

Potash, Pioneers and the Prairie Giants

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.

Experience and learn about a wide variety of agricultural practices, both old and new, that have developed throughout the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands. Discover how they contributed to the vibrant and diverse communities you will be visiting on this tour. Gaze across the amazing vistas provided by three beautiful river valleys as you travel from a brand new interactive interpretive centre to Provincial and National Historic Sites.

Today's tour takes you from Esterhazy, Saskatchewan to Roblin, Manitoba and requires a full day. If you would like a shorter route try exploring from Esterhazy to Russell, Manitoba or from Russell to Roblin. This tour can also be done in reverse from Roblin to Esterhazy. To create a multi-day tour, combine this route with another of our self-guided tours called "Bounty of the Past" that takes you from Roblin, Manitoba to Veregin, Saskatchewan.

There are restaurants, cafés, and grocery stores in Esterhazy, Spy Hill, Langenburg, Russell, Inglis and Roblin along the way. There are also several great places for a picnic along the way including parks and rest stops, some overlooking several different valleys in the region. 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

Potash Interpretive Centre

Located in Esterhazy Historical Park on Hwy 22

Phone: (306) 745-5407

Open from May to September

Daily from 8:00 – 5:00

Donations graciously accepted

www.potashinterpretivecentre.com

Contact the town office for tour arrangements from September to May (306) 745-3942

Call ahead to book a guided tour.

Esterhazy Flour Mill

Located in Esterhazy Historical Park on Hwy 22

Phone: (306) 745-5406 (Visitor Information Centre)

Open from May to September

Daily from 8:00 – 5:00

Donations graciously accepted

Contact the town office for tour arrangements from September to May (306) 745-3942

Call ahead to book a guided tour.

Esterhazy Museum and Visitors Centre

Located in Esterhazy Heritage Park on Hwy 22

Phone: (306) 745-5406

Open from May to September

Daily from 8:00 – 5:00

Donations graciously accepted

Contact the town office for tour arrangements from September to May (306) 745-3942

Call ahead to book a guided tour.

Inglis Grain Elevators National Historic Site

Located in Inglis, MB

Phone: (204) 564-2243

Open from May long weekend to September long weekend.

Small tour fee charged and donations graciously accepted

Check website or call for hours and fee information.

www.ingliselevators.com

Your excursion begins in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan at the brand new Heritage Park. Several sites await your exploration at the start of this tour, so before heading off on your adventure make sure to visit the newly constructed Potash Interpretive Centre and the restored Flour Mill. These two distinct sites offer a glimpse into agricultural practices, old and new.

The Potash Interpretive Centre, ideally situated in the “Potash Capital of the World”, allows you to explore what a mineshaft looks like over kilometre below ground without the long elevator ride. Head inside to see samples of potash ore mined right below your feet and learn how this ore is turned into fertilizer for farmers and your home garden. Saskatchewan is responsible for one-third of the world’s production of potash. The province recognized this achievement by officially designating potash as their provincial mineral in 1996. Keep your eyes open for potash mines throughout today’s tour as you drive through the region.

The Esterhazy Flour Mill is now over 100 years old. And while it may be old, it is in great shape thanks to many volunteers who have helped to restore and upkeep this Provincial Heritage Site. Take a volunteer guided tour to learn how the grain you see growing in farmer’s fields was once turned into the flour you would buy at the local grocery store.

Also in the Heritage Park is the Esterhazy Museum and Visitor Centre. Inside you will find information on other local attractions and accommodations as well as artifacts from the entire region. Take a walk through the park to examine the former mining equipment on display or just enjoy the beautiful landscape.

km to next location	Directions	Total km
0.0	Start at the Potash Interpretive Centre and Flour Mill in Esterhazy located on Hwy 22 just west of the intersection with PR 637.	0.0
	Turn right when leaving the parking lot so that the Potash Interpretive Centre is on your right and head east on Hwy 22.	
2.7	Turn right onto Hwy 22. Follow the green signs pointing for Gerald.	2.7

After a couple kilometres you will pass over Kaposvar Creek. Kaposvar Creek received its name from one of the first colonies in the area that later became the town of

Esterhazy. In 1886, thirty-five Hungarian families settled in the area and named it after the city of Kaposvár, Hungary. If you are interested in learning more about the first settlers in this region check out the Assiniboine-Qu'Appelle Valleylands self-guided tour called "Follow the Path of the Settlers", which takes you to visit the Kaposvar Historic Site.

