

# Regional Profiles of Manitoba

## Assiniboine



Canada's longest historic free-suspension footbridge in Souris and International Peace Gardens in Boissevain

Known for its picturesque prairie splendour and never-ending horizons, the Assiniboine region covers 32,134 sq km of rolling forested hills, small lakes and sprawling acres

of canola and wheat in the province's southwest corner. The region is home to nearly 70,000 people.

Brandon is the region's largest centre (however, it is serviced by its own health authority) and is within 30-90 minutes of most communities in the region.

The largest communities outside of Brandon include Neepawa, Killarney and Virden, which is the oil capital of Manitoba.

Neepawa and surrounding area is home to over 2,000 named varieties of lilies - more than anywhere else in the world. In 1998 this earned Neepawa the title of World Lily Capital. Each year The World Lily Festival attracts more than 11,000 people from around the world.

The region is home to many popular camping destinations including Riding Mountain National Park and Spruce Woods Provincial Park, a beautiful retreat considered to be one of the best provincial parks Manitoba. The park occupies nearly 7,500 acres of the Spruce Woods Forest preserve and is home to Spirit Sands, also known as Carberry Dessert, a large area of rolling sand dunes and unique plant and animal species including the pincushion cactus, hognose snakes and the skink, Manitoba's only lizard. Kiche Manitou Campground offers excellent facilities and is ideal for swimming, fishing, hiking and picnicking.

Other regional attractions include the International Peace Gardens, located minutes way from the Canada/US Border in Boissevain, Lake Minnedosa's annual Classic Rock Festival, the 'Stone Angel' statue, located near Neepawa, which inspired Margaret Laurence's book of the same title, and Canada's longest historic free-suspension footbridge, which runs 852 feet over the Souris River.

The main industry throughout the Assiniboine Region is mixed agriculture. Secondary industries include mixed manufacturing, service sector, tourism and transportation.

Housing and property prices are generally lower throughout the Assiniboine Region than in major service centres such as Winnipeg and Brandon. Average rental costs vary between \$200 and \$600 per month.

## Brandon



Two hours west of Winnipeg and only minutes from the beauty of national and provincial parks, the city of Brandon is filled

with big-city luxuries and has a small-town appeal. Situated in the southwest corner of Manitoba, Brandon is the second largest city in the province and has twice been voted one of the top ten cities in Canada in which to live by Chatelaine magazine.

In honor of a rich agricultural heritage and reputation as a prosperous farming community, Brandon has been nicknamed the 'Wheat City'. Covering an area of 43 square km (26 square miles) Brandon's population is approximately 43,000. However, its trading area population is estimated at 180,000.

Cultural, recreational and entertainment opportunities abound with theatre and concert events as well as art galleries and museums.



The City of Brandon is a charming and intimate community with many offerings

The Assiniboine River Corridor stretches 17 km through the heart of the City of Brandon. The corridor includes a network of parks and pathways linked by the Red Willow Pedestrian Bridge. The trail system ranges from natural river bottom forest to paved, lit walkways and links sports venues to downtown shopping and dining.

The Waterfall of Lights is a wintertime oasis, offering skating and cross-country skiing through beautiful light displays throughout most of the winter.

The Royal Manitoba Winter Fair is one of Western Canada's oldest and most prestigious agricultural events. The fair is one of the largest indoor agricultural events in Canada, attracting nearly 120,000 patrons each year.

Brandon's multiculturalism shines each February at the Lieutenant Governor's Winter Fest. There are over 14 pavilions that offer cultural food and beverages.

Brandon is a sports oriented city offering recreation facilities and everything from hockey to English equestrian sports. The Brandon Wheat Kings, a prestigious Canadian junior ice hockey team that competes in the Western Hockey League, attracts top-notch athletes, such as Ron Hextall, Trevor Kidd, Bryan McCabe, Chris Osgood and Jordin Tootoo, who all went on to play in the NHL.

## Burntwood



Canada's second largest falls, Pisew Falls; photo courtesy of Travel Manitoba

The Burntwood Region includes most of Manitoba lying above the 53<sup>rd</sup> Parallel, excluding areas around Flin Flon, The Pas, and Churchill.

