



The Wheat Province

Established 1905
8th Province

Did You Know?



- Saskatchewan gets its name from the Cree word *kisiskatchewan*, which means “the river that flows swiftly.”
- The only training academy for Royal Canadian Mounted Police recruits is located in Regina.
- The city of Estevan in southeastern Saskatchewan is known as the sunshine capital of Canada. Estevanians enjoy an average of 2,500 hours of sunshine per year!
- Saskatchewan has more kilometres of road (totaling 250,000 kilometres, or 150,000 miles) than any other province.
- Saskatchewan has around 250 golf courses, more courses *per capita* (per person) than anywhere else in the world.
- The first bird sanctuary in North America was established in 1887 at Last Mountain Lake.
- The waters of Little Manitou Lake are so salty that swimmers float without using any flotation device!
- Saskatchewan sends more players *per capita* to the National Hockey League (NHL) than any other province or state.
- Curling was named Saskatchewan’s official sport in 2001.
- Saskatchewanians are proud of their odd place names. Moose Jaw, Elbow, and Eyebrow are all communities found in the province.
- Saskatchewan has around 100,000 lakes, close to one lake for every 10 people!
- Saskatchewanians call hoodies “bunnyhugs.”

Quick Facts



Capital city: Regina

Population: 1,150,632

Total Area: 651,036 square kilometres (251,366 sq miles)

Population Density: 1.80 persons per square kilometre (4.50 per sq mile)

The Place



Climate

Saskatchewan’s climate is *continental*, meaning it has short, warm summers and long, cold winters. Temperatures vary from year to year, but the average summer temperature is 18.5°C (65°F). Winters are much cooler, with an average temperature of around -18°C (0°F) in the Regina area and -28°C (-18°F) in the northern area. Blizzards are also common in the winter. Winds whip across the province all year long, and the occasional tornado hits the southern half of the province. The constant winds make for a very dry climate, and *droughts* (dry periods) frequently trouble farmers in southern Saskatchewan.



Average Seasonal High and Low Temperatures

Spring: 10/-3°C

Summer: 24/11°C

Fall: 9/-2°C

Winter: -8/-18°C

Geography

Saskatchewan is shaped like a trapezoid. The province covers a total area of 651,036 square kilometres (251,366 square miles). Half of Saskatchewan's land is covered in forests, while one-third is used for farmland. Freshwater rivers and lakes make up one-eighth of the province. The Saskatchewan River runs from the west to the east and is the province's most important waterway.

There are three geographic regions in the province: the Canadian Shield, the Plains, and the Hills. The Canadian Shield stretches across the northern third of Saskatchewan and is made up of ancient rock that used to be covered by glaciers. It's now a very rugged, forested area. The Plains region is in central and southern Saskatchewan. Most of the province's cities are located in the Plains, as is the most productive farmland. The Hills, Saskatchewan's third region, is in the southwestern corner of the province. These steep hills make up the highest land in Saskatchewan.



Wildlife

Bison and grizzly bear used to be common in Saskatchewan, but these animals are rare now. The province's wide prairies are now home to smaller animals such as coyote, antelope, and prairie dogs. Moose and caribou wander the forests of northern Saskatchewan. This province is famous for its many different species of birds. Pheasants, ducks, swans, pelicans, and hundreds more all make their home in Saskatchewan.



Flora and Fauna

Common Animals

Antelope
Beaver
Caribou
Coyote
Deer
Gopher
Great blue heron
Ground squirrel
Hungarian partridge
Jackrabbit
Moose
Muskrat
Prairie chicken
Skunk
Timber wolf
Yellow perch

Common Plants

Arctic crocus
Arctic poppy
Arctic willow
Aspen
Birch
Cotton grass
Dwarf willow
Moss campion
Muskeg
Poplar
Purple saxifrage
Sphagnum moss

Endangered Animals

Burrowing owl

Endangered Plants

Hairy prairie clover

Greater sage-grouse
 Lake sturgeon
 Mountain plover
 Ord's kangaroo rat
 Piping plover
 Sage thrasher
 Swift fox

