



ARCTIC ODYSSEYS™

SPRING AURORAL ODYSSEY TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WITH 3-D ASTRO-PHOTOGRAPHER, BRYAN WHITE

View, Study, Photograph the Northern Lights!

Departures: March 26 – April 1, 2011 7 Days – 6 Nights
 April 1 - 7, 2011 7 Days – 6 Nights
Cost: \$4,690* (CND) from Edmonton, Alberta

This Odyssey has been specifically designed for those who are curious about the Aurora Borealis, who wish to view and photograph its splashes of color, and those who want to experience one of nature's most unique phenomena. The format is free of the large-group regimentation, rather it is oriented to those who would like to look and linger without the encumbrance of artificial schedules. The Odyssey will be led by renowned 3-D Astro-Photographer, Bryan White, the "Aurora Chaser."

The Odyssey is primarily staged at the exclusive Blachford Lake Lodge on a remote lake, east of Yellowknife, just north of the Great Slave Lake. Far removed from viewing inhibitors, such as city and auto lights, this location provides the best opportunity to experience the Northern Lights in full splendor – the curtains of color that are the "Piece de Resistance." Nightly Aurora displays are common due to proximity to the 20 degree arc from the Geo-Magnetic North Pole, known as the Aurora Oval."

During the day, you will have a menu of active pursuits from which to choose, including dog sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, snow-shelter/igloo building, ice fishing, and other cultural and ecological learning experiences.

The specific dates for this Odyssey have been selected to maximize the intensity of the Auroral display, as well as to optimize opportunity for outdoor recreational activities. Visibility of the moon will range from one-quarter to new (not visible) for the duration of the trip, enabling quality celestial photography.

Day 1 - The group will congregate at Edmonton International at approximately 9:35A for our 11:05A departure on First Air to Yellowknife. Check-in will be at the AIR CANADA ticket counter. Lunch will be served on the flight. Upon arrival in Yellowknife we transfer to our hotel.

After check-in, we will embark on a tour of Yellowknife, the seat of government and largest city of the Northwest Territories. The city tour will highlight the Legislative Assembly Building and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre/Museum, which houses artifacts of aboriginal people, early explorers, natural history, and aviation. We will course through Yellowknife's downtown with

its modern high-rises, shopping malls, restaurants, and recreational facilities, which comprise an indoor swimming pool, ice skating rink, and curling club. The historic section of Yellowknife dates back to the gold rush days, with infamous buildings like the Wildcat Cafe, ski planes, and houseboats on Great Slave Lake. On our extended tour of the area, we will visit Great Slave Lake's ice road, the Con (gold) Mine, and the Village of Detah, home to some 300 Dene Indians.

We will return to the hotel at about 5:00P, after which you will have some free time to relax or visit some of the local shops, art galleries, and other points of interest, all within walking distance of our hotel. (Yellowknife galleries exhibit extensive and some of the finest examples of Northern art, particularly of the Dene and Inuit.) Dinner, which includes a selection of Northern specialties such as Caribou Striploin, Arctic Char, or Baffin Island Scallops, will be served at the hotel.

After dinner (about 7:30P), your group leader will provide an orientation on the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights), what causes them, their character in terms of duration, intensity, cyclic nature over time, and how best to capture the "hallow of light" and "curtains of color" on film. A winter photography workshop will also be provided (either this evening or at the Lodge), particularly focused on obtaining quality pictures under bright snow and cold conditions.

Participants will be free to retire at about 9:00P. However, for those interested, and assuming the Aurora presents itself, your group escort will lead a short walk out onto the lake for a first glimpse of the Northern Lights (between 11:00P and 1:00A). Photographic assistance will be provided. We will return to the hotel at approximately 1:00A.

Days 2-6 - After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for the airport for a Twin Otter flight to our remote Arctic Lodge. En route to the lodge, passing over frozen boreal forest, lakes, and muskeg, keep a watch for foraging caribou herds that winter in the area. Arriving at our lodge complex on Blachford Lake, we will spend the next five days in a winter wonderland.

Accommodations at Blachford Lake are in keeping with the remote destination. The main lodge offers five private guestrooms, full kitchen, conference, restrooms, shower facilities, a lounge with full bar, outside Jacuzzi/hot tub, and open decks to view the Northern Lights. In addition to the main lodge are five

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cozy hand-built log cabins, equipped with wood and propane stoves and propane lights. The cabins do not have indoor plumbing, but are reasonably convenient to the main lodge. After settling in your room or cabin and a hearty lunch, your lodge hosts and group leader will go over the facility amenities and range activities available to you, as outlined below:

Aurora Borealis and Skywatching

Clear weather permitting, each night will involve an intense exploration of the Arctic's night sky. Witness and photograph fantastic displays of the North Lights, and/or with assistance of binoculars or a telescope, track the brightest planets, galaxies, and find nebulae and globular clusters around our Milky Way.