4.5	On your left you will see what remains of an old drive in movie theatre.	7.2
12.6	Pass over Cutarm Creek.	19.8

As you pass over Cutarm Creek you may wonder where this creek got its unusual name. One legend has it that an Aboriginal boy fell off his horse while riding through the valley and broke his arm, after which the creek was known as Cutarm Creek.

7.8	Turn right at stop sign at T-junction with Hwy 8 and continue south.	27.6
20.0	Continue past the town of Spy Hill on your left and turn left onto an unmarked gravel road before the bridge over the Qu'Appelle River.	47.6
5.5	On your left is Harmona Provincial Recreation Site.	53.1

Stop here for a picnic or simply to enjoy the view of the picturesque Qu'Appelle Valley. Read the storyboards at the site to learn about the fascinating colony called The Harmony Co-operative Industrial Association. This colony was years ahead of its time in social policies and members later participated in many co-operative ventures such as the United Grain Growers, the Co-operative Elevator Company, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which was the predecessor to the New Democratic Party.

1.1	Continue along the same road and head straight at the yield sign.	54.2
9.8	Turn left at the yield sign onto the unmarked gravel road. If you are following along on a map this is Hwy 600.	64.0
1.2	Gravel road becomes paved.	65.2

Keep your eyes open along this stretch of road for "beefalo" grazing in the fields. Beefalo are a cross between domestic cattle and bison. Beefalo look similar to bison and are lower in fat and cholesterol than domestic cattle. Beefalo are also supposed to be more resistant to the cold and to require less assistance in calving than cattle while still maintaining their docile nature, which makes them attractive livestock for farmers. If you ask anyone who has tried beefalo meat, you will be told just how tasty yet lean it is. If you are interested in buying some to take home, call local producer Joe DeCorby in Spy Hill at (306) 534-4410.

14.6	Turn right onto Main Street as you enter the town of Spy Hill. Follow the curve in the road as Main Street becomes a gravel road.	79.8
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To find out how Spy Hill got its name, check out the Assiniboine-Qu’Appelle Valleylands self-guided tour called “First Peoples of the Valleylands”.

0.8	Turn left at the T-junction.	80.6
0.6	On your left is the Lorch Snowplane.	81.2

If you grew up on the Canadian Prairie in the 1930s or 40s then this will probably be a familiar site. The Lorch Snowplane was developed in Spy Hill by Karl Lorch. Karl wanted to build a machine that could negotiate the almost impassible roads during hard prairie winters, which only horse and sleigh could travel at the time. The first version used a modified Model “T” Ford with the front wheels placed on the rear axel to create dual traction and skis placed at the front. The model worked but resulted in an extremely rough ride. Karl got a new idea after seeing a ski-equipped plane.

The version of the Lorch Snowplane that you see before you used a Model “A” Ford engine and later aircraft engines on a steel frame with one ski in front and two in back. A large propeller bolted to the crankshaft propelled the snowplane across the snow-covered landscape throughout the Canadian prairies and the northern United States. The snowplanes came fully equipped with seating for four, an interior heater and a windshield with defroster. Most communities had at least one snowplane, which was used especially in emergencies for doctors, nurses, schoolteachers and expectant mothers.

As automobiles became more reliable through winter driving, roads became suitable for all weather driving. Added to this, modern snow clearing equipment became standard and the Lorch Snowplane became obsolete. However, the Lorch Snowplane served a great purpose for many people and can be credited with helping save lives, ensuring school continued through the winter for children, and for the successful deliveries of hundreds of babies.