Sand verbena
 Tiny cryptanthe
 Western spiderwort

Environmental Issues

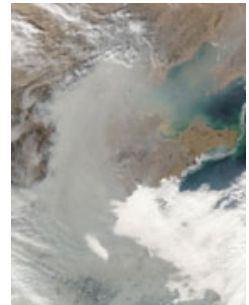
Biofuels

Saskatchewan is home to a *biofuel* testing centre. *Biofuels* are fuels that come from living organisms. Examples include cow manure or wood. Saskatchewan is interested in developing *biofuels* and other *renewable fuels* (fuels that can be replaced naturally), particularly *ethanol* (grain alcohol) and *biodiesel* (fuel made from vegetables), because they aren't harmful to the environment. The centre checks the quality of the fuels to make sure they meet industry standards. Since the *biofuel* industry no longer has to go outside the province for testing needs, products are ready for consumers at a much faster rate.



Acid Rain

In the past, acid rain has been a problem mainly for the *Maritime Provinces* (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). However, Saskatchewan's and other provinces' acid levels have risen because of the pollution created by extracting oil. These air pollutants are blown across Saskatchewan and form acid rain. Testing has revealed that in many areas the acid level has risen above the maximum amount allowed. Acid above this level will damage the environment in the province, killing the fish, insects, and plants that live there. Because the pollution affects several provinces, officials from each province, including Saskatchewan, must work together to find a solution to the acid rain problem.



Resources and Industries

Agriculture

Farming is the largest industry in the province. Saskatchewan produces more than half of Canada's wheat and is one of the largest wheat producers in the world. About 8 million hectares (20 million acres) of land is used every year to farm wheat. Canola, lentils, peas, rye, oats, and barley are other important crops.



Manufacturing

Manufacturing has remained a small part of the industry in Saskatchewan. Food and steel are the main products. Most of what is manufactured in the province is sold to markets in other parts of Canada.





Mining





Mining has long been a productive industry for Saskatchewan. The province is the world's leading producer of *potash* (a kind of salt containing potassium), which is used to make fertilizer, soap, and glass. Saskatchewan's *potash* sales bring in more than one billion dollars every year. Two-thirds of the total *potash* produced is sold to the United States. The province is also the nation's second largest producer of crude *petroleum* (oil) and the world's largest uranium producer. Uranium is used to fuel nuclear power plants.



History

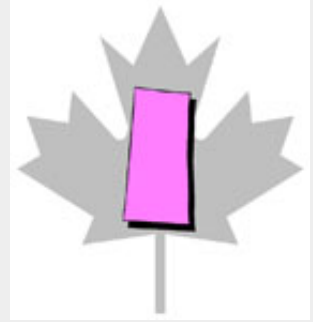
Time Line

10,000 BC	
10,000 BC	Ancient peoples, who hunt herds of bison, live in what is now Saskatchewan
AD 1600	
1690	Henry Kelsey becomes the first European to reach Saskatchewan
1700	
1741	French explorer Pierre Gaultier (La Vérendrye) builds Fort Bourbon on the South Saskatchewan River
	
1774	Samuel Hearne establishes Cumberland House, the first permanent settlement
	
1800	

1840	Missionary Henry Budd opens the first school at Cumberland House	
1870	The Dominion of Canada reorganizes the Northwest Territories to include what is now Saskatchewan	
1873	Several <i>Assiniboine</i> (a First Nations people) are killed in the Cypress Hills Massacre	
1875	The North West Mounted Police establish Fort Walsh at Cypress Hills	
1876	Battleford is named the capital of the Northwest Territories; Sioux chief Sitting Bull seeks protection in Canada after the Battle of Little Big Horn	
1878	The <i>Saskatchewan Herald</i> begins publication	
1882	The Canadian Pacific Railway comes to the Northwest Territories	
1883	Regina becomes the new capital of the Northwest Territories	
1885	Government troops stop the Northwest Rebellion; Métis leader Louis Riel is hanged for treason	

