

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA

The Essentials

Name of Area	Fort Saskatchewan
Location	35 km north east of Edmonton
Km trails	~15 km
Km classic	15 km
Km skate	14 km
Trail Rating	Mainly easy with a few intermediate sections
Signage	Poor
Grooming	Good
Facilities	Minimal outside of Fort Saskatchewan Nordic Club compound 1.1 km lighted loop inside compound
Trail Fees	None
Access Points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turner Park off River Road 2. Downtown off 100 Ave west of 101 Street 3. Various points off 100 Ave between 79 & 88 Streets
Other facts	Trails looked after by Fort Saskatchewan Nordic Ski Club
Loppet	None
Description of trails	<p>The trails roughly parallel the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River. They start from the Nordic club compound on the east side of downtown to a small park several km west of downtown.</p> <p>There are a few loops at the east end of the trail system. Some of these are inside the Nordic compound, which is normally kept locked except when club members are present. The trails inside this fenced area include a few short steep hills. Proceeding west from here the trails loop through an open area. Branching off from the end of this is the Ross Creek loop, which after a short climb descends into a pretty creek & then south around a golf course. The trail through the golf course is not always groomed.</p> <p>The main trail continues alongside the river through a wooded area and parkland, passing the old downtown area towards Hwy 15. A parallel loop goes through a strand of trees & this is a section that is too narrow for skate skiing. Beyond here the trail splits, the lower portion passes under Hwy 15 by the river before climbing back up to rejoin the main trail. The left hand trail climbs up & over Hwy 15 via a footbridge & follows along between the houses & river for a couple of kilometres to a turn-around point in a small park.</p>
Trail map	Download from club website
Website	www.fortsasknordic.ca
Trail conditions & more information	Club website or from Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed north east from Edmonton on either Hwy 15 (Manning Freeway) or Hwy 21 to Fort Saskatchewan • If approaching from Hwy 15, head south & cross the river and then turn left (east) at the junction with Hwy 21 • Turn left at next junction into 101 St – Just head for the water tower. • If approaching from Hwy 21 continue east past junction with Hwy 15 & turn left as above into 101 St • Continue north for about 1.5 km past the old downtown where the road bears right when it reaches the river and becomes River Road • After about 0.5 km turn right into a parking area in Turner Park • The Nordic Centre is located 1 km east of Turner Park • Driving time from centre of Edmonton is about 30 minutes.

Mike's Two Skis Worth

A small but dedicated band of local Nordic club volunteers keep these trails regularly groomed. All but a small loop is set for both classic & skate skiing. Signage is sparse but it is generally easy to find your way around the trail system.

This is an ideal place for novice skiers particularly for those that want to improve their skating technique without having to climb up an endless succession of hills. The snow here often lasts well into late March and I have had some excellent late season skate skis, especially when I have caught it right usually in the mornings before the heat of the day softens the snow too much.

I usually start from the parking area in Turner Park and head east towards the Nordic Centre warming up on the flat loops across the open area. If the gate to the Nordic compound is locked, I turn around and head back via the scenic Ross Creek loop which can be skied in either direction. This is probably my favourite part of the trail system. One moment you are overlooking a steamy refinery and then the next minute you are skiing along a windy trail alongside a picturesque wooded creek. From here I head west across parkland and several roads on mainly flat trails to the turn-around point at the west end of the system.

For opening times of the local Nordic Centre please see the club website.

Compiled by Mike Stern 05/11/09
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