

Lose Your Heart To Saskatoon!

4-DAYS OF PICKUP TRUCKS, FARM-TO-TABLE FOOD & HEART WARMING SASKATOON HOSPITALITY

When I told people I was going to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for a little vacation, they questioned, “why?” After all, what do we really know about Saskatoon as a travel destination? What I did know was the city had been recently voted as one of the top “52 Places To Go in 2018” by ***The New York Times***. So greatly were Saskatoon’s virtues extolled, I had to find out for myself *why* it was so special. I spent four lovely days investigating what Saskatoon had to offer – and the world of hospitality I found there was remarkable. The following travel guide is for people looking for a fresh new Canadian city to discover.

Saskatoon is special for many reasons. The downtown core is cleaved by the South Saskatchewan River, connected by nine unique bridges. It’s one of the fastest growing cities in the Canadian Prairies, with a population of about 250,000+. The average age is 34, compared to age 40 in the rest of Canada. Saskatoon gets more sunlight than the rest of the country, averaging 2,268 hours of sun annually. Year-round the northern lights (aurora borealis) are bright enough to see from the city. Below is a day-to-day guide that will get you into the Saskatoon spirit and put a smile on your face.



Saskatoon, a fresh new Canadian city for you to discover.

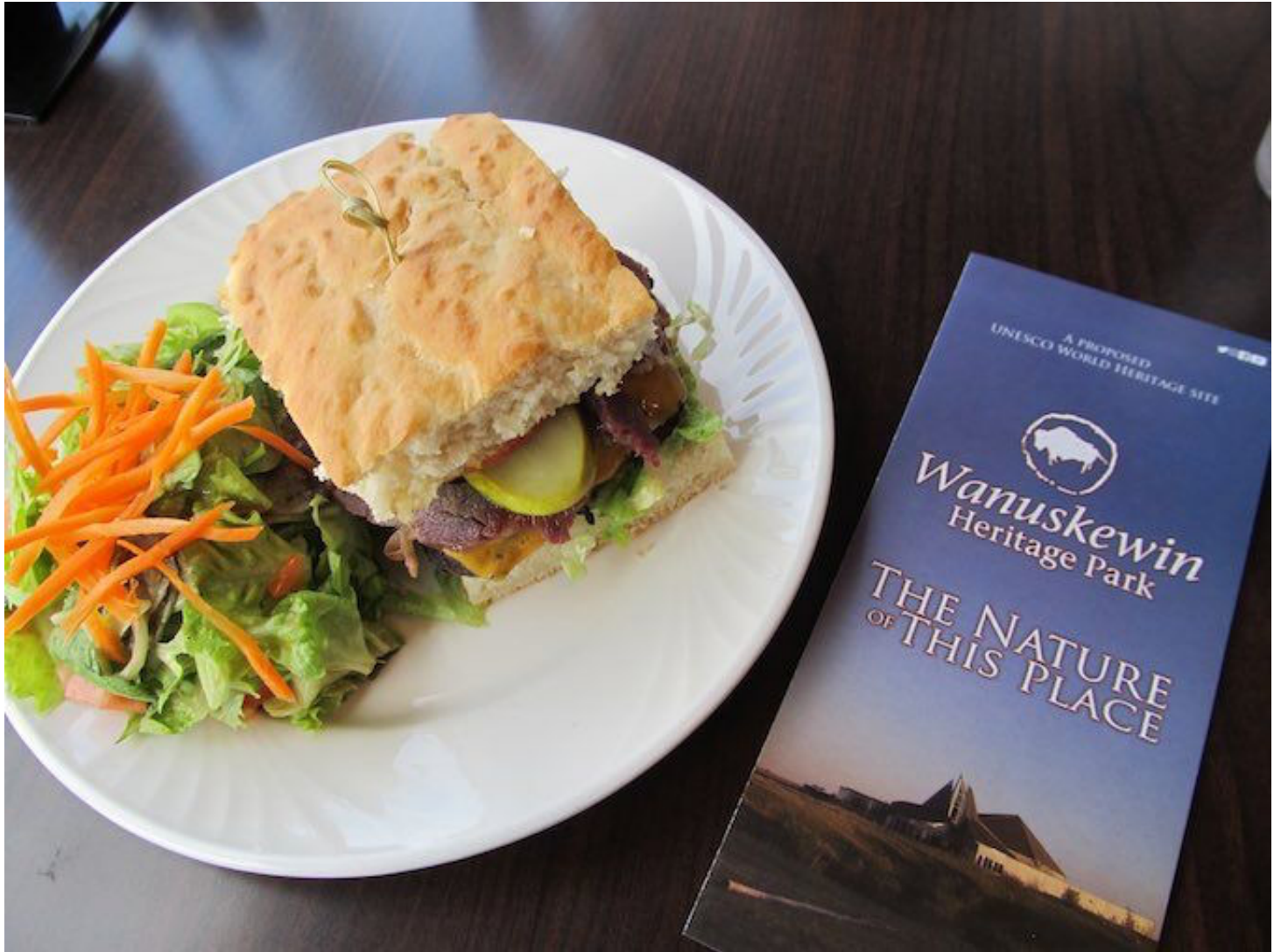
Toronto Guardian Guide To Saskatoon

Day 1 > Where The Buffalo Roam, Pumpkin Patch & Diefenbaker Trout

Getting to Saskatoon is easy: a plane from Toronto takes about three hours, and Saskatchewan is only two hours behind on the clock. On the flight there I discovered Saskatoon is renowned for its hospitality – I was invited to a wedding reception by the woman sitting beside me! This out of the blue invitation made my first **WestJet** experience memorable, as the Plus seating perks made it enjoyable. I was treated to a hot towel, fresh coffee and a breakfast box on my morning flight. I landed just before lunch at the John G. Diefenbaker International Airport where I met up with the wonderful Aviva Kohen from **Tourism Saskatoon**, who then took me on an out-of-town afternoon tour.

My first stop was **Wanuskewin Heritage Park** to walk the path of a traditional buffalo hunt, also known as a buffalo jump (i.e., a bison herd stampede over a cliff!). The park is home to one of the most ancient Indigenous hunting sites, one of the most northern Medicine Wheels and the longest-running archaeological project in

Canada. This National Historic Site's hunting grounds are a living reminder of the Northern Plains Indigenous peoples' sacred relationship with the land, and in order to further conserve and protect Wanuskewin forever, it has been named to Canada's Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In the near future the park intends to reintroduce a small bison herd back to the Wanuskewin plains.



Day 1, Wanuskewin Heritage Park lunch, a tasty bison burger on a bannock bun.

