

ROAD TO THE ARCTIC

With 7 day cruise from Seward to Vancouver on *Westerdam*
August 2, 2019 - 24 days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person: based on double/twin

\$8,875 Inside Category K

\$9,360 Outside Category D

\$10,210 Verandah Category VD



- > Other categories available along with single and triple fares.
- > Please add 2.3% GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 10 seats; \$150 on next 6
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 180 points; use 180 points by April 24

Includes

- Coach transportation for 17 days
- 16 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Flight from Victoria to Yellowknife on Westjet
- Current air taxes and fuel surcharges
- Locally-guided tour of Yellowknife
- Great Slave Lake boat trip with fish fry lunch
- Prince of Wales Museum
- Deh Cho Mackenzie River bridge toll
- Liard River ferry twice
- Scenic flight to Nahanni National Park with landing at Virginia Falls
- Nahanni National Park fee
- Naturalist walk at Muncho Lake
- Swim at Liard Hot Springs
- SS Klondike National Historic Site
- Yukon Beringia Centre
- Local guide to Tombstone on Dempster Hwy
- Drive on new road from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk
- Locally-guided tour of Tuktoyaktuk
- Visit to an Inuit home in Tuktoyaktuk with traditional lunch and Inuit fashion show
- Transfer from hotel to Inuvik Airport
- Flight on Air North from Inuvik to Dawson City
- Locally-guided tour of Dawson City
- Dredge #4 National Historic Site
- Goldpanning on Bonanza Creek
- Diamond Tooth Gerties with show
- 7-day Holland America cruise from Seward to Vancouver on board *Westerdam*
- Cruise gratuities
- Cruise taxes and port charges
- Entertainment and other services on ship
- Transportation from Vancouver cruise terminal to your Victoria pickup point
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides
- Luggage handling at airline, most hotels & ship
- **49 meals:** 17 breakfasts, 18 lunches, 14 dinners

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

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



MS Westerdam


Holland America's *MS Westerdam* made her inaugural cruise in 2004. She was the third of four Vista-class ships launched, preceded by *Zuiderdam* in 2002 and *Oosterdam* in 2003 and followed by *Noordam* in 2006. Carrying 1,848 passengers, these ships are Holland America's third largest design, but they still have an intimate feel to them. *Westerdam*'s gross tonnage is 82,000 and she is 300 metres long. Her 11 decks feature a 900-seat live entertainment theatre, seven lounges, casino, shopping arcade, movie lounge, beauty shop, library, games room, Internet centre, spa, gymnasium, and two swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover). *Westerdam* has 14 elevators and four of them are glass with panoramic views.

Dining is one of the highlights of a cruise. The elegant two-floor Dining Room serves breakfast, lunch and dinner with full choice of menu. The Lido Market offers six buffet-style serving stations for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the 11 pm buffet. The Pinnacle Grill and 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 24 hours a day.

Staterooms have twin lower beds (some convert to queen-size double), television, music, telephone, and bathroom with toilet, sink and shower or bathtub. A crew of over 800 ensures top-quality service and entertainment. Every day has a full schedule of optional activities: dance class, bridge, bingo, shuffleboard, table-tennis, karaoke, and board games. The movie theatre presents recent films frequently, there is an entertaining live stage show every evening, and musicians are playing in most lounges.

Notes about your Arctic tour

- Accommodation in the North is the best available, but it may not be up to the standard you expect in the rest of Canada. In places such as Fort Simpson, Muncho Lake, and Eagle Plains, there is only one hotel. Since hotels in the North have a limited season and enormous operating expenses, room rates are very high, so that is why this tour costs more per day than most Wells Gray tours.
- This tour is scheduled for August, so you can enjoy colourful foliage, pleasantly warm days and cool nights, and possibly the aurora borealis. Another advantage of August is that there is a minimum of mosquitoes or other insects. Some customers ask for a June tour to the North, but that is the height of bug season and some people have difficulty sleeping with nearly 24 hours of daylight.
- **Please book early!** Holland America 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 waitlist disappointed customers, even though we had seats available on the motorcoach portion of the tour.
- **Dinner reservations on ship:** *Westerdam* 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.

