

A Primer for Kansans Heading to Southern Saskatchewan

We're Going Where?

Saskatchewan is a Canadian Province located just north of Eastern Montana and Western North Dakota, and our mission opportunities are all located in south central plains area (the yellow-colored section) in the communities around Regina, the capital city of the province.

(By the way, Saskatchewan is often spoken like it's only one syllable: "Sskatchw'n" and "Regina" is pronounced *reh-JI-nuh* – Latin for "queen" - and not *reh-GEE-nuh*, the girl's name)



How do we get there?

Most folks from our area take a plane and rent a car on arrival. Everybody travelling by air will need a passport.

You can also drive, just plan for at least one overnight stay, since it's an 1150 mile/18 ½ hour drive from Wichita to Regina. Adults (16 and above) require a passport, youth can travel with an *original or certified* copy of their birth certificate (when part of a church group).

The Train/bus route (look right) seems to take you well out of the way, lasts more than 2 days, and is kinda pricey – how adventurous are you?



OK we arrived ... do we Sleep Outside?

I guess you could, but once "on site" we plan for each individual to be carefully cared for by our hosts. Lodging and meals will vary for each mission opportunity and the details will be worked out before you go, so no worries!

What are the people like?

Visitors from Kansas should feel right at home in the Southern region of Saskatchewan which is well known for its prairies and primarily rural makeup. Another common characteristic we have with this region is a people regarded as being generally open and friendly (unless they're talking about their hockey team) and responding extremely well to polite behavior. (If a driver stops to let you cross the road, give him/her a friendly wave of acknowledgement.)



Their eating habits and dining fare is also pretty much like ours, including having dinner for the mid-day meal and supper in the evening, and drinking pop (not soda) Unlike most of the US, supper time is the one occasion when friends and family can visit after a busy day. As a result, supper becomes more about a social opportunity than just getting something to eat. A supper at a restaurant with friends could be expected to last hours!

Do they speak English?

The vast majority (more than 92%) speak English but the rest are bilingual so you shouldn't have any problems in conversations. In addition to the local accent (Hey, just think what YOU must sound like) there is a certain amount of regional slang. For example:

Booty aka **Soaker**: A heavy rain, so named because of the threat that a torrential downpour could create mud and muck so deep it overflows right into your boots.

Bunny hug: In the US we'd call this a "hoodie." A hooded fleece top that is either a pull over or has a front zipper.

Dainties: Sweets or cookies usually prepared for a community or church luncheon.

Gibbled: Broken or useless.

Loonie and **Toonie**: One dollar and two-dollar coins, respectively (because the one dollar coin features the image of a loon.)

Poutine: A Canadian side dish, made up of French Fries, topped by Cheese curds and gravy. (Hey, don't make that face! It's really quite good)

Saskatchewan chrome: Duct tape.

Vico: A small carton of chocolate milk.

Washroom: The restroom, W.C., or "potty," – you know – where you go when you have to go.



Canadian Poutine

Do I have to Trade in my US Dollars?

Basically, yes. You can use Debit cards at an ATM to draw out Canadian money (but most charge \$2-5 for the transaction plus another – although small – fee to exchange from your US dollar source to Canadian currency.) Of course, once you're back in the US you can change your Canadian money back for US – again for a small fee. (It's not the origin of the phrase "getting you coming and going" but it's a good example)



Credit cards are pretty much regularly accepted, though again your credit card company may charge a fee for the currency change (Capitol One, for example, does not) Most folks will make a pretty good-sized cash withdrawal to keep them going but try to rely on credit cards as much as they can.

What's the Weather Like?

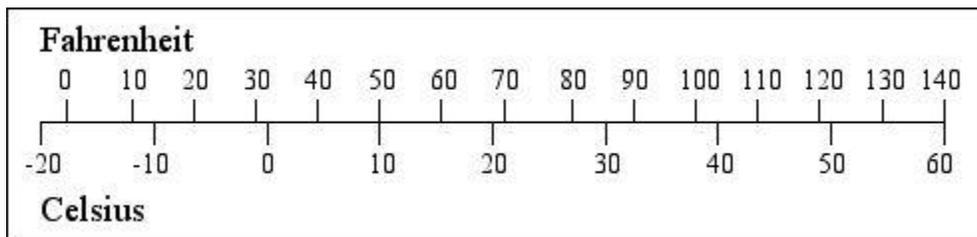


In general, dress for somewhat colder temps than you're used to (if this a surprise please go apologize to your grade school geography teacher). It's also more humid in the winter and less humid in the summer months than we experience in Kansas.

For comparison purposes, the table below shows general weather conditions in Regina in Saskatchewan and Topeka. While I've given the temps in Fahrenheit, remember that Canada has gone metric and all the forecasts you see will be in degrees Celsius.

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Regina, SK	Ave (F)	2	9	21	39	53	62	66	65	53	41	23	8
	Ave (C)	-17	-13	-6	4	11	16	19	18	12	5	-5	-14
	Rain Days (%)	35	32	32	27	26	43	32	29	27	19	33	32
	Humidity (%)	89	87	88	56	44	51	41	46	50	60	82	88
Topeka, KS	Ave (F)	66	40	45	56	68	76	85	90	89	80	68	55
	Rain Days (%)	33	33	30	33	40	33	30	27	27	33	33	30%
	Humidity (%)	68	69	66	63	64	69	71	70	70	69	68	70

And here's a handy chart to help you figure out what's going on.



Can I Drive in Saskatchewan?