The Wanuskewin Heritage Centre restaurant is also where I had the first of many delicious Saskatoon meals. Lunch was a bison burger with bison bacon, Saskatoon berry BBQ sauce on a bannock bun. Bannock originates mainly from Scotland and was adopted by the Indigenous peoples of Canada, particularly the Métis of western Canada. Apparently Indigenous people already had their own version made from a wild plant called camas. The venison chili and the pike tacos were also recommended. After walking the hunting trail and lunch, I visited the gift shop which had a great selection of authentic Saskatoon souvenirs including fireweed and wild mint herbal tea and Saskatoon berry jam (I regret not buying a few pots of jam).

On the Valley Road drive to **Black Fox Distillery** I enjoyed a glorious, unbroken panoramic view of the sky.

Saskatoon is famous for its firmament; Saskatchewanites call it the living sky. Black Fox is more than an award-winning gin and vodka distillery, it's also a cut flower farm, bee haven and pumpkin patch. While there I visited the pumpkin patch and rode with some local families in the back of an open tractor rig to the distillery building, followed by a snack of pumpkin donuts and a Honey Gimlet cocktail made with honey syrup from the farm's bees. The owners, third generation farmers Barb and John Cote, are experienced grain producers, distillers and conservationists; their fields produce 90 per cent of what goes into Black Fox spirits and liqueurs – their motto is from farm-to-flask. At Black Fox everything is used and almost nothing goes to waste, for instance they recycle 95 per cent of their water in the distillery process. Black Fox Raspberry Liqueur is made from the juice of farm berries, and Black Fox Sour Cherry Liqueur is made with the neighbours cherries. The distillery is famous for its Oaked Dry Gin which won *Best Cask Gin* in the 2017 World Gin Awards.



Day 1, Black Fox Distillery and Farm, an award-winning gin and vodka enterprise.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Black Fox Farm were a good combination for a day trip outside the city, as both properties are all about 'the land' – respecting and conserving it for future generations. During my time in Saskatoon I heard many stories about conservation, seasonal food sourcing and sharing with neighbours.

Back downtown I checked into **The James Hotel**, a contemporary boutique hotel located along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River on Spadina Crescent. My elegant 430 square foot suite was a large one bedroom apartment with a river view balcony, two enormous plasma televisions and a bathroom stocked with L'Occitane en Provence bath and body products. The bed featured 800 thread count cotton hypo-allergenic sheets. Apparently the bedding became so popular with guests the hotel now sells sets (as sheets have been known to mysteriously disappear...). I had hoped the weekend weather stayed fair so I could borrow one of the hotel's complimentary bikes, as there are 80 km of local trails to explore along the river valley.



Day 1, The James Hotel a boutique hotel located along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River.

For dinner I connected once again with my Saskatoon host, Aviva, to feast at **Ayden Kitchen & Bar**. Opened in 2013 by Top Chef Canada winner, chef Dale Mackay, Ayden features French/Asian inspired food and drink creatively crafted with seasonal, local ingredients. With Dale's reality television notoriety and world experience he could have opened Ayden anywhere in Canada, but he decided on Saskatoon, where he grew up.