Sparsely populated, Burntwood has just over 45,000 residents. Population characteristics include a high proportion of youth (35 percent under age 15) and a low population of seniors (4 percent).

People of Aboriginal descent form the largest population group. The First Nations communities are Cree, Cree/Ojibway and Dene, with Cree being the most numerous group.

Great distances separate the various communities and Thompson is the only city within the area. Located 830 km north of the international border, and 739 km north of Winnipeg, Thompson is the province's third largest city and, as the regional trade and service centre of Northern Manitoba, is nicknamed 'Hub of the North'. Thompson is a dynamic northern community of over 13,200 residents and serves as a trade centre for an additional 36,000 - 65,000 Manitobans. As such, it has all of the services and amenities that would be expected in a much larger, urban centre, including a number of fine restaurants and night spots as well as a golf course and other diversions.

Thompson is set in the ruggedly beautiful Canadian Shield, among numerous pristine lakes, in the heart of the Boreal Forest. Both residents and tourists alike are offered a unique wilderness experience, which can also be enjoyed via chartered trips from Thompson's river air base.

In the winter months, Thompson offers downhill skiing and snowboarding, cross country skiing and a biathlon range, all at the Mystery Mountain Winter Park. Snowmobiling is also extremely popular in the area with more than 200 miles of groomed trails between Thompson and Sasagiu Rapids.

A half hour drive south of the city is the scenic Paint Lake Provincial Recreational Park encompassing Manitoba's largest marina as well as two sand beaches and an abundance of fishing. Another 45 km south is Pisew Falls, the province's second largest falls which includes a suspension bridge that spans the lower portion.

Mining, hydro-electric development, forestry, commercial fishing, trapping, transportation and tourism are the region's major industries. Income is above the national average for individuals employed in these industries.

## Central

The Central region extends across more than 18,900 square km of south-central Manitoba and includes 37 municipalities and six First Nations communities and a population of more than 103,000.

Thousands of years ago, the rushing waters of a glacial spillway, instead of forests of lush vegetation, would have greeted your visit to the Pembina valley. It is the effects of glaciers, weather and time

that have left the land looking as it does today. The valley is the notable landform of the area, measuring over two km wide and 100 metres deep.

Portage la Prairie is the largest city in the region with a population of over 14,300, or approximately 15 percent of the region's total population. Within the city of Portage la Prairie is a peninsula known as Island Park. The island features an 18 hole golf course, outdoor water park, horse racing track, walking trails, tennis courts, a duck pond and an extensive arboretum and serves as grounds for the Portage Industrial Exhibition grounds which hosts various agricultural competitions and midway.

The second largest centre is Winkler, also Manitoba's sixth-largest city (as of 2008) and one of the fastest growing cities in the province. Located on the western edge of the Red River Valley, Winkler is approximately 100 km southwest of Winnipeg and 70 km northwest of a 24-hour US border crossing at Emerson. Winkler's main festival is the Harvest Festival and Exhibition. Held at the Winkler Parkland in mid-August, it features a parade, midway, live stage entertainment, fireworks, rodeo and more. The Cripple Creek Music Festival is another popular summer event.

Other communities include Morden, Altona, Carman, Crystal City, Emerson, Gladstone, Morris - home of the Manitoba Stampede, Manitou, MacGregor, Notre Dame de Lourdes, St. Claude and Swan Lake.

Pembina Valley Provincial Park, located south of Morden, is 440 acres of preserved areas that are representative of the Pembina/Tiger Hills Natural Region of Manitoba and which accommodate nature-oriented recreational opportunities.

Agriculture is the major industry in the area. Farmers grow a wide range of crops ranging from wheat, rye, oats, barley, canola, flax, corn, peas, sunflowers and potatoes. Livestock production is also prominent in the region with farmers specializing in hog production, beef and cattle production. Commercial fishing on Lake Manitoba in the north-east part of the region is an important part of the economy as well.

The beautiful scenery, events and activities around the region also support a thriving tourism and service industry.