0.1	Continue straight until the stop sign. Turn right onto Hwy 8 North.	81.3
25.7	Turn right at stop sign onto Hwy 16 East heading to Russell.	107.0
14.5	Reach the Saskatchewan and Manitoba border. Continue on Hwy 16.	121.5
2.5	Watch to the south (your right) to see glimpses of the Bunge Canada canola crushing plant.	124.0

If you have ever driven through the Canadian prairies in late summer, you have probably seen the bright yellow fields of canola. Canada is the largest single producer of canola in the world. Canola is brought to this plant and processed into canola oil by crushing the seeds. This modern facility recently underwent a \$15 million addition, which has helped to strengthen the Russell and area economy.

Did you know that canola was developed by Canadians? In 1974, Dr. Keith Downey, born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Dr. Baldur Stefansson, born in Vestfold, Manitoba, developed a variety of rapeseed using selective breeding techniques that was low in erucic acid and glucosinolates. They named this new variety **CAN**adian **O**il, **L**ow-**A**cid or **CANOLA** for short.

3.0	Pass over the Assiniboine River and continue east on Hwy 16.	127.0
5.0	Watch to your right for bison grazing in the fields.	132.0

The plains bison has made a comeback from near extinction just over a hundred years ago, in part because of bison farms like you see to your right (south). There are now over 350,000. Of those, around 250,000 are bred for human consumption and for hides. If you are interested in buying some bison meat to take home, contact Lorne and Louise Miller at Silver Creek Bison Ranch (just south of Russell off Hwy 16) at (204) 532-2174.

1.8	Turn right onto RD 167W at the ATM Vanguard Credit Union sign.	133.8
2.1	On your right is a cairn commemorating the Dr. Barnardo Industrial Farm.	135.9

You are looking at the site of one of only two Dr. Barnardo homes for children in Canada. This former Barnardo Industrial Farm covered 8,000 acres of land along the Assiniboine Valley. Dr. Thomas John Barnardo was an Irish philanthropist who dedicated his life to helping the orphans and “street kids” of the United Kingdom. He established several houses for these disadvantaged youth and worked to provide them with food, shelter and an education.

One program that Dr. Barnardo established was an emigration system to send some of these children to houses in British Colonies. It is estimated that around 28,000 children, many of whom came to this location, were brought to Canada by the Barnardo Foundation. Many families in this region can trace their ancestry back to a relative who was brought up in the Dr. Barnardo Home.

0.5	Turn around and drive back the way you came. Turn right at the first intersection.	136.4
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0.2	On your right is another cairn commemorating Barnardo's Homes and those who are buried there.	136.6
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Can you notice a difference between the two plaques you just saw? Take a second look at each and then check the end of the tour for the answer.

1.8	Return to Hwy 16 the way you came. Turn right and continue east.	138.4
4.2	Turn left at the Petro-Canada gas station onto the Main Street of Russell.	142.6
0.7	On your right is a mural of Russell in 1885 in front of the Russell Civic Centre.	143.3

Check out this artist's depiction of early pioneer farming from over a hundred years ago while Russell was just beginning to take shape as a town.

If you're in Russell around Thanksgiving weekend in October, make sure you take time to check out the annual Beef and Barley Festival. The festival celebrates the strong agricultural industry in the region and is fun for the whole family.

0.9	Continue down Main Street to T-junction with Manitoba Ave. Turn left. Follow signs for Hwy 83.	144.2
0.9	Turn right at stop sign onto Hwy 83 North.	145.1
18.1	Turn right onto PR 366 North following signs for Inglis and Inglis Elevators.	163.2
3.7	Turn right onto Blighty Street.	166.9
0.8	Turn left onto Main Street of Inglis.	167.7
0.2	Turn right onto Railway Avenue.	167.9
0.2	Park after the last grain elevator called the Patterson Elevator.	168.1

The Inglis Elevators are a National Historic Site and are the last known surviving row of grain elevators in Canada. These elevators were closed in 1995 but the hard work and dedication of the people of Inglis and surrounding areas ensured this last vestige of the early Canadian prairies would not be lost.

