



IN THE PADDLE STROKES OF THE VOYAGEURS Self-Directed Canoe or Kayak Trip

Welcome to a Routes on the Red self-directed tour of the Red River Valley. These itineraries guide you through the history and the geography of this beautiful and interesting landscape. Several different Routes on the Red, featuring driving, cycling, walking or canoeing/kayaking, lead you on an exploration of four historical and cultural themes: Fur Trading Routes on the Red; Settler Routes on the Red; Natural and First Nations Routes on the Red; and Art and Cultural Routes on the Red.

The purpose of this route description is to provide information on a self-guided canoe/kayak trip. While you enjoy yourself, please canoe carefully as there are risks associated with canoeing or kayaking and you are responsible to ensure your own safety and that this activity is within your skills and abilities. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this description is accurate and up to date. However, we are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained as a result of anyone relying upon this information.

Dip your canoe or kayak paddle into the same waters that the fur traders followed in their quest for beaver pelts. Begin on the Seine River, following its curves and riverbank forests to its confluence with the Red. Pass the site of Fort Gibraltar, a reconstruction of a North-West Company fur trading fort and the main site of Winnipeg's wintertime Festival du Voyageur. Paddle up the Red River to arrive at The Forks, and imagine yourself arriving at Upper Fort Garry after a long and arduous trip from the Hudson Bay coast or the fur trading headquarters of Montreal. Plan a shuttle in advance or return by water to your starting point.

This is a full day tour. If you wish to make the tour longer, you can continue paddling on the Assiniboine River once you reach The Forks or before heading back to the launch point on the Seine River. It is also possible to reverse this route by starting at The Forks.

Pick up lunch supplies at The Forks or bring your own as there are no stores along the river.

Canoeing and Kayaking Responsibilities and Tips:

- in a large river such as the Red avoid paddling down the middle as there is plenty of boat traffic in the summer
- bring more drinking water than you think you will need (in a non breakable container)
- be a competent swimmer
- be prepared to get wet
- dress for the temperature and in layers that can be added or taken off during the day (don't forget a sun hat or toque)
- bring extra clothes in a waterproof bag (being cold and wet is a very bad thing!)
- wear shoes in case you need to get out of the canoe quickly.
- you may wish to bring a bike chain and lock –to secure your canoe when you arrive at The Forks.

Federal regulations require the following:

- waterproof flashlight if paddling at dawn or dusk
- lifejacket for each person and of the appropriate size
- signalling device (such as a whistle)
- bailing device (half a 2 litre pop bottle, bucket etc.)
- at least 15 meters of floating rope

For the First Nations peoples and the Europeans who first came to the west, the rivers that crisscrossed the continent constituted a great transportation network. They plied these rivers in canoes, invented by the First Nations people and adopted by the European newcomers. First Nations people travelled in their canoes to bring furs to the European trading posts. Explorers, traders, and voyageurs travelled inland in

search of new lands and new trading partners. For the fur trade, the rivers were also sources of furs and smaller rivers like the Seine were habitat for the beaver, the animal that became crucial to the trade. In fact, beaver dams often block the Seine today. This short voyage will take you along the Red River and overlaps with the last part of a trip that the voyageurs would make as they returned from the interior.

km to next location	DIRECTIONS	Total km
0.0	Launch site: Near corner of Provencher and Des Meurons. Pull into parking lot for a donut shop and the small strip mall and park near the small alley behind the mall and the donut shop. The launch site is located behind the mall. As you walk behind the mall, you will see a crushed rock path. Follow the path briefly (20 m) to the right (away from Provencher). Shortly there is a turn off to the left that will take you to the Seine River launch site.	0.0

The areas along side rivers and streams are called riparian zones. These small areas are important because they provide critical habitat and maintain biodiversity for the bordering areas. Plants and trees growing in the riparian zone help to stabilize the soil and reduce erosion. This vegetation is also important during times of flood, as it soaks up the water and slows the speed of the water flooding its banks.

Want to know more about the nature and environment of the Red River Valley? Try Rivers West's Glaciers to Grasslands: self-directed drive & stroll tour or Driving to Dinosaurs: self-directed drive & stroll tour.

0.0	Turn left to paddle down river and towards underpass.	0.0
0.1	Keep to the left before crossing beneath Provencher Blvd, as it can be very shallow in the middle and to the right.	0.1
0.2	Pass beneath Provencher Blvd.	0.3

This street is named for Bishop J.N. Provencher who came to the Red River colony from Lower Canada as a missionary in 1818, where he settled at The Forks amongst the Métis. He was sent to build the colony's first Catholic church and to bring stability to the area. He felt that it was his duty to educate the youth, convert the Aborigines, and encourage Catholics to emigrate. He became the first bishop of St. Boniface in 1847.