Scenic Sunflower fields and Manitoba Stampede in Morris; photos courtesy of Travel Manitoba

## Churchill



Beautiful Polar Bears and spectacular Northern Lights are among the splendour in Churchill; photos courtesy of Travel Manitoba

Located on the shores of Hudson Bay, about 650 miles north of Winnipeg, the Town of Churchill is one of Manitoba's northern-most communities. Archaeology in the area shows evidence of human presence dating back 4,000 years. Prince of Wales Fort, built in the mid 1700's by the Hudson Bay Company, sits just across the river, a solid reminder of the fur trade which first put Churchill on the map. This National Historic Site of Canada encompasses a massive fortification along with installations at Cape Merry and Sloop Cove.

Churchill offers a unique wilderness lifestyle in a small village setting with

just over 1,000 residents. The town itself offers excellent recreational facilities and the surrounding area is primed for snowmobiling, off road vehicle riding, hunting and fishing. Unique flora, fauna and historical features contribute to making tourism the largest industry in the region. Four distinct tourism seasons keep travelers flocking to Churchill year-round for bird watching, Belugas, Polar Bears and northern lights.

October and early November are prime times to see hundreds of polar bears waiting on the vast peninsula for the Hudson Bay to freeze so that they can return to hunt. This is one of Churchill's most famous attractions, earning it the distinction of 'Polar Bear Capital of the World'. Tourists can safely view polar bears from tundra buggies.

Nature's light show - the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) - are seen in late August and from December to late April in the night skies over Churchill.

The average summer temperature in Churchill is 12° C with the winter average at -27° C. Snow covers the ground for a good portion of the year and a short but sweet summer season brings many species of beautiful blossoms – and Beluga whales. Thousands of Belugas move into the warmer waters of the Churchill River during July and August to calf.

Wapusk National Park is located in the Hudson Plains ecozone, 45 km south of Churchill. Wapusk is the Cree word for 'white bear' and, as the meaning indicates, the 11,475 square km park provides an excellent opportunity to view polar bears as it protects one of the world's largest known polar bear maternity denning areas. It includes a large part of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, a sub-arctic region bordering Hudson Bay that is mostly muskeg and wet peatlands. It is one of the wildest and most remote of Canadian landscapes.

Churchill continues to be a northern transportation hub with a busy rail line and airport as well as Canada's only inland saltwater port. Churchill has a strong research presence with many scientific professionals basing their studies out of The Churchill Northern Studies Centre and the Institute of Arctic Ecophysiology.

## Interlake



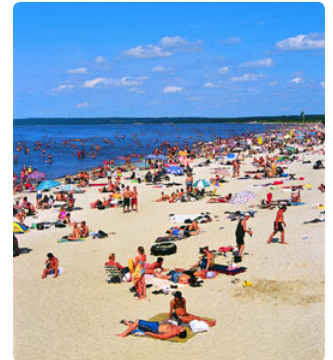
Located north of the City of Winnipeg, the Interlake Region extends over a territory of approximately 26,000 square km. On the east, the region is bordered by Lake

Winnipeg and on the west by Lakes Manitoba, Winnipegosis and Cedar. The dominant characteristic of the land is its variation, at least by Prairie standards. The diverse landscape includes geographical features such as natural lake borders, agricultural and parklands, marshlands, beaches and over two hundred caves. Limestone bedrock is a dominant topography, which contributes to the shape and productivity of the land. The region also has the highest number of wildlife management areas in Manitoba.

The region is home to 76,000 people. Communities include the City of Selkirk, towns or rural municipalities such as Arborg, Ashern, Eriksdale, Gimli, Lundar, Stonewall, Teulon and Winnipeg Beach, two villages, Riverton and Dunnottar, 14 rural municipalities and nine First Nation communities.

Kilometers of clean sandy beaches along the shores of Lake

Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, excellent cottage sites and camp grounds as well as two first class resort and conference centres and many challenging golf courses make the region a vacation paradise for outdoor activities and bird watching. Interlake's first class beaches include: Grand Beach, Patricia Beach, Grand Marais, Hillside Beach and Victoria Beach.



The serene waters in Gimli's Harbour and fine sands of Grand Beach offer both relaxation and excitement; photos courtesy of Travel Manitoba

Grand Beach is located approximately 80 km northeast of Winnipeg and boasts a 3 km shore line of fine white sand, considered to be one of the best beaches in the world. On summer days it is not uncommon for more than 20,000 visitors to come and enjoy the modern campgrounds, picnic areas, and of course, the beach itself.