Ayden Kitchen & Bar is very popular so make sure to reserve a table. While awaiting appetizers, I enjoyed a pint of delicious Crossmount Saskatoon cider. The cidery is located 5 km south of Saskatoon and the orchard has 1,500 trees that grow apple varieties bred on the prairies. For a starter I had the sausage platter,

comprised of three juicy made in-house sausages: Thai pork (a local favourite), lemon and poppyseed, and beef and red wine. The main was smoked Diefenbaker trout with corn succotash, shishito peppers, chorizo, green onion and mint. For a vegetable dish I had Ayden's popular heirloom tomato dish with watermelon, smoked goats cheese, cilantro, cardamom dressing and this amazing puffed rice. Dessert was something new, salted chocolate mousse topped with sour cherries, hazelnuts and lavender cream. Before a spoonful of mousse even touched my lips, the fresh lavender scent rose up to my nose – extraordinary! Everything about Ayden's quality menu was daring and unexpected; unique food combinations that made for a memorable meal.



Day 1, Ayden Kitchen and Bar. Opened by Top Chef Canada winner.

After dinner I was treated to more Saskatoon hospitality. Jesse Zuber, chef at **Little Grouse on the Prairie**, invited us over the road to eat from his Italian kitchen. Generous as this was I did wonder how I could possibly eat more food. Jesse made it easy with a refreshing melon plate with fresh buffalo mozzarella and a teacup of mushroom soup. Little Grouse had a sassy atmosphere, as the open kitchen and small scale of the restaurant allowed for easy banter between chef, servers and their tables. Little Grouse is popular for its hand-cranked pasta and alla famiglia dining. The next time I'm back I must try the spaghetti carbonara. Joking around with Jesse and his cheeky crew was a delightful way to end my first night in Saskatoon.

Day 2 > Modern Art, Saskatoon Berry Cake & Rock Against Racism

My second day began with breakfast in The James Hotel's Odessa Room; customary breakfast options were available buffet style, alongside an on-site chef making omelettes to order. I enjoyed an excellent omelette, while reading the **Saskatoon Star Phoenix** newspaper. It was here that a little more Saskatoon hospitality came my way. Chatting with the chef, I discovered we both planned to attend the *Rock Against Racism* fundraiser at Amigos Cantina that evening, I was invited to meet there and hang out with her and friends.



Day 2, walking a pedestrian path along the South Saskatchewan River.

On my way to experience the Rемаi Modern, a huge new museum of modern and contemporary art, I walked along the river and took photos of the sunlight shining off the water. The walk wasn't far, about twenty minutes. Being from Toronto I was surprised that everyone I passed by smiled at me. Many walkers said hello or good morning too – this local practice made me feel so good!

The **Remai Modern** has been open in Saskatoon for one year; it has four levels, 11 gallery spaces, as well as learning studios, a theatre, the Art & Design gift shop, lounges, a river view deck and rooftop terrace, kids play areas and a fabulous restaurant called **Shift**. The museum won a *2011 Award of Excellence* from **Canadian Architect** magazine before construction even began. The building was designed by Bruce Kuwabara; his projects include the Gardiner Museum, TIFF Bell Lightbox and Canada's National Ballet School (all in Toronto).

**Day 2, the Rемаi Modern, a sensational, new museum of modern and contemporary art in Saskatoon.**

Remai is a must visit destination in Saskatoon. There were so many excellent exhibitions going on.

Contemporary artist Walter Scott caught my eye immediately. *Betazoid in a Fog* was Scott's first solo exhibition at a museum; it featured works in sculpture that traced and concealed the body using pieces of clothing, locks of hair and cast limbs. I adored it! Another first was the show *Send Me Sky* by Rosa Barba; her first major solo exhibition in Canada. Barba's astronomy and cinema inspired art work illuminated the darkness of a huge gallery. I was intrigued by Barba's fascination with astronomer Henrietta S. Leavitt's research on the luminosity of stars. Women artists were brought together in the exhibition *III*, which featured three generations connected to the Prairies: Dorothy Knowles, Faye HeavyShield and Elaine Cameron-Weir; the oldest working artist being in her 90's and the youngest in her 30's. A special shout-out to Toronto-based artist Oliver Husain and his immersive 3D cinematic work *Isla Santa Marie* - I watched in three times! I could have spent all day at the Remai.



Day 2, contemporary artist Walter Scott's *Betazoid in a Fog* exhibition at the Remai Modern, Saskatoon.

After all the fabulous exhibitions and chats with friendly museum staff I had lunch at the museum's **Shift Restaurant**, which just happens to be operated by Oliver & Bonacini (one of the many Toronto connections at the Remai). The restaurant's massive glass windows allowed for a sweeping, sunny view of the Saskatchewan

River. The food at Shift was delicious! I had the brown butter prairie pierogies with bonito (fish flakes) and bacon, along with the charred squid with cucumbers and yogurt dill and a side plate of chickpea fries. After lunch I visited the Remai Modern gift shop, which had a super selection of greeting cards and jewellery by Saskatoon artists. I bought a pair of earrings made by Nicole Hoffman, a partially sighted artist living with MS; her label is called BAMBU and her pieces are crafted in brass or sterling silver. The store also sells art by Pat Bruderer – something I have never seen before, bitten birch bark. It's an old, rare art form practised by Indigenous peoples of North America.

