

TOURING THE COUNT'S COUNTRY

St. Walburg to Fort Pitt Loop

A German Count found this scenic corner of northwest Saskatchewan the ideal place to settle down and practise his art. Artists still come to be inspired, history buffs come to relive the tumultuous last days of the 1885 conflict, and avid birdwatchers are positively aflutter over the wildlife. Add the plethora of lakes a stone's throw away, and the pleasant countryside is a delight to explore. This circle route begins in St. Walburg and takes in an amazing variety of history and scenery in a short distance. The route follows mostly paved or good gravel roads, although a few optional side-trips are on minor roads which might have to be avoided during wet weather.

St. Walburg and the Count's Country

It's the life-size bronze statue of Count Berthold von Imhoff riding his horse that you first notice upon entering St. Walburg when you arrive from the south on Hwy #26. Born in Germany in 1868, Imhoff excelled as an artist, eventually settling near



Statue of Count Berthold von Imhoff in St. Walburg.

St. Walburg where he built his home and studio. Until his death in 1939, Imhoff was a prolific artist—mostly religious paintings that adorn many churches throughout Saskatchewan and parts of the United States. To see some of Imhoff's work, head to the south end of Main Street to the former Roman Catholic Church where the sanctuary is covered in his murals. The building now houses the St. Walburg & District Historical Museum.

The campground building on the same corner as the statue serves as an information centre for the town and area. Brochures are available on town attractions and events such as the annual Wild Blueberry Festival, and Centennial Park with its cheery floral displays and memorial plaques.

St. Walburg is a hub for birders. Its setting near prairie, parkland, lakelands, and boreal forest makes for incredible variety and numbers—over 250 species from shorebirds to waterfowl, eagles, songbirds, and numerous warblers. Birding hotspots abound in places like the Turtle Lake Nature Sanctuary (a short drive east), nearby Brightsand Lake, as well as numerous small lakes and wetlands. Look for birding information at the brochure stand at the campground building.

Walking trails include portions of the Trans Canada Trail with the main trailhead on the south side of town along the highway. Some 7 km of trails are maintained and take you through different habitats and landscapes including forested areas, a lake view, and planted fields.

Also check out the Englishman River Nature Trails east of town. To get there, head east along Hwy #26. Turn on the grid road at the grain elevator and keep going east for about 3 km to the first crossroad. Turn right here (a sign says No Through Road) and continue south for about 1 km until you see the large Trans Canada Trail sign near a turn-off on the east side of the road where you can park. A footbridge across the narrow Englishman River takes you to the main trails. The paths pass through