 **Activity Level:** Some travelling days are long as hotels and towns are far apart in the north. There are walks to some viewpoints. Some communities do not have paved streets and sidewalks, so the walking surface may be uneven. There are steps on and off the Nahanni plane and Inuvik to Dawson plane, and the lake cruise. This tour is not appropriate if you depend upon a walker. The coach and planes cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, 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. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require ongoing assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be asked / required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you. Seeing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation.

Itinerary

Friday, August 2, 2019:

Meals: D

A transfer is provided to Victoria Airport. We fly on Westjet via Calgary to **Yellowknife**, the capital and largest community of the Northwest Territories. We stay two nights at the Explorer Hotel. Dinner is included, a chance to meet your fellow travellers as we embark on our Arctic Tour.

Saturday, August 3:

Meals: L

A locally-guided tour features highlights of Yellowknife, followed by a boat trip on **Great Slave Lake** with a fish fry lunch served on an island. This is the deepest lake in North America at 610 metres, and the 10th largest lake in the world, covering 27,195 square km. The rest of the day is free time for you to explore Yellowknife and visit the outstanding **Prince of Wales Museum**.

Sunday, August 4:

Meals: L,D

We start our road journey across the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Alaska. The Mackenzie Highway winds around the north arm of Great Slave Lake to Fort Providence. We cross the mighty **Mackenzie River** on the Deh Cho Bridge which opened in 2012 at a cost of \$200 million. The Mackenzie starts just upstream in Great Slave Lake and flows 1,742 km to the Arctic Ocean, making it Canada's longest river. We stop at Whitaker Falls, then a ferry takes us over the broad Liard River to **Fort Simpson**. The next two nights are at Nahanni Inn.

Monday, August 5:

Meals: B,L

Today is one of the most memorable of our Arctic tour. We board charter planes for a thrilling air excursion into the wilderness of **Nahanni National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The highlight is 100-metre high **Virginia Falls**, one of Canada's greatest cataracts and also one of the least-visited. The planes land near the falls and you have 1½ hours to visit the awesome viewpoints. Downstream from the falls, the Nahanni River boils through miles of rapids below 1,000-metre cliffs. These canyonlands were made famous by prospectors' tales in the last century of lost gold and the Headless Valley. A recommended book is Raymond Patterson's *The Dangerous River*, a gripping account of his 1927 journey into the Nahanni. Weather permitting, our flight route follows the Nahanni River from 1st to 4th Canyon past Pulpit Rock, then goes to Little Doctor Lake, the rugged **Mackenzie Mountains**, and the soaring cliffs of Ram Plateau.

Tuesday, August 6:

Meals: B,L,D

We follow the Liard Highway south into B.C. and join the **Alaska Highway**. This world-famous road was built in 1942 in just eight months and has been continually upgraded. This scenic part of the Alaska Highway winds through the barren Rocky Mountains to Muncho Lake. We stay two nights at **Northern Rockies Lodge**, one of Canada's largest log structures.

Wednesday, August 7:

Meals: B,D

A trip is offered to nearby **Liard Hot Springs** where the water temperature ranges from 108° to 126°F. This afternoon, you may want to take a pleasant stroll along the shoreline of Muncho Lake.

Thursday, August 8:

Meals: B,L

We continue on the Alaska Highway along the Liard River and enter the Yukon at an elaborate monument. In **Watson Lake**, we see the famous Sign Forest, started by a homesick roadbuilder 75 years ago and now numbering several thousand city signs. We drive along the east shore of immense Teslin Lake and cross the long bridge over Nisutlin Bay. We stay two nights in **Whitehorse** at the downtown Best Western Gold Rush Inn.