On a mission to taste Saskatoon berries I walked over the Broadway Bridge to **Calories Bakery, Café and Restaurant**. Opened in the Broadway neighbourhood over 30 years ago by Remi Cousyn, Calories was one of the first local restaurants to establish the farm-to-table practice along with sustainable, seasonal menus. Cousyn was at the forefront of the Saskatoon food scene; he was one of the local Farmers' Market's founding business owners, and he keeps bees on his restaurant roof and sells the honey (apparently lots of people keep bees in Saskatoon). Calories' fabulous French-inspired menu is sometimes overshadowed by the baked goods in the café (that's because most Torontonians have never had Saskatoon berries and we kinda freak-out to eat them in pie!). The bakery has two bakers who bake from scratch daily using local, seasonal ingredients. Calories buys berries from a local gatherer who picks them wild. My mission included trying both the Saskatoon Berry Lemon Yogurt Cheesecake and the Saskatoon Berry Pie. Both desserts were delish; however, the cheesecake was victorious!



Day 2, The Founders, Chief Whitecap and John Lake. Imagine what they would think about modern day Saskatoon.

Before my first Friday night out in Saskatoon, I was back at The James Hotel to unwind with a local Paddock Wood beer. As mentioned earlier, I planned to go to the *Rock Against Racism Saskatoon* live music fundraiser, hosted by **Amigos Cantina** with support from the Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network. The taxi to Amigos from the hotel cost \$5, which I found to be about the average cost of all my rides in the city (no Uber!). I'd heard Amigos had good Tex-Mex, so I sat at the bar and ordered a shredded chicken enchilada that could have fed a family of four. OMG it was almost death by enchilada for me! I also enjoyed a Black Bridge beer, brewed in Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

I had the most fun at the *Rock Against Racism* event at Amigos Cantina. The Saskatoon hospitality I experienced was amazing – I truly felt love in the air. I was thrilled to join a passionate passel of local Peruvians to watch the bands, and talk outside the cantina with musicians on smoke break. The live music event featured about 18 bands, plus some supergroup combos, mostly from Saskatoon or around Saskatchewan, who covered a wide range of music styles from rock, folk and blues to reggae, ska and hip-hop. I'd like to mention them all;

however, highlights included: Shayne Lazarowich and his seven piece country band (an event founder!), The Whiskey Jerks who did a wicked Led Zeppelin cover, Oral Fuentes, T-Rhyme, Skaravan 1969, and two new favourites, Dirty and the Perks and Stoned on the Prairie. I can't believe I got to see so much Saskatoon musical talent, all in one night, for ten bucks!





Day 2, Rock Against Racism event at Amigos Cantina featured local band Stoned on the Prairie.

Day 3 > Brunch, Shopping, Saskatoon Nuit Blanche & Wedding Reception

Saturday morning I changed hotels and checked into the **Delta Hotel Bessborough**, known locally as the castle on the river. The historic Châteauesque-styled building opened in 1935, and is one of Canada's grand railway hotels built for Canadian National Railway. The Bessborough is on five acres of picturesque waterfront property, which hosts a number of special events including the annual Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. My cozy room had a stunning view high over the South Saskatchewan River.



Day 3, the Hotel Bessborough and a quintessential Saskatoon pickup truck!

Just like Toronto, Saskatoon had many excellent brunch options for the weekend. I'd heard good things about **Poached Breakfast Bistro** from locals, so I took another \$5 taxi to check it out. Poached Bistro won Best of Food Saskatoon 2018 awards for *Best Fancy Breakfast* and *Best Eggs Benedict*. I began brunch with the popular pecan and maple syrup bacon roll ups, a mini side salad of cherry tomatoes in greek yogurt, pesto and parmesan flakes, and a perfectly poached egg over a crab and shrimp risotto cake. I also tried the highly recommended Butternut Crunch; a dish of roasted squash, red onions, crispy bacon and herb hollandaise with a spicy kick. Everything I ate was divine. The brunch atmosphere was relaxed (...a good spot for hangover recovery), jazzy lounge music played softly in the background. There were romantic looking couples brunching, as well as small groups of girlfriends chatting together – a really welcoming vibe here.



Day 3, fabulous, wonderful brunch at Poached Breakfast Bistro.

