

# PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Cruise on Oosterdam from Fort Lauderdale to Vancouver  
April 10, 2019 - 25 Days



a world to experience



**Fares Per Person:** based on double/twin

**\$7980** Inside Category K

**\$8620** Outside Category D

**\$9245** Verandah Category VD

> Other categories available along with single and triple fares.

> Tour is exempt from GST.

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

> **Experience Points:** Earn 132 points from this tour.

Redeem **132 points** if you book by **January 4**.



## \* PORTS OF CALL \*

**CARTAGENA (Colombia)**

**FUERTE AMADOR (Panama)**

**PUERTO CALDERA (Costa Rica)**

**CORINTO (Nicaragua)**

**PUERTO QUETZAL (Guatemala)**

**PUERTO CHIAPAS (Mexico)**

**HUATULCO (Mexico)**

**MANZANILLO (Mexico)**

**PUERTO VALLARTA (Mexico)**

**SAN DIEGO (California)**

**VICTORIA (BC)**

## Includes

- Transportation to Seattle airport
- Flight from Seattle to Fort Lauderdale
- Current air transport taxes & security fees
- 3 nights hotel accommodation & taxes
- Transfer from Fort Lauderdale airport to hotel
- Transfer from hotel to cruise terminal
- 21 days on Holland America's Oosterdam
- Cruise gratuities
- Port charges, Panama Canal fees, cruise taxes
- Entertainment and other services on board ship
- Locally-guided tour in Cartagena with Castillo de San Felipe and coffee tasting
- Locally-guided tour in Panama City
- 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
- Dinner reservation in the Pinnacle Grill
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Knowledgeable tour director throughout cruise
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **66 meals:** 24 breakfasts, 21 lunches, 21 dinners

Kamloops > 250-374-0831

Kelowna > 250-762-3435

[www.wellsgraytours.com](http://www.wellsgraytours.com)

Penticton > 250-493-1255

Vernon > 250-545-9197

**Toll Free > 800-667-9552**



## Holland America's *MS Oosterdam*

The **MS Oosterdam** (pronounced OH-ster-dam) made its inaugural cruise in 2003. She was the second of four Vista-class ships launched, preceded by the *Zuiderdam* in 2002 and followed by the *Westerdam* in 2004 and the *Noordam* in 2006. Carrying 1848 passengers, these ships are Holland America's third largest, but they are still more intimate than some mammoth cruise ships nowadays. The *Oosterdam*'s gross tonnage is 82,000 and she is 936 feet 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). The *Oosterdam* 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 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 and you will not go hungry on board!

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, board games and fitness activities. The movie theatre presents films several times daily and, every evening, there is live entertainment in the Mainstage Theatre plus musicians playing in most lounges.

### Cruise notes

**Shore excursions included:** On many cruises, shore excursions are a significant additional expense. On this cruise, five excursions are included: Cartagena, Panama City, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

**Dinner reservations:** The *Oosterdam* 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 fixed dining. The Pinnacle and Canaletto take reservations on board and you should do this early in the voyage.

**Importance of booking early:** Holland America has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour and they are normally held until 75 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. Sometimes cruise fares are reduced after final payment to fill remaining vacant staterooms, but a shipboard credit is usually offered as compensation to those who reserved early. **Please book early.**

### Itinerary

#### Wednesday, April 10:

Transportation is provided to **Seattle** and we stay overnight near the airport. Note: Home pickups are available for a small additional cost.

#### Thursday, April 11: Meals: B

We fly to **Fort Lauderdale** and stay two nights at the Embassy Suites near the airport and cruise terminal. Hotel amenities include a pool, whirlpool, restaurant, lounge, and nightly cocktail reception.

#### Friday, April 12: Meals: B

This is a free day to relax around the hotel or visit the many nearby shops and restaurants. A free

shuttle service is available to nearby places.

#### Saturday, April 13: Meals: B,L,D

We board the **Oosterdam** 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 Port Everglades at 6 pm with a festive "Farewell to Fort Lauderdale" deck party. After a sumptuous dinner, enjoy a lively stage show or music in many smaller lounges.

#### Sunday, April 14: Meals: B,L,D

**Monday, April 15:** Meals: B,L,D  
During our first two days at sea, we sail between Cuba and Haiti to enter the **Caribbean Sea**. We

also cross the Tropic of Cancer.