Friday, August 9:

We visit the **Yukon Beringia Centre** which tells the story of native people and animals that lived in a prehistoric land between Alaska and Siberia known as the Bering Land Bridge. Then we go aboard a restored sternwheeler **SS Klondike** which used to ply the Yukon River downstream to Dawson City and is now a National Historic Site.

Saturday, August 10:

Meals: L

We leave Whitehorse via the **Klondike Highway** and follow the Yukon River past Lake Laberge and Five Finger Rapids. Our destination is **Dawson City**, the partly-restored town where the fabulous Klondike Gold Rush started in 1898. Once Dawson had a population of 30,000 people but now it is home to a mere 800. We stay at the Downtown Hotel.

Sunday, August 11:

Meals: L,D

Canada's renowned wilderness road, **Dempster Highway**, heads north from Dawson City across the Arctic Circle to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. Surveying of the route began in 1958 and it took 21 years to build. The road was named for William Dempster of the Northwest Mounted Police who searched for the Lost Patrol in 1911. During our first day on the Dempster, a local guide is

with us as far as the **Tombstone Mountains**. We follow the Klondike and Ogilvie Rivers through stunning scenery of barren mountains and tundra. We stay overnight at Eagle Plains Hotel which perches on a lofty ridge with views in every direction of Arctic wilderness.

Monday, August 12: *Meals: B,L*

We soon cross the **Arctic Circle** and the highway winds over miles of mountain ridges without a tree in sight. The Peel and Mackenzie Rivers are crossed utilizing small ferries. At **Fort McPherson**, we see a traditional northern Hudson's Bay store and the graves of the Lost Patrol. **Inuvik** is a modern town of 3,200 people on the Mackenzie River where it widens into its huge delta. We stay two nights at the Mackenzie Hotel.

Tuesday, August 13: *Meals: B,L*

A highway to Canada's Arctic Coast has been talked about since the 1960s. Construction began in 2014 and the new road, 138 km from Inuvik to **Tuktoyaktuk**, was opened in November 2017. The Ice Road which had served Tuktoyaktuk in winter for decades closed for the last time in April 2017. Today, we have the exciting experience of driving to the Arctic Ocean, across the permafrost of the **Mackenzie River Delta**. A tour of Tuktoyaktuk, Canada's most northerly mainland town, is conducted by a long-time local resident and includes a chance to dip a toe or finger in the frigid **Arctic Ocean**. We also enjoy a traditional lunch at an Inuit home and a presentation on Inuit fashions and lifestyles.

Wednesday, August 14: *Meals: B,D*

The morning is free time in Inuvik. A popular attraction is Our Lady Of Victory Church, nicknamed the Igloo Church. A flight of 1¼ hours on Air North whisks us from Inuvik back to Dawson City. Accommodation for two nights is again at the Downtown Hotel.

Thursday, August 15: *Meals: B*

A local guide accompanies us on a drive around **Dawson City** and up Bonanza Creek to the gold diggings. The gigantic Dredge #4, now a National Historic Site, is included and you can even try panning for gold yourself at Claim #33 (you keep what you find, even at over \$1,200 an ounce). Back in Dawson, there are optional activities to enjoy during a free afternoon: the visitor centre, a presentation by the "Ghost of Robert Service", a cruise on the Yukon River, or the SS Keno stern-wheeler. Tonight, we go to **Diamond Tooth Gerties** for casino gambling and a vaudeville show.

Friday, August 16: *Meals: B,L,D*

Today's drive traverses the magnificent **Top of the World Highway**, so named because it winds for miles across the tops of high ridges above treeline. A surprise is the solitary log cabin which is U.S. Customs, for this is "Welcome to Alaska". Just past the border is the unique village of **Chicken** where you can mail your postcards with a very unusual postmark. Back on the Alaska Highway, we stay overnight in **Tok** at Golden Bear Lodge.