Rich and celebrated cultures and heritages provide for year-round celebrations and festive activities. Major festivals include Gimli's Icelandic Festival, Arborg Summerfest, Selkirk Highland Gathering Celebrations, The Triple 'S' Fair and Rodeo, Winnipeg Beach Boardwalk Days, Stonewall Quarry Days and The Lundar Agricultural Fair. Major historic sites and other attractions include, Oak Hammock Marsh Wildlife Habitat, Lower Fort Garry, St. Andrews Lock and Dam, Prairie Dog Central and Selkirk marine Museum, Narcisse Snake Dens and the oldest stone church in western Canada, St. Andrews Church, which is still in use.

## NOR-MAN



Nature's beauty in NOR-MAN; photo courtesy of Judy Black

With a population of 26,000, the NOR-MAN spreads over 72,000 square km of Manitoba's landscape and includes crystal clear lakes, endless boreal forests, pristine wilderness and diverse ecosystems.

The region is famous for Canadian Shield rock formations near Flin Flon and for being home to the world's second clearest lake - Clearwater Lake, a focal point of Clearwater Lake Provincial Park and a geological marvel. Deep crevices were formed in the lake when rock masses split away from the shoreline cliffs during the retreat of a vast glacier. Today, these caves shelter black bears, squirrels, weasels and hearty plants growing in the dim light. The park is also home to thousands of red garter snakes that spend winter below the frost line and emerge in spring for a spectacular mating ritual.

NOR-MAN has a population of 26,000, however health services within the region, including DSM's diagnostic facilities, also serve 8,000 residents of northeastern Saskatchewan.

The Pas and Flin Flon are the largest communities with populations upward of 7,600 and 6,400, respectively. Other communities within the region include Snow Lake, Cranberry Portage, Grand Rapids, Pukatawagan, Sherridon, Cormorant and Moose Lake.

Built on the rocks, the city of Flin Flon is a thriving mining community, built on the rocks near the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border north of the 54<sup>th</sup> parallel. The Flin Flon area is part of the Precambrian Amisk volcanic belt, which was formed millions of years ago by underwater volcanic eruptions.

Known as the 'Gateway to the North', the town of The Pas serves as a major center for agriculture, forestry, transportation, tourism, government services and other services. The Pas is also considered home to a growing number of 'Lake Residents' who reside year round at Rocky Lake and in Clearwater Provincial Park.

Snow Lake is a mining community situated midway between Flin Flon, The Pas and Thompson in north-central Manitoba. It is 685 km north of Winnipeg. Although mining has traditionally been the mainstay of the local economy, this friendly and hospitable town has been developing its tourism industry. Snow Lake is located on the east shore of the beautiful and well-stocked Snow Lake, which gives the town its name. The lake's excellent fishing and abundant flora and fauna continue to attract many tourists.

The region offers quiet, comfortable living with many amenities such as post-secondary education, libraries and recreational facilities close to home. Burntwood is a year-round playground. Summer activities include golfing, sailing and fishing. Winter activities include cross country skiing and snowmobiling.

Major industry in NOR-MAN includes mining, forestry, tourism, hydro-electricity and government services.

## North Eastman

North Eastman is a region of beauty, business, recreation and opportunity. The region's geography is very expansive, covering an area of approximately 35,000 square km. While the southerly part of the region is primarily an agricultural area, the remainder of North Eastman is set amidst the boreal forest and is interspersed with a multitude of waterways in which are nestled



several resort communities. Much of the Winnipeg River area has been defined by several hydroelectric dams. The northerly areas are very remote and accessible via a winter road system and by air. Year-round, approximately 39,000 people call this region home, but come summertime, with its endless recreational possibilities, the population can double and even triple.

North Eastman is Manitoba's premier vacation destination and its reputation for beautiful landscapes and abundant lakes and rivers has spread internationally. The recreational paradise offers the best in year-round activities including miles of unspoiled beaches and waterways perfect for water sports, as well as golfing, camping, snowmobiling, skiing, hiking and more.

