

The Aurora Classic



This week-long program begins Sunday afternoon in Whitehorse. Guests are picked up in Whitehorse at 3:00pm. It is recommended that guests arrive a day early (Saturday) and overnight in Whitehorse (at their expense) to overcome jetlag, ensure their baggage arrives and to allow for the threat of missing a connection due to winter weather complications. If this is impossible and guests arrive on the Sunday flight, we will pick them up at the airport at the time of the flight's arrival. Many of our guests choose to spend an hour or so at the McBride Museum located in downtown Whitehorse as it is a fantastic introduction to the fauna and history of the Yukon.

After driving West for thirty minutes we arrive at the Homestead, where we live. Here you will be outfitted with gear and instructed in the art of dog sledging and experience become acquainted with your very own dog team. Our guests are outfitted with expedition quality arctic clothing. Examples are Arctic parkas with fur ruffs, Chomo insulated salopettes, Weber-Malakov Sorel boots, and Apocalypse overmitts. While the average winter temperatures are between minus 10° and 25° degrees Celsius, we have had clients on Aurora trips in -40° C and they were never cold!



Guests spend the first couple days going on day trips from the Homestead, getting used to their sled and their team. On Wednesday we mush into the yurt basecamp where we spend the next two nights. On Thursday the dogs get a well deserved rest and we go for a snowshoeing interpretive trip, returning to the camp for a sauna and celebratory feast! Friday we mush out back to the Homestead, and Saturday we finish with the excitement of either hooking additional dogs up or trying our hand at mushing a more technical trail. By the end of this week you will be mushing like a seasoned "Sourdough"!

Day 1

On the first evening guests stay in one of our log guest cabins or yurt overlooking the Takhini River Valley. Each cabin has a sitting/sleeping area and a cozy loft bedroom. A delicious dinner is served in the Main Cabin. Menu items include such Yukon specialties as Arctic Char, Alaskan halibut and locally picked blueberry-cranberry crisp to name a few - vegetarian diets can also be accommodated with advance notice. After dinner guests often choose to relax in the hot tub, enjoying their favourite beverage under the aurora borealis, or up in our loft recreation room watching the latest dog sledging videos on our large screen home theatre.

Day 2

The next day we begin our dog sledging adventure! After a review of Mushing 101, we mush our teams to our lunch site overlooking the beautiful Dam Lake. After a fireside lunch of grilled caribou sausage we mush back to the homestead working on our balance and dog driving technique.

Day 3

The following day, clients mush their dog teams on the lower Ibex River Trail past active beaver dams, under the awe-inspiring cliffs of Mount North. This trail is a notch above the previous day's trail in terms of difficulty allowing us to progress to Mushing 201.

Day 4

Wednesday sees us sledding into our wilderness base camp. The camp is set in a spectacular valley with magnificent views in all directions. Much of the trail that we will be travelling on has been cut right out of the raw wilderness. This valley has been rarely travelled since trappers were here decades ago. Herds of Dall sheep often occupy the mountain slopes above. A resident wolf pack lives 10 miles down the trail and often comes down the frozen river to howl to our sled dogs on clear, cold nights.

Here accommodation is in spacious yurts, circular mountain huts with large dome skylights. Accommodation is rustic yet elegant, with propane lights, authentic cast iron stoves and pine furniture for you to relax in whilst reading or resting. Guests eat and socialize in the large, main yurt and sleep in smaller private yurts containing two twin beds that may be joined if requested.



Day 5

Today we wake up in our cosy yurts and make our way to the main yurt for a hearty breakfast. The dogs get a well deserved day off as we pack a trail lunch and go on a snowshoe interpretive trip down the south end of the valley towards the wintering grounds of the southern lake Caribou herd and the Ibex Valley wolf pack. We return in time for a relaxing sauna, shower and yet another incredible meal prepared on the wood stove.



Day 6 and Day 7

On Friday, clients mush back out to the Homestead for their final dinner. On Saturday, we go for our last mush where guests often choose to feel the power of an additional dog on their team or opt to run a technically challenging trail. Of course a nice relaxing run is also an option for the grand finale. Guests may be either taken to their flight for departure on Saturday or to their hotel on Saturday afternoon for a more relaxed departure on Sunday.



Cost: £2235 including local GST tax

Group size: from 1 to 6 persons

Dates: 2010

3 rd to 9 th January
10 th to 16 th January
17 th to 23 rd January
24 th to 30 th January
31 st Jan to 6 th February
7 th to 13 th February
7 th to 13 th March
14 th to 20 th March

Included: transfers, full board from Sunday afternoon until Saturday breakfast, all special outer clothing and sleeping bag, own team of huskies and sledge.

Not included: Flights, travel insurance, hotel accommodation on pre-tour night and last night (Saturday which is optional), breakfast and lunch on Sunday on beginning of tour, lunch/dinner/breakfast on the Sat/Sun at end of tour, alcohol and personal expenses.

Meals: all food is home made, excellent and plentiful. Please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary needs – eg vegetarian, gluten free.