1900

1905 Saskatchewan becomes the 8th province



1912 A tornado destroys part of downtown Regina



1916 Saskatchewanian women win the right to vote

1931 Coal miners strike in Estevan

1944 Oil is discovered near Lloydminster

1948 The Saskatchewan Arts Board is created, the first of its kind in North America

1957 Saskatchewanian John Diefenbaker becomes prime minister of Canada



1969 The Saskatchewan Indian and Métis provincial government department is created, the first of its kind in Canada

2000

2005 Saskatchewan celebrates its *centennial* (100th anniversary)

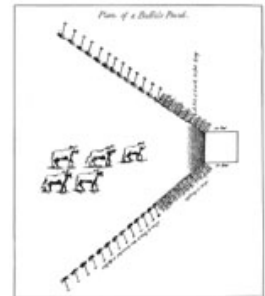


2010 Saskatchewan has the fastest rate of population growth in Canada

PRESENT

Bands of Brothers

The first people to live in what is now Saskatchewan belonged to seven different *bands*, or tribes. Groups of *bands* joined together to form nations, trading with each other in times of peace and helping protect fellow *bands* in wars with other nations. In northern Saskatchewan, there were the Slavey, Beaver, and Chipewyan *bands*. The southern area of the province was home to the Cree, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, and Assiniboine *bands*. The northern *bands* spoke Athapaskan languages and hunted caribou and moose throughout the northern forests. The southern *bands* spoke Siouan languages and used spears to hunt buffalo across the central and southern plains. Buffalo hunters drove herds of buffalo off cliffs or into *pounds* (corrals).



All of these early peoples used every part of the animals they hunted to support themselves and their families. Buffalo and caribou *hides* (skins) were made into clothes, blankets, and coverings for tents. Bones and antlers were used to make weapons and tools. The *bands* added to their food supply by collecting berries, nuts, and roots, and they stored them for the wintertime when food was hard to find.

Beaver Fur

In the late 1600s, Europeans reached the area that is now Saskatchewan in search of beaver fur. At the time, beaver fur was used to make hats that were popular in Europe. Hudson's Bay Company traders realized that the native inhabitants of the land were best at trapping beavers, so they set up trading posts where natives could bring the beaver pelts and trade them for manufactured goods such as cloth, guns, and metal tools. Soon French fur traders joined in the business. First Nations peoples traded steadily with both groups and often served as guides to the newcomers. Many European settlers married *aboriginal* (native) women and had families. Their children were known as *Métis* (mixed blood). Fur hunting and trading quickly became a way of life for the *Métis*, who grew up in the new settlements.



The Northwest Rebellion

In the late 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company sold a large chunk of land (including what is now Saskatchewan) to the government of Canada. This chunk of land encompassed roughly one-quarter of the North American continent! It became known as the Northwest Territories. When they settled on the South Saskatchewan River, the Métis set up their own homesteads, farms and communities. As the population in the area grew, government surveyors moved into the area and ignored the existing boundaries of these settlements and land holdings. Threatening to re-survey and displace the Métis from their lands, the government forced many natives to give up the rights to their land and move onto *reserves* (federal land set aside for natives to live on) and signed treaties that detailed the agreement. However, the Métis of Saskatchewan were not happy with these treaties or the growing numbers of European settlers who were moving in and taking over.



A Métis named Louis Riel became a leader among his people and set out to achieve self-government for the Métis. Riel was joined by military commander Gabriel Dumont. When the government did not respond to their peaceful attempts, Riel and Dumont set up their own Métis government and, in 1885, led an armed rebellion against the federal government. At first, Riel's and Dumont's forces were successful, so the Canadian government sent in the North-West Field Force of the Canadian Militia under General Middleton. The troops fought with Cree chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker. The Militia eventually won. Big Bear and Poundmaker were put in jail. Riel was convicted of *treason* (betraying the government) and was hanged.

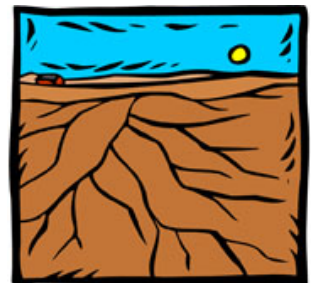
The Great Lone Land

Europeans began referring to Saskatchewan and other parts of the western territories as the Great Lone Land because the land was vast and few settlers lived there at the end of the 19th century. The new Dominion of Canada quickly set about encouraging European settlers to come to the west and settle down. The government gave out free plots of land to people who were willing to live there and *homestead* (build farms). Immigrants steadily moved into Saskatchewan. The area became more accessible when the Canadian Pacific Railway reached Regina in 1882, and towns and communities grew rapidly. At the turn of the century, large groups of Eastern Europeans from Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, and Germany came to the territory in search of farmland. In 1905, Saskatchewan officially became a province, with a population of more than 400,000.