It started lightly snowing as I left the bistro. I was told the region was experiencing an extra short autumn. Despite the cold, I walked to the **Saskatoon Farmers' Market** through the Riversdale neighbourhood for some Saturday shopping. Riversdale was one of the original settlements that formed the City of Saskatoon in

1906. The area reminds me of Toronto's Leslieville. My first shop stop was **Hardpressed Print Studio** where I got a handprinted unisex t-shirt with a Saskatchewan inspired graphic motif. You can't leave Saskatoon without owning a Hardpressed tee! There were lots of little shops to pop into walking along 20th Street, including **Hazlewood**, which stocked upscale vintage and upcycled designs for women and men. Check out my shop recommendation section at the end of the travel guide for more shopping options and store details. I'd also read in the paper about a *Made in Canada Etsy Fair* at **Station 20 West**, but I just ran out of time and couldn't make it.

The **Saskatoon Farmers' Market** on Avenue B South is adorable. It had everything you might expect: vegetables, fruit, coffee, honey, ice cream, baked goods (get a Saskatoon berry tart for \$2.75), dairy milk, grass-fed beef and fresh fish like northern pike and burbot. One of the vendors I spoke with was a Syrian woman who had been selling at the market for just three months. If you live in the city make sure to stop by her stall, Seif Kitchen, and check out Saada's traditional foods for sale. The market is open Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM year-round, and on Thursdays there's a Night Art Market from 5:00-9:00 PM. I saw some nice looking apartments just across the street from the Farmers' Market, and thought to myself that I could imagine living here, living on Avenue B in Saskatoon (Google Saskatoon condo prices – you may faint from disbelief!).



Day 3, a good looking building outside the Saskatoon Farmers' Market, Riversdale area.

After the market it was time for a late lunch at **Living Sky Café**, a friend- and family-owned food business located in the historic Glengarry Building. The café vibe was cheery, as the owners and staff were like the happiest people. I started with the most delicious mochaccino and something I had never had before, a Lavender Fizz – a refreshing, icy drink concocted with fresh made in-house lavender syrup. Lunch started with Living Sky's popular Cheese Balls made with cheddar, herb cream, fresh dill and walnuts, spread on fresh baked crostini (all bread baked on-site). This was followed by a Cobb salad with homemade croutons, local bacon and made in-house beet-pickled eggs. There was also a curious menu item I had to try, the Prawns Pernod; tiger prawns sauteed in a rich tomato sauce with onions, celery and Pernod, topped with feta cheese and served with crostini. All the food and drink at Living Sky Café was wonderful and lovingly made. I was touched that the owner's father cooked my prawns, the recipe he used was one of his own (a family favorite!). Most of the Living Sky menu is based on cherished family recipes.

On Saturday night **Saskatoon's Nuit Blanche** took place in three core areas of the city: Broadway, River Landing and downtown. I reached out to some locals I met at Amigos Cantina to gather underneath the south

side of the Broadway bridge to see an installation by local multimedia visual artist Stephanie Kuse called **SEMBLANCE**. As part of this experience I saw my reflection through a one-way mirror woven into an abstract video portrait projected onto a large movie screen under the bridge. Kuse is well known in the city, as she has had her graphic design printed as vinyl wraps on traffic boxes in the Broadway neighbourhood. Other Nuit Blanche installations along the Broadway route included Scummy Magic; a sticker dispensary with affordable adhesive art from a retro vending-machine. In a back alley, I discovered a table with people making handbound field notebooks using handmade paper from plants grown in Riversdale by local book artist Susan Mills. My favorite gathering of the night was at the circle surrounding SK Craft Council blacksmith, James Gerlinsky, who demonstrated fire forging technique by making small metal leaves. Once a leaf cooled, Gerlinsky gave it to someone in the crowd (I was one of those lucky people).



Day 3, Saskatoon Nuit Blanche SEMBLANCE installation. Photo credit Bandon White

This was the city's fifth edition of **Nuit Blanche**; it featured 22 projects or installations, and involved nearly 50 artists primarily from Saskatoon. Compared to Toronto's Nuit Blanche the crowds are much smaller. At the installations I attended, gatherings were only of 20 to 35 people at any one time. I cannot complain, as I find the Toronto event too crowded. I loved the Saskatoon Nuit Blanche gatherings – friendly, chatty people, and in

many cases, very cute!

I didn't stay all night at Nuit Blanche, as I had to head back to the Hotel Bessborough to attend that wedding reception I was invited to on the plane. The wedding was a result of a Toronto woman and a Saskatoon man falling in love at first sight. Considering I didn't really know anyone from the city, I was grateful for being included in a local, down-home experience. It was a lovely occasion, I wish Wendy and Tom all the best in love and marriage.

Day 4 > I Left My Heart In Saskatoon

After breakfast I took a quiet walk along the river's edge near the Hotel Bessborough. The autumn scene was picture perfect: a beautiful blue sky, dazzling sunshine and trees crowned with gold. I tucked it away in my heart, like the keepsake of fall leaves between the pages of my notebook.

On the way to the airport, despite feeling euphoric about my Saskatoon experience, I felt my heart sink saying goodbye. I knew then I would have to visit again – my little love affair with Saskatoon was far from over.



Be prepared to fall in love with Saskatoon!

