

SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE

Cruise on *Rotterdam* from Tampa, Florida

January 10, 2018 - 20 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person: based on double/twin

\$5755 Inside Category J

\$6015 Outside Category E

\$8170 Verandah Category BB



- > Other categories available along with single and triple fares.
- > Tour is exempt from GST
- > **Early Bookers:** \$160 discount on first 15 seats; \$80 on next 10
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 74 points from this tour.
Redeem **74 points** if you book by **October 5**.

* PORTS OF CALL *

KEY WEST (Florida)

SAN JUAN (Puerto Rico)

ST. THOMAS (US Virgin Islands)

ST. JOHN'S (Antigua)

CASTRIES (Saint Lucia)

WILLEMSTAD (Curacao)

ORANJESTAD (Aruba)

GEORGE TOWN (Cayman Islands)

Includes

- Transportation to/from Seattle airport
- Flight from Seattle to Tampa and return
- Air transport taxes & security fees
- 5 nights hotel accommodation & taxes
- Transfer from Tampa airport to hotel
- Locally-guided tour of St. Petersburg
- Salvador Dali Museum
- Ringling Brothers Museum and Mansion
- Transfer from hotel to Tampa cruise terminal
- 14 days on Holland America's *Rotterdam*
- Cruise gratuities
- Port charges & cruise taxes
- Entertainment and other services on board ship
- Transfer from cruise terminal to Tampa airport
- Knowledgeable tour director throughout cruise
- Gratuities for local guides in Florida
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **50 meals:** 19 breakfasts, 16 lunches, 15 dinners

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MS Rotterdam

Holland America Line's "Flagship of Excellence," *MS Rotterdam*, made her grand entrance into the cruising world in 1997. A sister ship to the *Amsterdam*, the *Rotterdam* reflects a graceful combination of classic and state-of-the-art features, exhibiting wood and deep, vibrant colours for a traditional ship feel. A \$2 million collection of art and artifacts is showcased throughout the ship. The *Rotterdam* carries only 1,404 passengers which is far more intimate than some of the mammoth cruise ships nowadays. Her 10 decks feature a 700-seat live entertainment theatre, 5 lounges, casino, duty-free shops, movie theatre, beauty shop, library, games room, 12 elevators, Internet centre, spa, whirlpools, and 2 swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover).

The elegant two-floor dining room serves breakfast, lunch and dinner with full choice of menu. The Lido Restaurant offers buffet-style serving stations for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the 11 pm snack. The intimate Pinnacle Grill and the Canaletto Restaurant offer extraordinary service, reserved seating and gourmet menus for an extra charge. You can also dine in the privacy of your stateroom by ordering from the complimentary room service menu. All meals are culinary delights!

Staterooms have twin lower beds (some convert to queen-size double), TV, music, telephone, and bathroom with toilet, sink and shower or bathtub. A crew of over 600 ensures top-quality service and entertainment. Every day has a full schedule of optional activities: dance class, bridge, bingo, shuffleboard, table-tennis, karaoke, board games, and fitness activities. The Wajang Theatre shows recent movies several times a day. Every evening, there is live entertainment in the Mainstage Theatre, plus musicians are playing in most lounges.

Cruise notes

Please book early: Holland America has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour and they are normally held until three months before sailing (early October 2017). However, any unsold staterooms can be taken away from us at any time when the ship fills. This 14-day cruise is very popular, so this can result in our block being reduced. When this has happened before, we had to waitlist disappointed customers, even though we still had seats available on the coaches and planes.

Dinner reservations: The *Rotterdam* offers both open dining and fixed dining. Open dining means you can go to a restaurant when you are ready with your friends or make a reservation earlier in the day. All Wells Gray customers are automatically assigned to open dining by Holland America, but if you prefer to dine at the same time with the same people each day, we can request this. The Pinnacle and Canaletto take reservations on board and you should do this early in the voyage.

Tour activity level: The cruise days are Activity Level 1, but you should choose shore excursions based on your abilities. There can be longer walks in Seattle and Tampa airports; please request a cart or wheelchair in advance if this could be an issue for you. If you think you may have difficulty participating in Activity Level 1, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.



Itinerary

Wednesday, January 10:

Transportation is provided to **Seattle**. We stay overnight at the Quality Inn in Renton near the Seattle airport.

Thursday, January 11:

Meals: B

We fly on Alaska Airlines non-stop from Seattle to **Tampa**. The next three nights are at the **Embassy Suites** in Brandon, just east of Tampa. All suites have a living room and separate bedroom. Amenities include a pool, whirlpool, restaurant

and lounge. A two-hour reception with complimentary beverages is offered each evening. Note: We have scheduled two days in Tampa to avoid the risk of a flight delay which could cause you to miss the ship's departure.

Friday, January 12:

Meals: B,L,D

Start the day with Embassy Suites' extensive breakfast buffet. A locally-guided tour shows off the sights of Tampa and **St. Petersburg**. Lunch is included at Johnny Leverock's, a popular restau-

rant since 1948 and known for clam chowder and key lime pie. This afternoon, we visit the famed **Salvador Dali Museum** which celebrates the life of Dali (1904-1989) and features works from the artist's entire career. The stunning new gallery opened in 2011. Dinner is at Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City which dates from 1905 and is Florida's oldest restaurant in the same family.

Saturday, January 13: *Meals: B*

We drive to Sarasota, south of Tampa Bay, and visit the **Ringling Museum and Mansion**. When John Ringling, founder of the circus, died in 1936, he willed his estate to Florida. It sat neglected for 60 years, then a major fund-raising provided \$90 million for the total renovation of the art museum and mansion which opened in 2007. The Ringling is now one of the outstanding art museums of the USA. There are several other attractions at the estate, so you can choose to visit any or all of the Circus Museum, the mansion, the Rose Garden, and the Secret Garden.