The Dirty Thirties

In the 1930s, a severe *drought* (dry period) hit Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, wheat prices fell at the same time. These two events dealt a huge blow to farmers in the province. The land was dry for so long that the frequent wind caused strong dust storms, and Saskatchewanians began referring to the decade as the Dirty Thirties. In just a few short years, Saskatchewan became the poorest province in the nation. The government and many charities donated money and food to the suffering Saskatchewanians, many of whom were living in shacks along the railway. After 1937, the struggling province received more rain. World War II began shortly thereafter. The war created jobs and helped end the Dirty Thirties by bringing growth and development back to Saskatchewan.



The New Democratic Party

After the long years of the Dirty Thirties, Saskatchewanians were ready for social and political change in their communities. Several farmers and workers groups from Alberta and Saskatchewan got together and formed a political party known as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The CCF wanted to provide health care, unemployment insurance, workers' *compensation* (payment for workers who get hurt on the job), and retirement plans for everyone.

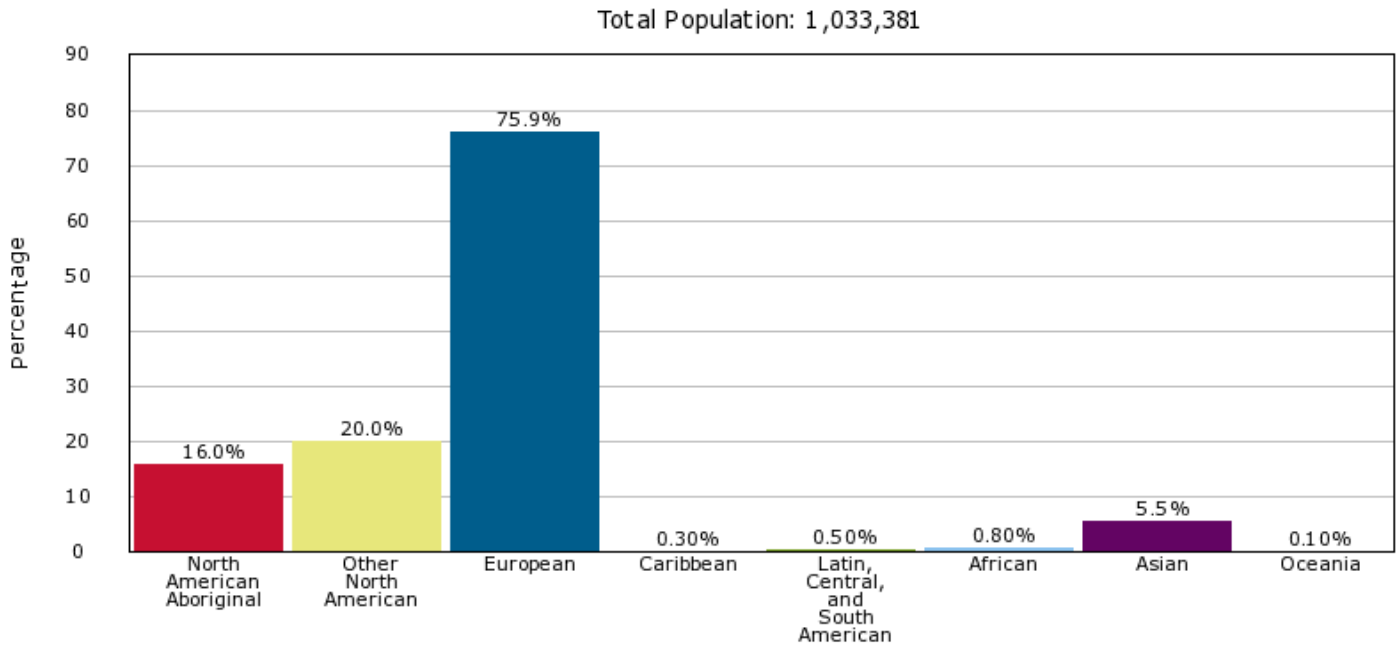


The CCF ran Saskatchewan for 20 years and eventually became the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the 1960s. In 1962, the NDP passed a complete Medicare program, which gave free medical care to everyone in the province. At first, doctors were against the program and even went on strike to stop it from being put in place. Eventually, however, both sides began to work together, and the Medicare program became highly successful.