Saskatoon Summary: Let This City Smile On You!

I hope my experience inspires you to visit Saskatoon. I've also included a bunch of city recommendations below. It is such a special place, with so much to offer. Saskatoon hospitality alone will warm the heart of the most jaded big city dweller. In Saskatoon people smile at you, the air smells clean and there is less noise. During my four days in the city I only heard a car horn honk once. Oh, and almost every vehicle is a pickup truck – so extra! Many locals I spoke with told me they enjoy a great quality of life in Saskatoon (da, this is maybe why so many people are smiling here!).

Visit Saskatoon for its marvelous food scene and friendly people; however, I also encourage you to think about travel to the city as a scouting assignment for a new way of life. There are good job opportunities in farming pulses and eggs for instance, as well as an emerging tech sector. Housing is affordable. The average city commute is a seven to 15 minute drive. Entrepreneurs and creative people are making all sorts of new ventures a viable reality, supported by a community bursting with Saskatoon pride. Search #Saskatooning on

Instagram for a taste of what to expect, and what you're missing. Be prepared to fall in love with Saskatoon!

Saskatoon Recommendations

Before you travel to Saskatchewan, visit the **Tourism Saskatoon** website for seasonal events listings and things to do year-round: <http://www.tourismsaskatoon.com/things-to-do/>. There are over 65 annual events including festivals, expos, marathons, conferences and city celebrations – with about 40 of them in the summer! The Saskatoon food scene is phenomenal, with many extraordinary, independent farm-to-table restaurants, cafés and bakeries.

Where to Eat In Saskatoon

Ayden Kitchen & Bar

Located at 265, 3rd avenue. Try the Diefenbaker Trout – a must eat food in Saskatoon! See review above.

Little Grouse on the Prairie

A pasta paradise! A perfect date night spot. See review above.

The Hollows

Restaurant in the historic Golden Dragon building, in the Riversdale neighbourhood. The Hollows chef and owner, Christie Peters is originally from Toronto, one of the few female head chefs and restaurateurs in Saskatchewan. Food is made with the best local and wild ingredients found in the area: cultivated plants grown from heirloom seeds, wild-harvested leaves and mushrooms, flowers, sap and roots, local fish — sustainably raised, pastured meat, poultry and eggs from small farmers. Also a popular brunch spot in the city.

Hometown Dinner

A modern diner located in the Riversdale District serving all-day breakfast and lunch, 7 days a week. All dishes made from scratch with the freshest ingredients. Chef Cole Dobranski uses local suppliers including The Cure, The Night Oven, Venn Coffee and McQuarrie's Tea. Fresh donuts with new flavours made daily.

Drift Sidewalk Café & Vista Lounge

Drift is a multi-level restaurant with a California vibe located in Riversdale. Features a prairie surf cafe, which serves crepes, soups, salads and sandwiches downstairs, and a coastal inspired menu and cocktail lounge upstairs — complete with a rooftop patio and a hammock lounge!

Poached Breakfast Bistro

Breakfast bistro by day, and party place by night, when it turns into martini bar, Flint. See review above.

Calories Bakery, Café and Restaurant

A little bit of France in the Broadway neighbourhood. All about sustainability and community. Excellent variety of cheesecakes, tortes, cupcakes, pies, tarts and puddings + more. **Joni Mitchell** played here back when the establishment was called the Louis Riel Coffee House in 1962 – it was her first paid gig apparently. Check out Calories' **Saskatoon Babes Who Brunch** monthly events, for example the October edition featured local boss babe and Ward 7 City Councillor, Mairin. See review above.

Little Bird Patisserie & Café

Saskatoon's French Cafe on 20th Street offers a Sunday High Tea service for \$35! You can't find that price in Toronto: <http://www.thelittlebird.ca/high-tea/>

Shift Restaurant

Located inside the Rемаi Modern museum, Shift offers contemporary Canadian cuisine. The menu celebrates Canadian culture with dishes like tourtière and chicken pot pie, while also highlighting familiar dishes of the Prairies such as pierogies and Diefenbaker trout. See review above.

Güd

Vegetarian and vegan comfort food. Great spot for lunch, located at 2917 Early Drive.

Living Sky Café

Downtown café for lunch with wine or beer, baked goods, specialty coffee, plus all day breakfast. The business partners with other locally owned establishments such as: Venn Roastery for coffee, Lost River Vodka, Drake supplies the maple bacon, and 9mile Legacy for locally brewed beer. See review above.

Jamaica Food Basket

Restaurant and retail shop that does pickup and delivery of authentic Jamaican dishes like curry chicken, pumpkin rice and red peas soup with pig tail.

Thrive Juice Co.

A Riversdale neighbourhood juice bar that offers raw, organic and locally-sourced cold-pressed drinks plus super healthy food for optimal health and well-being. Thrive also offers community yoga and meditation classes.

