PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Cruise on *Norwegian Pearl* from New Orleans to Seattle

April 4, 2018 ~ 26 Days

WELLS GRAY TOURS

a world to experience

Fares Per Person: based on double/twin

$6510 Inside Category ID

$7155 Outside Category OC

$8350 Balcony Category BA

> Tour is exempt from GST.

> Other categories available along with single and triple fares.

> **Early Bookers:** $250 discount on first 15 seats; $125 on next 10

> **Experience Points:** Earn 131 points from this tour.
Redeem **131 points** if you book by **January 3**.

* PORTS OF CALL *

COZUMEL (Mexico)
ROATAN (Honduras)
HARVEST CAYE (Honduras)
CARTAGENA (Colombia)
PUERTO CALDERA (Costa Rica)
CORINTO (Nicaragua)
PUERTO QUETZAL (Guatemala)
ACAPULCO (Mexico)
CABO SAN LUCAS (Mexico)
LOS ANGELES (California)

Includes

- Transportation to/from Seattle
- Flight from Seattle to New Orleans
- Current air transport taxes & security fees
- 4 nights hotel accommodation & taxes
- Transportation in New Orleans for 3 days
- Walking and driving tours in New Orleans
- Maison Bourbon Dixieland Club with drink
- Mardi Gras World
- Mississippi River cruise on Sternwheeler Natchez
- New Orleans School of Cooking
- Stateroom for 21 days/nights on board *Pearl*
- Ultimate beverage package on ship
- Fees for 5 specialty restaurants on ship
- Cruise gratuities
- Port charges, cruise taxes, Panama Canal fees
- Locally-guided tour in Cartagena with Castillo de San Felipe and coffee tasting
- Locally-guided tour in Costa Rica with Tarcoles River boat tour and crocodile viewing
- Locally-guided tour to Leon, Nicaragua
- Locally-guided tour to Antigua, Guatemala
- Locally-guided nature tour in Acapulco
- Locally-guided tour in Los Angeles
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers and boat crew
- Knowledgeable tour director throughout cruise
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **67 meals**: 22 breakfasts, 22 lunches, 23 dinners

102 - 736 Broughton Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1E1
www.wellsgraytours.com

victoria@wellsgraytours.com
Toll Free > 888-595-7889
Phone: > 250-590-7889

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Norwegian Pearl

The *Pearl* was launched in 2006 and had a multi-million refurbishment in 2013. Carrying 2,394 passengers, the *Pearl* is midsize in the Norwegian fleet of 14 ships, but she is still more intimate than some mammoth cruise ships nowadays. *Pearl's* gross tonnage is 93,500 and she is 293 metres long with 12 decks and 12 elevators. Facilities include the Stardust live entertainment theatre, 15 bars and lounges, casino, duty-free shops, beauty shop, library, games room, internet access, spa, fitness centre, 2 swimming pools, and 6 hot tubs.

The *Pearl* offers 17 places to eat. The complimentary dining rooms include Summer Palace, Indigo, O'Sheehan's Pub, Lotus Garden, and Garden Café buffet. Six specialty restaurants such as Cagney's Steakhouse, Le Bistro, Moderno, La Cucina, and Teppanyaki have different themes and gourmet menus. Your tour fare includes the extra fee for 5 dinners in these specialty restaurants. You can also dine in the privacy of your stateroom by ordering from the room service menu 24 hours a day ($8 charge for lunch and dinner). You can enjoy a different venue for each of your 21 dinners on board with time to return to your favourites. You may wish to reserve in advance, or just show up when you are ready.

Staterooms have TV, music, telephone, and bathroom with toilet, sink, and shower or bathtub. A great variety of stage shows is presented in the Stardust Theatre and Norwegian is well known for its extravagant entertainment. Every day has a full schedule of optional activities: dance class, bridge, bingo, shuffleboard, table-tennis, karaoke, board games, and fitness classes.

Cruise notes

Shore excursions included: On many cruises, shore excursions are a significant additional expense. This cruise includes six tours: Cartagena, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Acapulco, and Los Angeles.