The People

Population

Saskatchewan has the sixth largest population in Canada. Saskatchewan's population has been growing as people have moved to or back to the province as a result of the resource boom. Saskatchewanians are also moving out of the countryside into the cities. The majority of people in Saskatchewan currently live in the southern portion of the province, near main cities like Saskatoon and Regina. Saskatchewan has a large *aboriginal* (native) population. There are also large German, French, and Ukrainian ethnic groups within the province. Saskatchewanians tend to live long lives. As a result, the province has the highest percentage of people over the age of 65 in the country.



Canadians may belong to more than one group. Totals may not equal 100%.

Government

Federal

Senators: 6

- Liberals: 2
- Conservatives: 3
- Non-affiliated: 1



Members of Parliament: 14

- Liberals: 1
- NDP: 3
- Conservatives: 10

In Canada, members of Parliament are elected from across the country. The leader of the party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons becomes the prime minister. The prime minister is the head of government in Canada. The monarch (today, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom) is leader in name only. She appoints a governor-general to be her representative in Canada. The role of this governor-general is largely ceremonial. In Canada, there are two separate lawmaking bodies, the House of Commons, which is made up of elected members, and the Senate, whose members are appointed by the governor-general under the advice of the prime minister. The House of Commons debates and votes on *bills* (proposed laws). The Senate carefully examines the *bills* and decides whether to approve, change, or reject them. For a bill to become law, it must be passed by both the House of Commons and the Senate and be given *royal assent* (approval) by the governor-general.

Provincial

Capital: Regina, population 215,100

Province Abbreviation: SK

Premier: Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party)

Lieutenant-Governor: Vaughn Solomon Schofield

Members of the Legislative Assembly: 58

Female MLAs: 16

The lieutenant-governor of Saskatchewan represents the monarch (queen of the United Kingdom) and calls on the leader of the party with the most votes to be the premier. The premier chooses the members of the Cabinet from the elected members of the Legislative Assembly, who represent voters. These members are then appointed by the lieutenant-governor. Each is placed in charge of a department such as education, health, or aboriginal affairs. The Cabinet members advise the premier, while the Legislative Assembly makes the laws.

Key Issues

Voter Turnout

Saskatchewan's voter turnout in recent years has been low. Election officials believe part of the low turnout is due to the fact that there are not a lot of candidates competing for open positions. There also have not been many closely contested issues in the province lately. In an attempt to encourage more people to come to the polls on voting day, community groups are trying to create a little friendly competition in the voting process by challenging other cities to see which city can get the largest voter turnout. Some of the positions up for election include city major, school board members, and city councillors.

Health Care

Saskatchewan prides itself on being the birthplace of Canadian Medicare. The recent increase in population, however, has been a challenge to the organization and structure of the healthcare system. The province sometimes struggles to recruit enough health professionals, and long waiting times for some surgeries can be a challenge. One way of addressing such challenges has been an electronic healthcare management system. This system organizes patient records into a streamlined system used in hospitals throughout the province. The electronic system decreases mistakes and improves patient care. The system also helps speed up waiting times for surgeries by making it easier to find records and schedule appointments.



First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal Peoples

Saskatchewan's *indigenous* (native) population is made up of First Nations peoples and Métis. There are 72 different First Nations *bands* (tribes) in Saskatchewan, and they are the fastest-growing group in the province. The province's more than 150 reserves cover about 850,500 hectares (2.1 million acres) of land, mostly in *rural* (countryside) areas. About half the *indigenous* population lives on reserve and half lives in cities.