Sunday, January 14: *Meals: B,L,D*

A transfer takes us to the Tampa cruise terminal. We board the **Rotterdam** at noon and enjoy an embarkation buffet lunch. The afternoon is free time to explore the ship and get settled into your stateroom. We sail out of **Tampa Bay** at 4 pm with a festive farewell deck party. After a sumptuous dinner, enjoy a lively stage show or one of the lounges with music and dancing.

Monday, January 15: *Meals: B,L,D*

The **Rotterdam** arrives at **Key West** at the western tip of the Florida Keys at 11 am and departs at 6 pm. Shore excursions can be purchased on the ship or on the dock, or you can explore by foot. A popular attraction is the Ernest Hemingway House where he lived from 1931 to 1939. It has been a National Historic Site since 1968.

Tuesday, January 16: *Meals: B,L,D*

Wednesday, January 17: *Meals: B,L,D*
During these relaxing days at sea, we sail north of **Cuba** and **Hispaniola**.

Thursday, January 18: *Meals: B,L,D*

The **Rotterdam** arrives at **San Juan, Puerto Rico**, at 10 am and stays until 11 pm. Be sure to watch from deck as the ship navigates into the narrow harbour past the imposing San Felipe del Morro Fortress, built in the mid-16th century. The ship docks downtown, so you can explore San Juan's quaint cobblestone streets. Puerto Rico has been a territory of the USA since 1898.

Friday, January 19: *Meals: B,L,D*

We arrive at **St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands** at 8 am and depart at 5 pm. Colonized by Denmark in the 17th century, the islands were purchased by the United States in 1917 for \$25 million and tourism has become the most important industry.

Saturday, January 20: *Meals: B,L,D*

The **Rotterdam** docks at **St. John's, Antigua** at 8 am. It has been the administrative centre of the country of Antigua and Barbuda which consists of these two main islands and several dozen tiny ones. The islands were first colonized in 1632 and St. John's became the capital when the nation achieved independence from Britain in 1981. Attractions include the botanical gardens, Fort James, and the cathedral. We sail at 5 pm.

Sunday, January 21: *Meals: B,L,D*

We arrive at **Castries, Saint Lucia**, at 8 am. The island was claimed by the French in 1635, but switched between British and French rule 14 times, due to numerous wars. Saint Lucia gained full independence from Britain in 1979. We depart at 4 pm and enjoy scenic cruising along the Soufriere coastline past the rugged peaks known as The Pitons. Saint Lucia is a volcanic island and is more mountainous than most Caribbean islands.

Monday, January 22: *Meals: B,L,D*

This is a relaxing day at sea.

Tuesday, January 23: *Meals: B,L,D*

We cruise to **Curacao**, arriving at 8 am in the capital of **Willemstad** and staying at dock until 11 pm. This is a Dutch island and, after settlement in 1634, they built several forts at strategic locations. Today, the island has a population of 150,000 and has a diverse economy dominated by tourism and international trade. Sightseeing tours can be purchased on the ship that take you to historic places and around Willemstad.

Wednesday, January 24: *Meals: B,L,D*

We spend the day in **Oranjestad** on Aruba, a small island just off the coast of Venezuela. One of the Lesser Antilles, Aruba was granted home rule by the Netherlands in 1986 and became fully independent in 1996. The primary industries are tourism and the refining of oil imported from Venezuela. The island has a population of about 70,000, but is only 30 km long and 8 km wide. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao, Aruba forms a group referred to as the ABC islands. Collectively, Aruba and the other Dutch islands in the Caribbean are often called the Dutch Caribbean. Driving and walking tours of Oranjestad can be

purchased on the ship or on shore. The city is noted for its Dutch Colonial architecture and the Royal Plaza outdoor shopping mall. The *Rotterdam* arrives at 7 am and departs at 3 pm.

Thursday, January 25: *Meals: B,L,D*
A day at sea while the *Rotterdam* cruises west.

Friday, January 26: *Meals: B,L,D*
We arrive at **Grand Cayman Island** at 8 am and take a short tender ride from the ship into George Town, the capital. The flat coral island is only 35 km long and best known for its turtle farms, Seven Mile Beach, and liberal banking laws. Many tourists enjoy mailing a letter from the tiny post office of Hell. The *Rotterdam* departs at 3 pm.

Saturday, January 27: *Meals: B,L,D*
During our last day at sea, we cruise north and around the western tip of Cuba.

Sunday, January 28: *Meals: B,L*
We arrive back in **Tampa** and bid farewell to the *Rotterdam*. Our coach takes us to the International Plaza, a shopping mall with about 200 stores. Lunch is included. Our flight on Alaska Airlines leaves at 5 pm and is non-stop to Seattle. The overnight stay is at the Quality Inn near the airport.

Monday, January 29: *Meals: B*
There are shopping stops at **Bellis Fair Mall** in Bellingham and the Duty-Free Store, then we take an afternoon ferry back to Victoria.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$600 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due October 5, 2017.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$160 discount on first 15 seats and \$80 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after October 5.

Cancellation Policy: Up to September 5, 2017, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From September 6 to October 5, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From October 6 to November 3, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From November 4 to December 5, the cancellation charge is 70% of the tour fare. After December 5, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to foreign currency exchange rates or taxes, and surcharges from the airline, cruise line and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups and dropoffs may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and the size of the chartered vehicle. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credit: Holland America Line (atrium of *MS Rotterdam*)

e-points: This tour earns 74 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until October 5.

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