Want to know more about St. Boniface? Try Rivers West's In the Footsteps of the Voyageurs: self-directed walking tour.

You will probably encounter several log jams as you descend the river. Deadfall provides food and shelter to many small organisms, such as millipedes and beetles, which in turn are important sources of food for larger organisms such as woodpeckers. Dead fall also provides perfect growing conditions for mosses, lichens and tree seedlings. The decomposition of wood is important as it returns valuable nutrients back to the earth.

0.2	Pass beneath a pedestrian walking bridge.	0.5
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You are now in the Lagimodière-Gaboury Park. Lagimodière, one of the park's namesakes, was born in Lower Canada in 1778 and came west in 1800 as a voyageur. Lagimodière served as a messenger for the Hudson Bay Company for many years. His most famous travel as a messenger took him from The Forks to Lord Selkirk in Montreal in 1815, a journey of over 1800 miles (2,880 km)! He married Marie-Anne Gaboury (the other namesake) in 1806. She was the first

white woman to settle permanently in the west and was the grandmother of Louis Riel. This land, once home to Métis and Canadian fur traders, was granted to Lagimodière in 1817 by Lord Selkirk.

Want to know more about Louis Riel and the Métis? Try Rivers West's Métis and the Path to Confederation: self-directed drive & stroll tour.

0.3	Lagimodière-Gaboury homestead area on left, just before railway bridge.	0.8
0.2	Pass beneath railway bridge.	1.0
0.1	Arrive at the Red River. Turn left to head upriver.	1.1

The Red River is 877 km in length from its headwaters of Lake Traverse on the Minnesota-South Dakota border to Lake Winnipeg. The elevation of the Red River falls 233 feet from the headwaters to its mouth, for an average slope of about one-half foot per mile. The slope is greater near the headwaters and flattens toward the mouth. Its major tributary

is the Assiniboine, which joins the Red River at The Forks (today's destination). A late spring thaw combined with heavy snowfall can cause the Red River to spill its banks onto the flat lands of the Red River Valley. The Red River gets its name from the clay that lies on its river bottom, giving the water a reddish color.

1.1	Pass Fort Gibraltar on left. You may be able to just see it amongst the trees.	2.2
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The North West Company built Fort Gibraltar in 1810 at The Forks site to replace their temporary trading posts in the area. This fort, erected in close proximity to the rival Hudson's Bay Company's headquarters (Fort Douglas) led to many conflicts. The Hudson's Bay Company destroyed Fort Gibraltar in 1815. The capture was deemed illegal by British authorities and the North West Company was given permission to rebuild it in 1817. Fort Gibraltar continued to operate after the North West Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. In 1822, Fort Gibraltar's name was changed to Fort Garry which was carried away by the flood of 1826. The fort was rebuilt by the Festival du Voyageur in 1978.

Voyageurs were the men who paddled the canoes and boats that transported goods and furs across the continent and laboured at the fur trade companies' posts. Voyageurs were accustomed to long hours and hard work. They worked at least 14 hours a day, were supposed to paddle 50 strokes a minute, and expected to carry 90-pound bundles, known as pieces, at portages. Stops were allowed along the way every hour so that the men could smoke a pipe and distances came to be measured in pipes. Four pipes, for example, would equal

4 hours of travel. They dined on pemmican which was pounded buffalo meat mixed with fat and berries, peas, biscuits, and salt pork.

There were several ranks of voyageurs. The avant or bowman was the man at the bow or front of the canoe and he was the guide. At the back was the steersman or gouvernail, who steered the craft. In the middle were the middlemen or milieu, who paddled. These were the least skilled of the crewmembers, but they could move up in status as they became more experienced. To keep everyone paddling together, the voyageurs sang as they travelled, much as seamen aboard ships would sing as they performed their duties (a voyageur song can be found at the end of this route description).

Voyageurs had great pride in their hardiness and their abilities. They controlled the pace at which they travelled and determined what they would do.

Want to know more about the fur trade? Try [Rivers West's People of the Fur Trade: self-directed drive & stroll tour](#) or for another paddling excursion [The Waters of the Fur Trade: self-directed drive & paddle one or two-day tour](#).