Regina is home to the First Nations University of Canada—the only fully recognized university in the nation that is owned and operated by the First Nations. The university opened in 1976 with the goal of educating First Nations students in their native history, culture, language, and art. First Nations peoples, along with some non-First Nations peoples, from all over Canada come to attend this unique school. The university has around 1,200 students and has campuses in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

Famous People



**Catriona
LeMay Doan**

- *Leslie Nielsen* – Actor
- *The Richardson Brothers* – World champion curlers
- *Big Bear* – Cree chief
- *Gordie Howe* – National Hockey League player
- *Maria Campbell* – Métis writer
- *John G. Diefenbaker* – 13th prime minister of Canada
- *Joni Mitchell* – Musician
- *Ramon Hnatyshyn* – 24th governor-general of Canada
- *Connie Kaldor* – Folk singer
- *Hayley Wickenheiser* – Olympic hockey player
- *Tommy Douglas* – Father of Medicare
- *Poundmaker* – Cree chief
- *Buffy Sainte-Marie* – First Nations musician
- *Reuben Mayes* – National Football League player
- *Catriona LeMay Doan* – Champion speed skater
- *Gordon Tootoosis* – Actor



Big Bear



Joni Mitchell



Poundmaker

Cultural Notes



Prairie Fiction

Saskatchewan has a lively and long literary tradition. In 1947, W.O. Mitchell published his novel *Who Has Seen the Wind*. The book focuses on a young boy named Brian growing up in the Canadian prairies during the Great Depression and has since become a classic of Canadian literature. Often called the Mark Twain of Canada, Mitchell is considered a pioneer in what became an entire *genre* (category or style) of literature—prairie fiction.



In 1969, Saskatchewan poet Anne Szumigalski helped found the Saskatchewan Writers Guild to help encourage and promote Saskatchewan writers. Four years later, along with celebrated poet and playwright Ken Mitchell, Szumigalski also helped start *Grain*, a provincial literary journal. For more than 30 years, *Grain* has continued to publish the best in new literature and art from Canada and around the world.

The Roughriders

The Saskatchewan Roughriders are a Canadian Football League (CFL) team based in Regina. They are the only professional sports team in Saskatchewan. Originally, the Roughriders were a rugby team founded in Regina in 1910. In 1948, they became the Regina Roughriders. Now the Riders play for the CFL's West Division, and their colours are green, white, black, and silver. The team has gone to the *Grey Cup* (CFL championship) seven times in the history of the club and has captured the national title four times, once in 1966, once in 1989, once in 2007, and once again in 2013. Roughrider fans across Canada are known as Rider Nation, and they take their roles seriously. Home games are always highly attended. Some fans even make green "helmets" out of carved-out watermelons and wear them during the games!



Fun Facts & Contacts



Official Emblems

Provincial Flower

Western Red Lily

This tall, bright red lily grows in meadows and moist areas in Saskatchewan. Natives used it in both medicines and foods. Now the flower is quite rare, and it is illegal to pick it or hurt it in any way.



Provincial Bird

Sharp-Tailed Grouse

This bird is a true Saskatchewanian. It lives in the province year-round, never *migrating* (moving from one area to another) south for the winter. It is usually a spotted brown and grey with sharp, pointed tail feathers.



Provincial Tree

White Birch

This tree is found all over the province. It is a slim tree with smooth white or grey bark, which natives used to make canoes. The tree produces flowers in the early spring.



Provincial Tartan

Saskatchewan's provincial tartan has seven colours: gold, brown, green, red, yellow, white and black. Gold represents the province's wheat, while green symbolizes its forests. Brown stands for the *summer fallow* (cropland that is kept out of use for a season). Red and yellow represent the prairie lily and sunflower—both common in the province. White represents the snow, and black symbolizes the minerals found in Saskatchewan.



Provincial Coat of Arms

The beaver is the national animal of Canada, and the deer is Saskatchewan's provincial animal. The crown symbolizes the British monarchy, as does the lion. The three sheaves of wheat are a main farming product of the province. Western red lilies are the provincial flower.



Major League Sports Teams

- Saskatchewan Roughriders (CFL)

For More Information

To learn more about Saskatchewan, see www.saskatchewan.ca. Or contact Tourism Saskatchewan, 189-1621 Albert Street, Regina, SK, Canada S4P 2S5; phone (877) 2ESCAPE; web site www.tourismsaskatchewan.com.

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Saskatchewan

EXTREMES

Lowest: Saskatchewan's elevation dips down to 213 metres (700 ft) at Lake Athabasca.

Coldest: The coldest recorded temperature was -56.7°C (-70°F) at Prince Albert on 1 February 1893.

Highest: The province's highest point is Cypress Hills, at 1,392 metres (4,567 ft).

Hottest: Saskatchewan holds the national record for the hottest recorded temperature. Midvale's temperature hit 45°C (113°F) on 5 July 1937.