This resort-like community of Pinawa lies on the northern edge of the Whiteshell Provincial Park, just 110 km from Winnipeg and offers something for everyone. Situated on the Winnipeg River, the town is a recreation paradise offering sailing, canoeing, fishing, hiking, swimming, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. The town is home to one of Manitoba's best golf courses, situated along the shores of the Winnipeg River and Pinawa Channel.



Whiteshell Park offers many breathtaking views; photos courtesy of Travel Manitoba

Classified as a Natural Park, Whiteshell Provincial Park is a 2800 square km sanctuary of protected wilderness that is a camping and cottage destination. West Hawk Lake, the deepest lake in the province, was formed by a meteorite, and is a popular spot for scuba

diving within the Whiteshell. The park provides some of the most spectacular hiking trails in the province. Trails range from pleasant 3 km jaunts to the challenging 60 km Mantario Hiking Trail. Rock outcrops, beaver dams and wildlife make each hike a new experience.

With abundant resources, beautiful surroundings, and an extremely low cost of living, the North Eastman Region is a great place to live and is an ideal setting for families. The Region boasts a skilled and diverse labour force, and there is plenty of room to grow. And for those occasions when you'd like to take in a world-class concert, symphony or ballet performance, Winnipeg is never far away.

## Parkland



Parkland Farmlands

The Parkland encompasses approximately 25,000 square km, bordered by Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis in the east and the Saskatchewan border to the west. Nearly 10,000 square km of the area are

shared by national and provincial designated parks and forest reserves, including Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba's first national park. For most of the 50,000 plus residents, an hour drive or less takes them from the prairie farmland to evergreen forests and lakes.

Dauphin is the region's largest centre with 8,000 residents however, combined with surrounding municipalities the area serves over 10,000 people.

One of the biggest annual attractions in the Dauphin area is Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. At the end of July, people arrive from across North America and the world to enjoy the cultural displays and activities, sample Ukrainian food and watch and participate in Ukrainian dancing.

Another summer event that draws spectators from miles around is Dauphin's Country Fest. This weekend music festival celebrates country music with numerous local acts and world-renowned stars. Canadians Paul Brandt and Terri Clarke perform regularly and top artists such as Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, Patty Loveless and Alabama have also graced the Country Fest stage.

Manitoba's highest point, Baldy Mountain, is located in Duck Mountain Provincial Park within the Parkland region. The Mountain rises to 831.2 m (2,727 feet) above sea level. As well, topography of this region varies from town to town. Parkland is a watery maze of lakes, rivers, and streams - a legacy of glacial action. In the lowlands of central Manitoba, three large lakes - Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Winnipegosis - hold what remains of glacial Lake Agassiz, an immense prehistoric lake that once covered the entire province, with the exception of a tiny portion in the southwestern corner.

Parkland is an all-seasons recreational centre with many year-round activities taking place in the remote wilderness setting. Riding Mountain National Park and Aseissippi and Duck Mountain Provincial Parks have trails throughout, offering an impressive view of the animals, their habitats and the natural beauty of the many ecosystems.

The Parkland region thrives on tourism services, attractions and hospitality and provides activities from eco-tourism to hard adventure such as outfitting, which is a multi-million dollar industry.

Much of the regional economy is agriculture-driven, with producers growing almost everything from grains, oilseeds and livestock to honey bees and industrial hemp. Dauphin boasts a strong manufacturing and processing industry that supplies products to local, national, and international markets. The Swan River Valley is home to Louisiana Pacific, a major producer of oriented strand board and areas along Lake Winnipegosis figure prominently in the fishing industry.

## South Eastman

The South Eastman Region provides the best of both worlds - life in a country environment with proximity to urban amenities. Manitoba's fastest growing region is set in the south eastern part of the province, covering approximately 10,000 square km. The population numbers around 60,000, representing a somewhat younger demographic than the general Manitoba population.

While English is the home language for 70 percent of South Eastman residents, 14 percent use French at home, and 16 percent use a non-official language at home. The region's thriving French communities include St. Pierre, Ste. Anne, La Broquerie, St. Malo, Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe and Ile des Chenes.