Importance of booking early: Norwegian has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour and they are normally held until 90 days before sailing. However, any unsold staterooms can be taken away from us at any time if the ship fills and this has happened on several recent cruises. We had to turn away disappointed customers, even though we had seats available on the connecting motorcoach. **Please book early.**

Ultimate Beverage Package included: Order your favourite drink such as wine, beer, cocktail, mixed drink, or soft drink, and relax with friends in a lounge, on deck, in a dining room, or in your stateroom. It's all included and complimentary, even the gratuity. The maximum value per drink is $15. Please note that specialty coffees or teas and bottled water are not part of this beverage package. The third person in a triple booking is not provided with a beverage package (Norwegian policy).

5 Specialty Restaurants included: Make a reservation to have dinner in Cagney's Steakhouse, Le Bistro (French), Moderno (Brazilian), La Cucina (Italian), Teppanyaki (Asian), or Sushi and savour fabulous menus and cuisine. Normally there is a charge of $25 to $30 at each (plus gratuities), or some have a la carte pricing, so the first 5 restaurants you select are complimentary. Use this in conjunction with your beverage package and even your wine, beer and cocktails are included. You can reserve online up to 3 months before sailing or after you board the ship.

Itinerary

Wednesday, April 4:
Transportation is provided to **Seattle** and we stay overnight at the Quality Inn near the airport.

Thursday, April 5: *Meals: B*
We fly on Alaska Airlines non-stop to **New Orleans.** We stay three nights at the Wyndham Hotel, located in the French Quarter on Royal Street and a block off Canal Street. It has a restaurant, free wi-fi, indoor pool, and fitness centre.

Friday, April 6: *Meals: D*
This morning, a local guide takes us on a walking tour of the **French Quarter** where we hear the fascinating 300-year history of characters who built this city. Some highlights are the Cabildo Museum, the Spanish Quarter, St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square (where the original Louisiana Purchase is housed), Louis Armstrong Park, and Bourbon Street. During this leisurely walk, we stop for a New Orleans tradition of coffee and beignets at **Café Du Monde.** There is free time for lunch at the Historic French Market. Then we board the coach for a driving tour of the city: the Lower Ninth Ward where most of the damage occurred during Hurricane Katrina; Audubon Park; **St. Louis Cemetery,** an above-ground cemetery known for its voodoo history; Tulane and Loyola Universities; elegant **St. Charles Avenue**, lined with gracious mansions and trees; and the central business

district beside the Mississippi River. Our elegant welcome dinner is at **Court of Two Sisters**, the largest courtyard in the French Quarter and a New Orleans institution. Afterwards, we cross Bourbon Street to the **Maison Bourbon Dixieland Club** for an after-dinner drink and jazz show.

Saturday, April 7: *Meals: L,D*
At 11 am, we board the **Natchez Riverboat**, one of the few sternwheeler vessels left on the Mississippi River. There is a jazz band on board, calliope music, and a buffet lunch during this two-hour cruise around the Crescent Bend of the Mississippi. Next is **Mardi Gras World**, the famous float-making studio where 90% of the floats used in New Orleans' Mardi Gras parades are made. Observe artists and sculptors, try on elaborate costumes, and view a Mardi Gras video. Enjoy a unique experience at **New Orleans School of Cooking.** We learn how to prepare the taste of Louisiana, Cajun and Creole with recipes provided. After a full meal from our culinary prowess, we are entertained with history, trivia, and tall tales.

Sunday, April 8: *Meals: L,D*
We board the ***Norwegian Pearl*** and an embarkation buffet lunch is served in the Garden Café. The afternoon is free time to get familiar with the ship. We sail at 4 pm with a festive "Farewell to New Orleans" deck party as we cruise 150 km down the **Mississippi River** to the Gulf of Mexico. Enjoy your first wonderful dinner in one of the many restaurants, followed by a lively stage show or many other evening activities.

Monday, April 9: *Meals: B,L,D*
Enjoy a relaxing day at sea.

Tuesday, April 10: *Meals: B,L,D*
Our first port is **Cozumel**, the popular Mexican resort at the tip of the Yucatan. This is Mexico's largest Caribbean island and is located 10 km from the mainland. Cozumel was settled by the Mayans around 1000 AD but they were nearly wiped out by smallpox brought by the Spanish in the 16th century. Tourism started in the 1950s with the release of the movie *A New World*.