As a visitor, you'll have no problems driving with your Kansas Driver's License or even renting a car. And before you ask – yes, Canadians drive on the right side of the road just like the folks in the US (probably because of Canada's closeness to Detroit and the ease of purchasing unmodified right-hand drive cars). Just a couple things to be aware of:

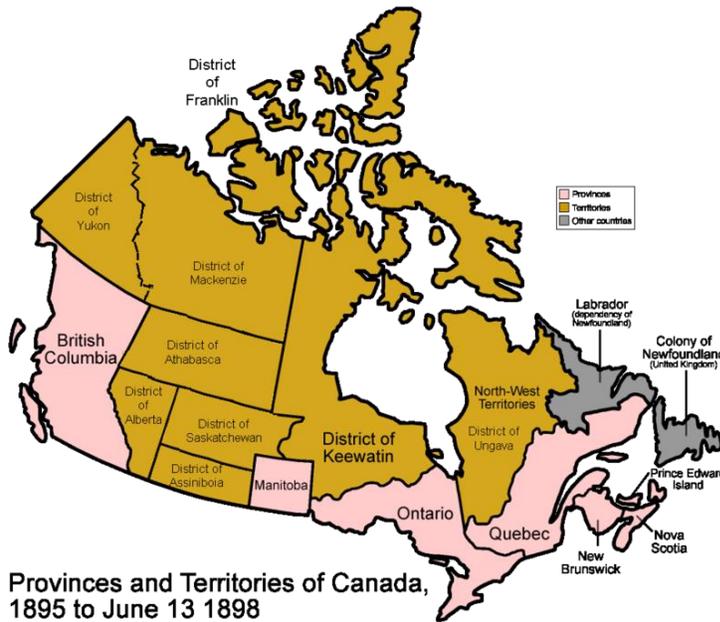
- Remember that they're metric - The maximum speed limit in Canada is 50km/hr in cities, 80km/hr on highways, and 100 km/hr on rural highways.
- Proof of auto insurance is required – your KS insurance card will work fine.
- Seat belt use is mandatory for all passengers (not just the ones in front)
- While not required, drivers are "strongly advised" to keep their headlights on, even during the day.
- In the cities at intersections with signals, directional signs will indicate only which turn is allowed; any other turn is prohibited.
- Most highways do not have merge lanes for entering traffic.
- Rapid lane-changes without signaling, and tailgating are common, as is the frequency which they run red lights. Be careful!
- Emergency vehicles frequently enter the oncoming traffic lane to avoid congestion.

SPEED SIGN CONVERTER			
New km/h Limit	Approximate Equivalent	New km/h Limit	Approximate Equivalent
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 

A (Very) Short History of Saskatchewan

Before it was claimed by Great Britain in 1670, this area was populated by several Indian tribes, including Cree, Assiniboine and Sioux. The area of Saskatchewan was part of the vast "Northwest Territories" that were under the care and exploitation of the Hudson's Bay

Company, similar to the East India Tea Company recently featured in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. These Companies were primarily set up to develop commerce and extend English influence. They had just enough government, backed by the English military, to guarantee a continuation of trade. By the late 1600's English and French fur traders began to move in and establish trading posts while the military constructed forts. Functioning as a policing body, the governor set up the Northwest Mounted Canadian Police, which later became the RCMP, and this group played a very important role in development of this new area.



Provinces and Territories of Canada, 1895 to June 13 1898

Some believe that it is because of their efforts that this area was kept out of the hands of the expanding US. In 1870 all the Hudson Bay Companies land were ceded to the Dominion of Canada and the land was cut into administrative Districts.

Around this same time, a rail line was laid to connect the eastern and western extents of Canada from Winnipeg to Calgary. It was simply easier for it to pass through the plains of the south, stopping at one point at a little town called "Pile of Bones." By 1903 the town grew to a city in its own right and was renamed Regina. In 1905, when the current boundaries of Saskatchewan were established, Regina was named as the capital of the Province. At 251,000 square miles, this province is just a little larger than Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, combined, though with a third of the population of Kansas.

As a result of a program to encourage immigration into these areas, including a homestead act very similar to the American model, the plains and hills of this area slowly became populated, but because of its geography and lack of water access, it was dominated by farming and ranching. Saskatchewan remained heavily rural with more than two-thirds of its people living on farms until the mid-1940's. With the rise of oil and energy industries the cities are slowly growing. But they're not too big. Regina, the second largest city in the province, has about 200,000 people – Topeka, by the way, has a population of 125,000.

As Long as we're in the Area, Is there Anything Else We Should See or Do?

By no means is this a complete list, but here are a few suggestions

RCMP Academy and Heritage Center outside Regina

This is where all those red-jacketed young men and women (since 1974) go to learn their profession!

The Wall Murals in Moose Jaw

40 or more buildings are decorated with huge murals depicting history of the region. AND there's the advantage of being able to tell folks you went to Moose Jaw!

Museums and Memorials

Such as the *Royal Saskatchewan* and the *Plains Historical Museums* in Regina and the *Western Development Museum* of Moose Jaw

The World's Largest ...

And as long as you're out seeing the sites and improving your mind, Regina boasts *The World's Largest Pemmican*, and Moose Jaw is home to, appropriately, *The World's Largest Moose* (named 'Mac', for some reason). Check out the offering in these other towns in the area around Regina:

Aylesbury - *World's - Largest Ox and Cart*

Craik - *Buffalo Hunter and Cart*

Edam - *Windmill*

Girvin - *Bison and Cart*

Langenburg - *Swing*

Ogema - *Grasshopper (named 'Ralph')*

Chamberlain - *Surveyor*

Davidson - *Coffee Pot*

Estevan - *Miner*

Kyle Woolly - *Woolly Mammoth*

Riverhurst - *Northern Pike*



Canada's national animal is the Beaver, Saskatchewan's is the White Tailed Deer

US – Bald Eagle and Kansas American Buffalo (or Bison)