Take advantage of the self-guided tour brochures available in the office or on the Inglis Elevators website (www.ingliselevators.com). Interpretive plaques throughout the site provide additional information. You can also take advantage of a guided interpretive tour

that ranges from an hour to an hour and a half. Make sure you phone ahead to arrange the guided tour.

The first grain elevator has been turned into an interpretive centre complete with videos and models to show how grain elevators worked in the 1920s. You can also tour the Reliance Double Elevator Complex for an up close view of the internal workings of a grain elevator along with a replica office. While there, see if you notice any similarities with the Flour Mill in Esterhazy.

0.3	Continue along Railway Avenue with the elevators behind you. Turn right at the stop sign onto PR 366.	168.4
0.1	Turn left onto PR 592 North.	168.5
1.0	Paved road becomes gravel. Follow all the bends in the road.	169.5
4.3	Turn left onto gravel road following signs for Lennard.	173.8

Along this road you will pass by a Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which you can recognize with its three “banyas” (domes). If you are interested in learning more about Ukrainian settlement in the Assiniboine-Qu’Appelle Valleylands, check out the exhilarating “Biking, Back Roads and Buddas” self-guided bike tour that visits several Ukrainian settler historic sites. Next you will pass by St. Elijah Romanian Orthodox Church Museum and Paulencu Pioneer House in Lennard. These Romanian settler vestiges are part of the Assiniboine-Qu’Appelle Valleylands “Follow the Path of the Settlers” self-guided tour.

7.0	Follow all the bends in the road. Turn right at stop sign onto Hwy 83.	180.8
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At the turnoff to Hwy 83 you can stop at Inglis Beach for a chance to stretch your legs. The Trans Canada Trail comes through here offering you a great place to take a hike or to pull out your mountain bike for some off-road fun.

The turnoff to Assiniboine Provincial Park is just a few kilometres south. This park offers camping sites, swimming and fishing on the Lake of the Prairie, which was created by the damming of the Assiniboine River. You can drive across the Shellmouth Dam near the park entrance. The park also offers exhilarating hiking trails such as the Ancient Valley Trail, which is featured in the “Gardens, Parks and the Arts” self-guided tour. The Assiniboine Townsite Trail takes you through what is left of the ghost town of Assiniboine and is featured in the “Follow the Path of the Settlers” self-guided tour. While traveling on Hwy 83 you will pass by the turnoff to Dr. Frank Skinner’s Nursery and Arboretum Trail. This gorgeous nature walk through the arboretum is featured in the Assiniboine-Qu’Appelle Valleylands “Gardens, Parks and the Arts” self-guided tour. On the opposite side of the highway from the Frank Skinner Arboretum is the Prairie Lake Golf Course.

31.5	Follow Hwy 83 into Roblin. At the stop sign at the intersection with Hwy 5 continue straight and turn right into the parking lot for sundial junction.	212.3
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This is the end of the tour. To get to Regina, Saskatchewan, head west from Roblin on Hwy 5, which becomes Hwy 10 in Saskatchewan and takes you all the way to Regina. To get to Winnipeg, Manitoba, head south from Roblin on Hwy 83. When you reach Russell, take Hwy 16 to Hwy 1, which will take you to Winnipeg. If you are interested in extending your trip there are accommodations available in Roblin and the surrounding area. The Assiniboine-Qu’Appelle Valleylands also offers a half-day agriculture themed tour called “Bounty of the Past”, which takes you from Roblin to Veregin, Saskatchewan, which may interest you for tomorrow.

Answer for the difference between the two Barnardo plaques:

The two plaques for Dr. Barnardo Industrial Farm have different spellings for the name Barnardo (Barnardo and Barnado). Barnardo is the correct spelling.

On this trip you experienced several different agricultural-based sites that hopefully helped you to understand the diversity that exists in this region. From mining to bison to old-fashioned grain elevators, this region showcases many distinct agricultural practices, both old and new.

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 and Qu’Appelle Valleys self-directed excursion exploring the agricultural heritage of the Assiniboine River Valley. We hope that you had an enjoyable trip, and we would love to have you discover more of the Assiniboine and Qu’Appelle River Valleys 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 travelers, 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 or fax 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