Wednesday, April 11: *Meals: B,L,D*
We arrive at the **Island of Roatan, Honduras,** at 8 am and depart at 6 pm. The island is 60 km long and 8 km wide, and is the largest of seven islands collectively called Islas de la Bahia. It is located about 80 km off the north coast of Honduras. Columbus stopped here during his fourth voyage in 1502-1504. The British occupied the island periodically from 1550 to 1700, and the first permanent settlers arrived from the Caymans in the 1830s. Shore excursions can be purchased for a variety of experiences on the island.

Thursday, April 12: *Meals: B,L,D*
The *Pearl* arrives at **Harvest Caye**, NCL's private island resort off southern Belize. Development of the island has cost $50 million since 2013. It features an expansive pool, seven acres of sandy beach, a shallow lagoon for water sports, and private luxury cabanas. A 40-metre tower is the start of a zipline across the island and a parachute drop.

Friday, April 13: *Meals: B,L,D*
Saturday, April 14: *Meals: B,L,D*
These are two leisurely days at sea.

Sunday, April 15: *Meals: B,L,D*
The *Pearl* docks at **Cartagena** in Colombia for a short visit from 7 am to 2 pm. Founded in 1533 by the Spanish, it rivalled Mexico City for commercial importance in the New World by the 17th century. The **Castillo de San Felipe** on the mainland guarded the wealth of the Spanish Main whereas the modern city is on an island accessed by a causeway. A tour with a local guide is included featuring San Felipe, a walk in the walled city, and a talk about Colombian coffee with a tasting.

Monday, April 16: *Meals: B,L,D*
Geographically, **Panama** is a curious country which connects two continents and has a length of 600 km, but a width of just 50 km between the Pacific and the Caribbean at its narrowest. Panama City, the capital and largest in the country, was founded in 1519 by the Spanish and has grown into a modern and bustling city. One of the highlights of our cruise is today's transit of the remarkable **Panama Canal.** Opened in 1914, after nine years of construction, it still ranks as one of the world's greatest engineering achievements with 134 million cubic metres of earth moved and a cost of $336 million. Currently about 15,000 ships per year (42 per day) pass through the canal and pay tolls of about $450 million. Cruise ships pay a toll based on berths, so Norwegian will pay about $300,000 for today's trip. During our eight-hour journey from the Caribbean to the Pacific, the *Pearl* is lifted by three locks, sails through Gatun Lake and the 12-km Gaillard Cut, then is lowered by three more locks back to sea level. A Panama Canal expert is on board to explain its history and technical operations. The Panama Canal expansion project has been under construction since 2007 and the first ship sailed through the new locks on June 26, 2016. Most cruise ships will continue to use the old locks.

Tuesday, April 17: *Meals: B,L,D*
A day at sea with lots of activities on board.

Wednesday, April 18: *Meals: B,L,D*
We arrive in **Costa Rica**, docking in the sheltered inlet of Puerto Caldera from 7 am to 5 pm. The country is known for its natural beauty, many parks and exotic wildlife. San Jose, the capital, is about 150 km away on a high interior plateau. Our tour features a **boat trip on the Tarcoles River** and Guacalillo Estuary. We see one of the world's largest colonies of crocodiles, the richest mangrove forest in the mid-Pacific Coast, and the country's most important conservation area for the scarlet macaw. About 250 different species of birds live here, including kingfishers, rosette spoonbills, great herons, and anhingas. The Tarcoles River is one of the most important feeding sites for resident and migratory birds, and is a mating and refuge site for mammals and reptiles. Lunch is included during this tour.

Thursday, April 19: *Meals: B,L,D*
The *Pearl* docks at Corinto in **Nicaragua** from 9 am to 6 pm. Settled in 1863 and named for the Greek city of Corinth, it is Nicaragua's largest Pacific port, even though less than 20,000 people live there. Nicaragua is a beautiful country of lakes, volcanoes and ocean beaches on both the Pacific and Caribbean, and has a population of less than six million. A locally-guided tour to the **colonial city of Leon** is included today. Leon was founded in 1524 by Spanish conquistadors at the base of Momotombo Volcano. The tour includes Central Park and the World Heritage Site of La Asuncion Cathedral. Lunch is at El Convento accompanied by folklore music and dances.

