.	26.3

St. Vladimir's College is a former Ukrainian minor seminary and secondary school. The former seminary was called the Redemptorist Fathers Juvenile and was the first Ukrainian minor seminary in North America. At the time of printing this tour, plans are

underway to once again open this beautiful building as a boarding school for students coming to Canada from Asian countries.

As you leave Roblin you can see Agricore United grain elevators on your left. These modern cement elevators have slowly replaced the old wooden grain elevators, the prairie sentinels that once marked the location of almost every town on the prairies. If you are interested in learning more about grain elevators check out the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands "Potash, Pioneers and the Prairie Giants" tour, which will take you to the National Historic Site in Inglis, Manitoba to see the "Five Prairie Giants", one of the last rows of grain elevators that exists in Canada.

13.2	On your right is St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church.	39.5
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St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church was built in 1908 in the traditional Byzantine style typical of many Ukrainian churches. The domes on top are called banyas. If you are interested in learning more about Ukrainian settlement check out the lands "Biking, Back Roads and Buddas" tour, which explores numerous historic sites including churches similar to this one.

11.7	Turn left onto PR 573 West following the green sign pointing for Togo.	51.2
8.7	PR 363 ends as you enter Saskatchewan and the road becomes Hwy 5.	59.9
9.6	Reach Togo Saskatchewan. Turn left and head down Main Street.	69.5

On your right is the All Saints Anglican Church and Picnic area.

The town of Togo was named after an Admiral in the Japanese navy. Admiral Togo was one of Japan's greatest naval heroes. During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Togo was the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, which destroyed the Russian Baltic Fleet in a huge upset that stunned the world. The town of Togo was named in honour of Admiral Togo in 1906. The next town along the rail line was named Makaroff, Manitoba after a Russian general. Both men were mentioned often in the news at the time, which led to their popularity.

0.2	Continue down Main Street. Turn right at the T-junction.	69.7
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On your left is a small wood cutout and painting of five elevators that once stood here along the CN rail tracks. These "Prairie Giants" have disappeared now, replaced by more modern cement elevators in central locations such as the one you saw north of Roblin.

0.5	Reach stop sign and continue straight on Hwy 5 West.	70.2
11.7	Turn right at the green lamppost on the first road after the bridge into the town of Runnymede. Follow the bends in the road.	81.9
0.4	On your right is a small grain elevator.	82.3

If you look closely at the grain elevator you can see the word “Searle” fading on the side. The Searle Grain Company was an American company that operated along the Canadian Northern Railway. Through the 1930s and 40s Searle acquired several grain companies to become the largest private company in Saskatchewan. In 1967 Searle amalgamated with the Federal Grain Company, which was later sold to the provincial wheat pools.

0.4	Return to Hwy 5 and turn right.	82.7
10.4	On your right is a memorial cairn for the Silver Creek School District.	93.1

Read the memorial plaque on the cairn for this former school.

3.1	Turn left at the stop sign and continue west on Hwy 5 to Kamsack.	96.2
3.1	On your right is Bielecki Barn.	99.3

This massive barn came about due to the happenstance meeting of two gentlemen who were waylaid in Kamsack by a train breakdown. Deciding it would be an excellent location to build a barn, Mr. Christie provided the financing and Mr. Ritchie built it. When Mr. Christie died in 1928, his wife inherited his half of the barn. It was rumored that she and Mr. Ritchie did not get along, leading Mr. Ritchie to ask her to buy out his half of the property. Mrs. Christie went to the bank and took out a mortgage to pay him. But when the depression hit in 1929, she lost the barn to the bank. In 1935, the Bielecki family bought the property and has farmed here ever since. They used the barn for housing cattle right up until 1992. The family still lives in the large farmhouse near the barn, which can house 300 cattle and several horses.

3.6	Continue on Hwy 5 to Kamsack. Turn left onto East Avenue at the corner with the tall grey water tower shaped like a lighthouse.	102.9
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The unique design of this water tower is an example of coastal-lighthouse inspired architecture. The water tower was built in 1915 and supplied the town of Kamsack until

1977. Only 10 water towers with this unique design were ever built and of those only four remain, including this beautiful example.

Kamsack was devastated in 1944 when a tornado hit the town in an event now referred to as the “Kamsack Cyclone”. Over \$2 million dollars of damage was done to 400 homes and 100 businesses. The flat roof of the water tower that you see now replaces the original peaked roof that was destroyed by the tornado.

0.9	Continue down East Avenue, on your right is the Community Orchard.	103.8
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Stop and stroll through this community orchard, an example of an agricultural practice that you may not expect to see on the Saskatchewan prairie. The Kamsack Wildlife Association planted these gorgeous fruit trees.

0.1	Continue down East Avenue. Turn right at the stop sign onto Railway Avenue.	103.9
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On your left is a large new Pool elevator and on your right is the community orchard.

1.3	Turn right onto Third Avenue.	105.2
0.3	On your right is a mural depicting 100 years of the Doukhobours in Canada. Turn left at the stop sign onto Queen Elizabeth Boulevard.	105.5

The Doukhobours were a Christian sect that originated in Russia. In the late 1890s, over 7,500 Doukhobours immigrated to Canada from Russia and settled on the Canadian prairies to escape persecution. Canada was an attractive location for them to settle due to the fertile farm lands, a similar climate to their homeland, and the promise of exemption from military service by the Canadian government, which complied with their pacifistic views. You’ll learn more about the Doukhobours when you visit the National Doukhobour Heritage Village in Veregin later today.