Saturday, August 17: *Meals: B,L*

We follow the **Glenn Highway** along the north side of the rugged Chugach Mountains, past Matanuska Glacier and through the fertile farmlands of the Matanuska Valley. On arrival in **Anchorage**, Alaska's largest city, we stay overnight at the Lakefront Hotel beside Lake Spenard.

Sunday, August 18: *Meals: L,D*

We drive around Turnagain Arm onto the Kenai Peninsula. At **Seward**, we say goodbye to our driver who takes the coach home empty, a 4,000 km trip. We board Holland America's **Westerdam** and an embarkation lunch is served in the Lido Market. Explore the ship this afternoon and familiarize yourself with her many facilities. Savour your first superb dinner, then be on deck at 8 pm for a festive party as we sail away from Seward.

Monday, August 19: *Meals: B,L,D*

We cruise across the **Gulf of Alaska** where some of the tallest peaks on the continent rise from the shoreline.

Tuesday, August 20: *Meals: B,L,D*

Nothing quite prepares you for waking up this morning amidst the grandeur of **Glacier Bay**. The **Westerdam** sails close to the Margerie Glacier and the Grand Pacific Glacier where chunks of ice periodically break away and crash into the sea. A National Park Ranger on board explains the natural phenomenon in detail. We spend most of today exploring an unforgettable world of floating ice castles and tidewater glaciers.

Wednesday, August 21: *Meals: B,L,D*

Haines is a rare port of call for Alaska cruises. It is situated at the south end of the Haines Highway which crosses the St. Elias Mountains to the Yukon. The Klondike Gold Rush brought a rush of people to the area in the 1890s, until the White Pass Railway was built into nearby Skagway, resulting in the abandonment of Haines. The ship docks near Fort William Seward which was the only US military outpost in Alaska until World War II. **Westerdam** is in Haines from 7 am to 9 pm.

Thursday, August 22:*Meals: B,L,D*

Westerdam docks in **Juneau**, the capital of Alaska, at 8 am and departs at 6 pm. City tours can be purchased on the dock or on the ship which visit the Capitol Building, Governor's Mansion, and the sprawling Mendenhall Glacier. During the rest of the day, you can shop the many boutiques, visit the Museum, ride the cablecar up Mount Roberts for a terrific view, or enjoy the action at the Red Dog Saloon.

Friday, August 23:*Meals: B,L,D*

Our last port of call is **Ketchikan** from 11 am to 7 pm. This picturesque town has waterfront buildings on stilts, weathered stairways that cling to steep hillsides, and the much-photographed Creek Street boardwalk.

Saturday, August 24:*Meals: B,L,D*

This is a restful day at sea as we cruise south through the **Inside Passage**, past hundreds of islands and waterfalls, viewing wildlife such as bald eagles, porpoises or Orca whales. If you tire of the scenery, there is always some interesting activity scheduled and the daily ship's newsletter keeps you informed, whether it is a stage show, a movie, a card game, a demonstration of napkin folding or ice-carving, or a walk around deck.

Sunday, August 25:*Meals: B*

We dock at Canada Place in **Vancouver** this morning. Transportation is provided to your pickup point in Victoria.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due April 24, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 10 seats and \$150 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after April 24.

Cancellation Policy: Up to February 22, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From February 23 to April 24, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From April 25 to May 24, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From May 25 to June 24, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After June 24, there is no refund.

Changes to tour: As this tour has been planned 15 months in advance, changes to air taxes, cruise taxes and other costs (either up or down) could occur, in which case the tour fare will be adjusted. Please note that with the current volatile fuel costs, the airlines and Holland America can add fuel surcharges any time, even after your final payment, and we must collect those extra costs from you. Hotels named in the itinerary could change, but substitute accommodation will be of similar quality.

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: Northwest Territories Tourism

E-points: This tour earns 180 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 April 24.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842