HomeQuarter Coffeehouse and Bakery

Newly opened coffeehouse that began with a Saskatoon Berry Orchard preserve and condiments business and a café at the Saskatoon Farmers' Market.

Foodies visit this site! <http://www.grassrootsrestaurantgroup.ca/>

Founded by Top Chef Canada Winner Chef Dale Mackay, alongside seasoned restaurateurs and mixologist Christopher Cho and Chef Nathan Guggenheimer –**Grassroots Restaurant Group** is built on the foundation of introducing quality, sustainable, diverse, and best in class dining experiences to Saskatchewan.

Party In Sask! Drink & Music

Black Fox Distillery

You'll need a car to get there, it's worth it!

Amigos Cantina

Live music venue in the Broadway neighbourhood. Broken Social Scene, Modest Mouse, Sarah McLachlan and Neko Case have performed here. The Tex-Mex cuisine also has a great rep. They also have an annual band-swap that raises money for local charity.

Leopold's Tavern

An eclectic neighbourhood bar in the historic Empyrean Building, not far from Amigos Cantina.

Black Cat Tavern

Live music and jam nights.

Capital Music Club

Local bands and music. Founded by four high school friends.

The Bassment Jazz Club

Of the 140 shows presented at The Bassment each year, approximately 80 fall under the jazz category. The Saskatoon Jazz Society helps in the development of younger jazz musicians by presenting monthly Jazz Jams, High School Big Band Nights and University of Saskatchewan Jazz Ensemble performances + more.

9 Mile Legacy

A small-scale neighbourhood nanobrewery located downtown, specializing in well-made craft beer with names like Old Man Moon and Straight Cut Kettle Sour.

The Yard and Flagon

Enjoy a pint with comfort food on the rooftop patio. Has a good selection of Irish and Scotch Whiskies.

Buds On Broadway

Live music and stand-up comedy. Monday to Thursday \$3.75 Happy Hour!

Shopping In Saskatoon!



Make sure to get a few pots of Saskatoon berry jam!

Saskatoon Farmers' Market: <https://www.saskatoonfarmersmarket.com/>

Open year round at 414 Avenue B South. Saturday's 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. It also features a Thursday Night Art Market, 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM. See review above.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park Gift Shop

Curated gift shop with traditional, handmade items made by local First Nation artisans that are unique and beautifully crafted. The Wanuskewin Gift Shop supports and fairly pays skilled local and rural artisans for their work. Your purchase from the gift shop allows artisans to continue their traditional practices and ensure that these traditions are passed down to future generations.

Saskatchewan Craft Council Boutique: <https://saskcraftcouncil.org>

Curated boutique and gallery space that promotes and showcases craft artisans and artists. It sells a good selection of fine craft items at affordable prices including photography, felt sculptures, tapestry, pottery, stained glass and jewellery + more. Visit the council website for an exhibition schedule.

Last Shoes

A custom shoemaking company, constructing handcrafted shoes for men and women in an array of styles which include a derby, mules, pull-ons and a classic ankle boot. Specialized in leather and rubber shoes. They also offer a one day sandal making workshop on Sunday's in the summer.

Bricker's Shoes

Downtown women's shoe store open since 1939, still in its original location with the interior preserved like a time capsule. Just go have a look.

Hardpressed Print Studio

Saskatchewan inspired lifestyle merchandise, printed by hand in Saskatoon. Hardpressed also ships across the continent through their online store. A handprinted unisex tee is \$35 – and it seems like everyone in Saskatoon has two or three of them, worn around the city by locals with pride.

SheNative

SheNative is a socially driven, clothing and accessories brand created by Devon Fiddler, Founder & Chief Changemaker, to empower the Indigenous woman. Indigenous women are 100% involved in the design and manufacturing of SheNative products. The shop is located in the downtown Midtown Plaza shopping centre.

Neechie Gear

An activewear and lifestyle clothing brand on a mission to empower youth through sports. The company was founded by Kendal Netmaker, who grew up in Sweetgrass First Nation, Saskatchewan. Located at B2-718 Circle Drive East, also takes online orders.

Hen & Chick Studios

Gift shop with handcrafted goods from local artisans and makers across Canada. A great place for souvenirs that are uniquely Canadian and handmade. Located near the Saskatoon Farmers' Market.

Goldie's General Store

Opened by Christie Peters, owner of The Hollows Restaurant, in effort not to let anything go to waste. Peters makes soap out of leftover animal fat, tea with homegrown herbs as well as foraged plants, and preserves fruits and vegetables grown for the restaurant. The store offers a wide variety of vintage clothes, antiques and handmade goods.

Vinyl Diner CDs and Records

Located on Broadway Avenue, this little shop is well regarded for its used records, solid selection and independent labels. Also a place where you can discover and take home music from local bands and musicians.

Hazlewood

Upscale vintage and upcycled vintage designs for women and men, including made in Regina brand CUB. In addition to clothing, the boutique carries a selection of Canadian labels including Hunt of Hounds and Natalia Gil jewellery, as well as leather goods from Creature Leather.