0.1	On your right is the Northern Quinoa Packaging Plant.	105.6
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Quinoa is an ancient agricultural crop that was first cultivated by the Incas in South America. It is sometimes referred to as the “grain of the gods”. Kamsack is home to Canada’s only grower and processor of quinoa. Quinoa is an extremely nutritional plant that is high in protein, fiber and many minerals. Stop in at the packaging plant to buy a package to take home and to hear more about how this intriguing crop is produced.

0.3	Continue on Queen Elizabeth Boulevard. Turn left onto Edmonton Avenue.	105.9
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0.1	Turn right at the T-junction with the stop sign.	106.0
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Straight ahead of you is the CN Trackside Garden and a mural storyboard depicting the events of Saskatchewan's first 100 years. On your left, after the turn, are the old LTS Grain Farms and Pioneer Elevators. Kamsack was formerly the home to 13 grain elevators.

0.1	Turn left onto Hwy 5.	106.1
0.5	Turn right onto unmarked road before the bridge following the signs for the Museum and Broda Park Entrance.	106.6
0.8	Reach the Kamsack Powerhouse Museum.	107.4

Park in the parking lot and take some time to explore the Kamsack Powerhouse Museum. Outside you can see several examples of early pioneer agricultural equipment from around the region. Imagine yourself as a pioneer farmer plowing the land with a team of horses through the hot Saskatchewan summers. The museum is located in the former powerhouse, which was home to the coal burning generators that powered Kamsack and surrounding towns from 1914 to 1958.

To stretch your legs a bit more, take a walk around beautiful Broda Park.

0.8	Return to Hwy 5. Turn right.	108.2
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As you leave Kamsack watch your left hand side to see an example of a modern agriculture practice – a strawboard factory – the first one in Canada at the time of printing this tour. Strawboard is produced by chopping straw into tiny pieces, which are then blended with a resin and pressed into a mat. The mat can be pressed into the desired thickness of the board being produced. The boards are then cooled and shipped to manufacturing plants where they are turned into furniture and other products.

11.7	Turn left following the signs for Veregin and Museum. Follow the arrows pointing to the museum.	119.9
0.4	Come to a stop sign before the train tracks. Turn right after you cross the train tracks. Follow the arrows pointing for the museum.	120.3
0.4	Turn left after passing the abandoned Pool elevator. Continue following the museum signs until you reach the parking lot for the National Doukhobour Heritage Village.	120.7

Visit the National Doukhobour Heritage Village to learn about these persevering peoples who sought a new life in a foreign country over a hundred years ago. The Doukhobour Prayer Home, the centerpiece of the Heritage Village, showcases spectacular architecture and houses thousands of artifacts from the early pioneer days. Make sure you ask about the agricultural practices this group helped introduce to Canada.

This is the end of the tour. To return Saskatoon, continue west on Hwy 5 from Veregin. To return to Roblin, retrace your path or take Hwy 5 back the way you came but continue on Hwy 57, which will take you through Saskatchewan's Duck Mountain Provincial Park and past the scenic Madge Lake. Once you reach the Manitoba border, head south on Hwy 83 to return to Roblin.

On this trip you had the opportunity to view several agriculture practices both old and new that have spurred this region's settlement and growth. Hopefully you have gained an understanding of these agricultural practices along with an appreciation for the pioneers who paved the way and for the modern day producers that provide valuable products to us.

For information on other attractions found in the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands as well as more self-guided tours please visit:

www.valleylands.ca

Thank you for joining the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands self-directed excursion exploring the agricultural heritage of the many river valleys that cut through this prairie landscape. We hope that you had an enjoyable trip, and we would love to have you discover more of the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands on our other self-directed itineraries.

We greatly value your input and comments. If something was not clear, a road sign changed, or if you found a delightful picnic site or visit that you would like to share with future travellers, please let us know. The best way to communicate is to write the changes or new information directly onto the appropriate route description page, and mail it to the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands office. Thank you in advance for your contributions!

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The Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands – Bringing the Valleylands Experience to the World

The Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands Inc. is a partnership of 30+ municipalities and First Nation communities near the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers.

The partnership, with support from regional economic development organizations spearheads a grassroots initiative involving business, tourism, conservation and community organizations to develop the scenic, tourism, recreation, historic and cultural resources of the area and to provide a premier travel destination for visitors to discover and explore.

Member Municipalities and First Nations

Manitoba

RM of Shell River
RM of Hillsburg
Town of Roblin
RM of Shellmouth-Boulton
RM of Russell
Town of Russell
Village of Binscarth
Gambler First Nation
RM of Silver Creek
Waywayseecappo First Nation
RM of Ellice
Village of St. Lazare
RM of Birtle
Town of Birtle
Birdtail Sioux First Nation
RM of Rossburn
Town of Rossburn

Saskatchewan

RM of Langenburg
Town of Langenburg
RM of Churchbridge
Town of Churchbridge
RM of Spy Hill
Village of Spy Hill
RM of Saltcoats
Town of Saltcoats
Village of MacNutt
Village of Gerald
RM of Fertile Belt
Resort Village of Birds Point
Town of Bredenbury
Town of Kamsack
Town of Esterhazy