Friday, April 20: *Meals: B,L,D*
Overnight we sail along the coast of El Salvador and dock at Puerto Quetzal, **Guatemala,** the country's largest Pacific port. Guatemala is a mountainous country that straddles Central America and has a population of 12 million. Guatemala City is the capital, located about 100 km inland from Puerto Quetzal. A locally-guided tour is included up to the highlands and the picturesque town of **Antigua**. It was founded in 1543 and was the third capital of Guatemala. It is noted for Spanish Baroque architecture and the spectacular ruins of colonial churches. The city has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy a traditional lunch at the Porta Hotel, then visit Palace of the Captains General, the Cathedral, Central Plaza, and La Merced Church. There are shopping opportunities for textiles and jade. We return to Puerto Quetzal for sail-away at 6 pm.

Saturday, April 21: *Meals: B,L,D*
A day at sea.

Sunday, April 22: *Meals: B,L,D*
We arrive in the storied city of **Acapulco** at 8 am. Welcome to Mexico! Acapulco was founded in 1550 and, until 1815, it was Mexico's major port on the Pacific coast for Spanish trade with East Asia. Its population is about 700,000 and it is noted as one of Mexico's major resorts. It became famous in the 1950s as a vacation place for Hollywood stars and millionaires. A morning nature tour is included to provide a different perspective on this famous city. We enjoy panoramic views of the coast while driving around Acapulco Bay to a turtle camp, and learn more about the lives of the **sea turtles** and even liberate one of them. We take a boat tour in Three Palos Lagoon to view typical fauna and flora. Lunch is included if you are back on the ship. This afternoon, you may want choose to take a taxi and watch the daredevil La Quebrada divers as they plunge 40 metres from a cliff into the ocean.

Monday, April 23: *Meals: B,L,D*
We cross the Sea of Cortez.

Tuesday, April 24: *Meals: B,L,D*
Our second Mexican port is **Cabo San Lucas**, situated at the southern tip of the 1,300-km long Baja Peninsula. Don't miss the view of famous Los Arcos as we approach the harbour. We anchor from 7 am to 2 pm and ride tenders ashore.

Wednesday, April 25: *Meals: B,L,D*
Enjoy a day at sea off the **Baja Peninsula**.

Thursday, April 26: *Meals: B,L,D*
The *Pearl* arrives in San Pedro near **Los Angeles**. With the benefit of a local guide, we enjoy a full day touring the City of Angels. Look for stars in Hollywood at Grauman's Chinese Theatre; view the rich abodes in Beverly Hills, the Hollywood Bowl, downtown skyline, Music Center, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles. Lunch is included, then we return to the ship by 3 pm.

Friday, April 27: *Meals: B,L,D*
Saturday, April 28: *Meals: B,L,D*
These are two more restful cruising days as we head north along the Pacific Coast. Late on Saturday, the *Pearl* rounds Cape Flattery and sails into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Sunday, April 29: *Meals: B*
We dock in Seattle and bid farewell to the *Pearl*. Our coach meets us at the pier. We stop at the Duty-Free Store, cross the border, and take an afternoon ferry back to Victoria.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of $1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due January 3, 2018.
Discounts: Early bookers receive $250 discount on first 15 seats and $125 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after January 3.
Cancellation Policy: Up to December 1, 2017, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of $50 per person. From December 2, 2017, to January 3, 2018, the cancellation charge is $300 per person. From January 4 to February 2, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From February 3 to March 2, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After March 2, there is no refund.
Fare Changes: Changes to 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 for medical and cancellation claims, 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: Norwegian Cruise Line

Activity Level: Light activity including short distances to walk and some steps. One port is accessed by tenders. Due to the historic nature of Leon and Antigua, these included tours have lots of walking with frequent rest stops, and cobblestone streets are common. You can opt out of these tours if they are too strenuous for you. Check activity level for shore excursions you purchase on the ship. There can be longer walks in Seattle and New Orleans airports; 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, local guides and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.

e-points: This tour earns 131 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One point equals $1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until January 3.
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