The region's largest city, Steinbach, is a community of approximately 11,000, located 61 km southeast of Winnipeg. Surrounding Steinbach is the Rural Municipality of Hanover, an area of diversified agriculture. Steinbach is one of the fastest growing cities in the province with a vibrant business community and is the hub of economic activity in southeastern Manitoba. Steinbach is the regional shopping and service centre and the agriculture supply centre for a large area.

Moose Lake Provincial Park is known for its provincially rare stand of white pine trees. Wildlife is plentiful in this area including the park's namesake, the mighty moose. A perfect lakeside location make Moose Lake and campground a great family weekend getaway.

Steinbach has been known as the Automobile City for many years due to the many area dealerships. It is also home to world-class manufacturers such as Loewen, Canada's largest wood window and door manufacturer, and Biovail Corporation, manufacturer of time-release medication. Steinbach also provides many research and development facilities.

Situated on a 49-acre site, the Mennonite Heritage Village portrays the life of settlers in southern Manitoba, as well as the Mennonite heritage. Drawing 40,000 visitors each year, the village recreates the experience of the pioneers and features a blacksmith shop, printery, general store, cheese factory, sawmill and wind-driven grist mill.

Steinbach's major festival, Pioneer Days, is four-day event packed with pioneer activities, including steam power, milling, and threshing demonstrations, horse shows, a petting zoo, concerts, drama, good food and more.



The landmark windmill at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Steinbach; photo courtesy of the City of Steinbach

# Winnipeg

Located at the geographic centre of North America, Winnipeg is the capital city of Manitoba and considered gateway to the West. The metropolitan population is over 712,000 people of diverse backgrounds who bring an international, cosmopolitan flare to the city as well as a feeling of community. Winnipeg is home to more than 60 percent of Manitoba's residents and the city continues to grow.

This city has four distinct seasons. Whether it's the long, warm summer days or the bright, sunny days of winter, Winnipeg is alive with activity. During the summer the city hosts many outdoor festivals, cultural and sporting events. Kick back and enjoy spending time at the Forks, on a patio in Little Italy or watching river boats float by. Sports enthusiasts can head off to CanWest Global Park, CanadInns Stadium or MTS Centre to catch a professional baseball, football or hockey game.

Winnipeg is truly a city of festivals, the largest being Folklorama, a world-renown cultural event that attracts tourists from every point of the globe for a sampling of ethnic heritage and traditions. Visitors travel the 'world' via pavilions where food, dance and cultural exhibits are enjoyed.

Among the city's spectrum of festivals and outdoor events are:

- Jazz Winnipeg Festival
- Winnipeg Comedy Festival
- Red River Exhibition
- Winnipeg Fringe Festival
- Winnipeg Music Festival
- Winnipeg International Writers Festival
- Teddy Bears' Picnic
- Winnipeg International Children's Festival
- Winnipeg Folk Festival

Downtown Winnipeg is home to many art galleries including the Winnipeg Art Gallery, live theatre venues, the Centennial Concert Hall, many museums and will be home to the new world class Human Rights Museum.

During the winter months, a beautiful Christmas atmosphere enhances the city's title of 'Christmas Capital of Canada'. Winter also offers an array of fun recreational activities like skating, skiing, hockey and curling, as well as the Festival du Voyageur which celebrates the voyageur heritage in Winnipeg, every February.

Winnipeg's economy is among the strongest in the nation and recognized as the most diversified in Canada. Winnipeg does not experience the boom-bust conditions faced by other cities. There are signs of growth and economic expansion nearly everywhere you look. Winnipeg's economic base is built on a wide spectrum of growing industries and cutting edge scientific research. Business taxes are coming down while new investment incentive programs are making Winnipeg an increasingly attractive city in which to invest.

Winnipeg is home to four growing universities and one large college. There is also a rapidly growing number of medical and scientific research facilities and cutting edge infrastructure being built, making Winnipeg a popular location for biotechnology research and for companies who utilize research in this field of knowledge. This is a city of opportunity.



The beauty, history, diversity and culture of Winnipeg is showcased in the scenic skyline, the Forks Historical Site, charming Exchange District and Festival du Voyageur - just one of Winnipeg's many festivals; photos courtesy of Travel Manitoba