0.1	Fort Gibraltar dock.	2.3
0.5	Pass a small boat launch on right.	2.8

You may want to pull up here, if you would like to take a stroll along the river walkway or into Winnipeg's Exchange District, can which be seen in the distance.

0.2	Pass beneath railway bridge.	3.0
0.6	Pass beneath Provencher Bridge.	3.6
0.2	St. Boniface Cathedral on left.	3.8
0.5	Arrive at junction of Assiniboine and Red River. Turn right to head towards The Forks Market.	4.3
0.1	Arrive at dock at Forks Market.	4.4

This junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers has been a meeting place for thousands of years. It was important during the fur trade era, when the rivers were key shipping routes. Rival fur-trade companies, the Hudson's Bay and North West, both had forts at this location. Aboriginal groups also camped here. Today it is a National Historic Site.

Take the time to visit the market and surrounding sites – perhaps resting over a picnic lunch or exploring the interpretive trails along the river and across to South Point.

After visiting The Forks return to your canoe and proceed down the Red River in the direction from which you came.

1.3	Pass beneath railroad bridge after Provencher.	5.7
0.4	Pass Alexandra Boat Dock on west bank of the river.	6.1
0.2	Pass a dock for Fort Gibraltar on right.	6.3
1.2	Arrive at the Seine and Red River junction. Junction occurs before train tracks over Red River. Turn right to paddle up the Seine River.	7.5
0.1	Pass beneath railroad tracks on Seine River.	7.6
0.8	Pass beneath Provencher Blvd. Stay to the right to avoid shallow water.	8.4
0.2	Arrive at launch site on Des Meurons and Provencher. Pick up path behind mall and between mall and donut shop.	8.6

Thank you for joining Routes on the Red's self-directed excursion paddling on the Seine and the Red Rivers. We hope that you had an enjoyable trip. We would love to have you discover more of the Red River Valley on our other self-directed itineraries.

We greatly value your input and comments. If something was not clear, a road sign changed, or if you found a delightful picnic site or visit that you would like to share with future travellers, please let us know. The best way to communicate is to write the changes or new information directly onto the appropriate route description page, and mail or fax it to the Rivers West office. Thank you in advance for your contributions!

Rivers West, officially known as Red River Corridor Inc./L'Association du Corridor Rivière Rouge, is a not-for-profit organization, with the overall objective to develop the Red River Corridor as a destination. Our mandate is to create and implement a long-term tourism and conservation strategy focusing on the development, promotion and management of the natural, tourism, cultural and heritage, and recreational resources of the Red River from Emerson to Lake Winnipeg.

We are pleased to receive financial support from the federal and provincial governments and the participation of rural municipalities, towns and cities along the length of the river. A variety of projects are underway in the Red River region. These include the preservation of special lands for conservation, designation of the Red River as a heritage river, increasing opportunities for public access to the River, and the development and promotion of the river valley's natural, cultural, recreational and tourism resources.

Contact us for more information at:

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C'EST L' AVIRON

M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle
M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.

Chorus :

C'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène
C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut!

J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.
J'ai point choisi, mai j'ai pris la plus belle.

Chorus

J'ai point choisi, mai j'ai pris la plus belle.
J'ai point choisi, mai j'ai pris la plus belle.
J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle.

Chorus

J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle.
J'l'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle.
J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.

Chorus

J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.
J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.
Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire.

Chorus

Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire.
Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire.
Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine.

Chorus

Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine.
Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine.
Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire.

Chorus

Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire.
Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire.
Je l'ai menée au logis de son père.

Chorus

Je l'ai menée au logis de son père.
Je l'ai menée au logis de son père.
Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres.

Chorus

Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres.
Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres.
À la Santé de son père et sa mère.

Chorus

À la Santé de son père et sa mère.
À la Santé de son père et sa mère.
À la Santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.

Chorus

À la Santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.
À la Santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.
À la Santé d' celui que son cœur aime.

Chorus

English Translation of the Verses :

- 1 - Returning from Rochelle
- 2 - I encountered three pretty young ladies.
- 3 - I chose the prettiest, who got on my saddle behind me.
- 4 - We rode one hundred leagues without talking
- 5 - until she asked for a drink.
- 6 - I took her to a spring,
- 7 - where she refused to drink.
- 8 - I took her to her father's home,
- 9 - Where she drank glass after glass
- 10 - And toasted to the health
- 11 - Of her mother and father,
- 12 - Her sisters and brothers
- 13 - And the one she loved.

Chorus: "It's the rowing that brings us upstream."