Bryan White will teach you about the Aurora Borealis, how it is formed, terminology, recent NASA findings, and techniques for photographing the Aurora for film and digital cameras. 3-D is once again becoming very popular and is the best way to relive your Arctic experiences. Bryan will relate how to take 3-D images, process them, and discuss methods of viewing the 3-D pictures. Bryan welcomes questions and discussion on astronomical mysteries, and will also bring a series of slides to amaze us with all that flies and lies overhead. The last evening will include a 3-D Show which will be a compilation of your pictures. Everyone will be provided a DVD with a 2-D show of the best Tours images which can be viewed on your TV or computer along with a computer screen saver.

Other Lecture and Interpretive Activities

In addition to learning celestial photography techniques, including the use of digital cameras, photography assistance will be provided, particularly focused on obtaining quality pictures under bright snow and cold conditions. In addition, mini-lectures and slide presentations will inform you on the historic and present-day use of sled dogs and dog team travel in the Arctic, as well as on wildlife management in the Northwest Territories, including ongoing fisheries and bear programs. You will also have the opportunity to relax around the fire in a tipi and listen to stories told by Dene, or learn how to make a Dene drum, see how fish are smoked, and partake in Dene "hand games."

Outdoor Activities

During the daylight hours a wide range of outdoor activities will be available, enabling you to fully experience this pristine Arctic wilderness:

- Embark on a dog sled excursion on the land in the traditional way and try your hand at "mushing." This activity is initially limited to 1.5 hours per person to allow all to participate. Time permitting, additional dog sled excursions can be arranged for an additional fee.
- Learn wilderness survival techniques, such as quinzhee (snowshelter) building.
- Ice skate or play hockey on the lake to your heart's content. Ice skates and hockey sticks will be provided, but we will need to know your size in advance of the trip.
- Go it alone and experience the snowbound solitude of the Arctic wilderness on cross-country skis or snowshoes, utilizing some 20 km of groomed trails or freestyle on the lake.
- Snowshoe through the Boreal forest, observing animal tracks, giant spruce, etc.
- Try your hand at ice fishing for the famous Arctic Lake trout and Northern Pike. (Requires a fishing license, which can be purchased in Yellowknife. Fishing equipment and ice auger can be rented at the lodge)
- Or, experience the thrill of snowmobiling across the lake and through the Boreal Forest (\$40/hour for snowmobile use).

For the duration of our time at Blachford Lake, meals will include fresh baked and northern treats such as Arctic char, caribou, muskox, lake trout, white fish, berry cake, and bannock. With prior notice, special menus can be arranged for people with particular dietary needs. If you wish to take a longer day excursion through the lunch hour, a wholesome box lunch can be prepared for you.

Day 7 – After breakfast, you will be free to relax at the lodge or enjoy one final morning in the out-of-doors in pursuing your activity of preference in the snowbound Arctic wonderland. After lunch, we will congregate on the lake and depart by Twin Otter ski-plane for Yellowknife. As planned, you will have about one hour to explore and shop Yellowknife before transferring to the airport at about 3:30 pm. Our return First Air flight to Edmonton departs at 5:10 pm. Dinner will be served on the flight to Edmonton. The Odyssey ends at the scheduled time of arrival in Edmonton (6:51P).

**Price is inclusive, per person, double occupancy. Gratuities for staff at Blachford Lake Lodge are included. A single supplement can often be arranged on an individual basis, as available. If available, the single supplement is \$1,600 CAD additional cost. Ask about discounts for children 13 years old and under and cabin vs. lodge accommodations. If desired, your trip can be modified to include additional nights in Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, either at the beginning or end of the trip. Air to Edmonton, winter clothing, alcoholic beverages, bottled or canned soft drinks, fishing license, independent guided activities, items of a personal nature, and costs associated with weather delays are not included in the price. Participants are supplied with the appropriate clothing and equipment list. If necessary, Arctic parkas, pants, and boots can be rented in Yellowknife for a reasonable fee. The price reflects the rebate of all Goods and Services Tax (GST) that is permissible. Price is subject to change up to 30 days of departure as conditioned by such variables as the number of participants, fuel costs, and the monetary exchange rate (USD:CAD).*

Notes: Participants must understand that auroras are dependent upon solar flares and are not typically seen every night, even at the best location. We are, of course, also dependent upon the weather for clear skies. Though auroras can be seen outside the Arctic, we will be ideally situated to witness the most spectacular Northern Lights displays nature has to offer. Witnessing the beauty of the Northern Lights in the natural Arctic environment is an experience enjoyed by very few in a lifetime.

Travel arrangements between one's point of origin and Edmonton can be arranged by Arctic Odysseys to suit the individual's convenience.