Saskatchewan food goods to shop for include:

- Riverbend Plantation Saskatoon Berry Tea
- The Local Bar (food bar made from Saskatoon lentils, flax, quinoa and berries – a healthy snack)
- **Prairie Berries**
- Saskatoon Berry homemade jams and sauces
- Saskatchewan Mustard (DYK almost 70 per cent of Canada's mustard seed is produced in Saskatchewan)

Extra Saskatoon! What to do, what to know about before you go!

YXE Underground

New podcast started by local and former CBC journalist Eric Anderson dedicated to people doing extraordinary things in Saskatoon. It features interviews that spotlight personal stories and underground activity going on in the city that is making a difference.

Remai Modern

Remai Modern is a new museum of modern and contemporary art. Open Tuesdays and Fridays until 10 PM!

February to May 2019 – Canadian and interdisciplinary Anishinaabekwe artist Rebecca Belmore's exhibition *Facing the Monumental* will show at the Remai Modern. Coming all the way from the AGO Toronto, this special show marks the Remai's first time sharing an exhibition with the AGO. Belmore's work covers current issues, including water and land rights, women's lives and dignity, violence against Indigenous people by the state and police, and the role of the artist in contemporary life.

The Joni Mitchell Promenade

A walkway along Saskatoon's River Landing in honour of the singer, who spent some of her childhood and young adulthood in the city. The stretch is between Second and Third Avenues South, and leads to the Remai Modern Museum.

Batoche National Historic Site

Batoche, Saskatchewan was the site of the historic Battle of Batoche during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. Located 90 km North of Saskatoon.

Western Development Museum Saskatoon

The largest human history museum in Saskatchewan with a collection of over 75,000 artifacts. The WDM tells the Saskatchewan story from the beginning of settlement to present day. Located at 2610 Lorne Avenue.

Prairie Lily Riverboat Cruises

In a one-hour tour, experience the Meewasin Valley and see views of downtown Saskatoon and the River Landing. Bookings from Mother's Day weekend until Thanksgiving with a variety of cruise options including Friday night sunset, Shakespeare cruise and brunch and dinner cruises.

Stargazing in Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan's [Campus Observatory](#)

On clear sky Saturday nights the observatory focuses its 3-meter telescope on planets, galaxies and comets. Admission is free.

[PAVED Arts](#)

A non-profit, community-based, artist-run centre and gallery for photography, audio, video, electronic and digital arts. It also offers a variety of workshops like this: [Bee Taxidermy for Beginners](#) and [Cinefilm Alternative Photography](#) workshops.

[Winter skating rink](#)

The public rink is free and there are skates available to borrow. The rink will close if the temperature dips below -31 degrees celsius or equivalent wind chill – yikes!

Getting Around Saskatoon/Connecting With Community

Taxis

No Uber! Saskatoon [Taxi Fare Finder](#)

Saskatoon [Airport Shuttle Service](#)

Note: a taxi to the airport from downtown is about a 10 to 15 min drive and costs about \$20!

[City Transit](#) Cash fare is \$3 per trip. A Go-Pass (day pass) card is available \$8.50 and valid for unlimited travel for 24 hours.

Saskatoon is a bike-friendly city! The City of Saskatoon [Cycling Guide](#) rates every road in the city, from novice to intermediate and expert, and provides suggested routes and facilities that have been identified by experienced local cyclists and city staff. Pick up a free guide at Civic Leisure Centres, all branches of the Saskatoon Public Library and local bicycle retailers. Best bike trail: [Meewasin Trail](#)



Saskatoon is cool with bikes.

Starting a Business/Finding a Job in Saskatoon

Two Twenty

Co-working community, office and studio spaces for hire.

OUTSaskatoon

Builds community for LGBTQ2S+ people of all ages and backgrounds. Provides peer support and counselling, queer-specific education and resources, outreach, social gatherings and events, community referrals and sexual health services.

CFCR 90.5 FM Saskatoon Community Radio

Meewasin Conservation Agency

Visit this site for information about cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley including biking, hiking, canoe tours and outdoor skating.

Where To Stay

The James Hotel

The James is a contemporary boutique hotel centrally located in downtown Saskatoon, on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. See review above.

Delta Hotels Bessborough

Known locally as the castle on the river, the historic **Bessborough** is a 4-star hotel with 225 rooms. The hotel also features the **Damara Spa**.

Travel to Saskatoon

WestJet

I love that WestJet stocks Canadian brand snacks like Laura Secord milk chocolate bars and BC Hardbite chips. The onboard flight team was friendly and helpful.

Air Canada

Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport

Named for John Diefenbaker, the 13th Prime Minister of Canada. The flight to Saskatoon from Toronto is about 3.5 hours. It's a tiny airport but has good gift shops for picking up last minute Saskatchewan souvenirs!
#YXE

VIA Rail

8 Comments Sort by

Add a comment...