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

The *Oosterdam* docks at **Cartagena** in Colombia for a short visit from 7 am to 1 pm. Founded in 1533 by the Spanish, it rivalled Mexico City for commercial importance in the New World by the 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Wednesday, April 17:** *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 has a population of 3.3 million people, mostly concentrated near the Panama Canal. 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 Holland America will pay about \$290,000 for the *Oosterdam's* passage. During our eight-hour journey from the Caribbean to the Pacific, the *Oosterdam* 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. After leaving the Canal, the *Oosterdam* anchors for the night at Fuerte Amador.

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

**Panama City** was the starting point for Spanish expeditions that conquered the Inca Empire in Peru. It was a stopover on one of the most important trade routes in the American continent, leading to the fairs of Nombre de Dios and Portobelo, through which passed most of the gold and silver that Spain took from the Americas. Panama City today is at the Pacific entrance to the Canal and from a distance resembles the Emerald City of Oz with soaring glass skyscrapers. We take tenders ashore and a morning tour is included, featuring the ruins of Panamá Viejo and

the **Bridge of the Americas**. The ship sails at 5 pm.

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

A day at sea with lots of activities on board.

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

We arrive in **Costa Rica**, docking in the sheltered inlet of Puerto Caldera. 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. A six-hour tour is included, starting with a boat trip on the Tarcoles River on the edge of Carara Biological Reserve where we can see one of the world's biggest **crocodile** populations in the wild.

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

The *Oosterdam* docks at Corinto in **Nicaragua** from 10 am to 5 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 accompanied by folklore music and dances.

**Monday, April 22:** *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, then visit Palace of the Captains General, the Cathedral, Central Plaza, and La Merced Church. There are shopping opportunities for textiles and jade.

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

In early morning, the *Oosterdam* starts sailing along the coast of Mexico. **Puerto Chiapas** is the gateway to the Mayan world on the Pacific Coast. Sightseeing tours can be purchased to the Mayan ruins of Palenque, dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a trip into mangrove swamps or bird watching. The Tacana Volcano dominates the view from the port eastward and is the second highest

peak in Central America at 13,320 feet.

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

We arrive at 8 am at **Huatulco**, considered Mexico's hottest new resort. It is built along nine beautiful bays with many hotels and condominiums under development. Enjoy shopping in the plaza or at Tangolunda Bay. Sightseeing tours can be purchased such as a catamaran trip in the harbour and a bird watching eco tour.

**Thursday, April 25:** *Meals: B,L,D*

A day at sea.

**Friday, April 26:** *Meals: B,L,D*

The *Oosterdam* docks at **Manzanillo**, Mexico's busiest port which handles Pacific cargo for Mexico City. It is known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World" and for 60 years has hosted international fishing competitions such as the Dorsey Tournament. A giant sculpture of a sailfish is on the waterfront. Manzanillo Bay was discovered in 1527 by navigator Alvaro de Saavedra and named for the abundant manzanilla trees which were used extensively for ship building. We depart at 5 pm.

**Saturday, April 27:** *Meals: B,L,D*

The *Oosterdam* calls next at **Puerto Vallarta** from 8 am to 11 pm. Be sure to be on deck early as the ship maneuvers inside the narrow entrance to this harbour. A bazaar is next to the dock and numerous other boutiques are in the historic downtown

area, about 3 km distant. The city became famous and attracted many celebrities after *Night of the Iguana* was filmed here in 1964.

**Sunday, April 28:** *Meals: B,L,D*

**Monday, April 29:** *Meals: B,L,D*

During two days at sea, we cross the Sea of Cortez and cruise up the **Baja Peninsula's** west coast.

**Tuesday, April 30:** *Meals: B,L,D*

We dock in **San Diego** until 4 pm. You may wish to visit the San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park, or Sea World, or go shopping at Old Town or Horton Plaza.

**Wednesday, May 1:** *Meals: B,L,D*

**Thursday, May 2:** *Meals: B,L,D*

These are two more restful cruising days.

**Friday, May 3:** *Meals: B,L,D*

In the morning, the *Oosterdam* rounds Cape Flattery and sails east into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We dock in **Victoria** from 2 pm until 11 pm. You may enjoy strolling the Inner Harbour or visiting local friends and relatives.

**Saturday, May 4:** *Meals: B*

We dock at Canada Place in Vancouver this morning and bid farewell to the *Oosterdam*. Home drop-offs are available for a small additional cost.

## Tour Policies

**Payments:** A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due January 4, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**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 4.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to December 4, 2018, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From December 5, 2018, to January 4, 2019, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From January 5 to February 1, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From February 2 to March 1, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After March 1, 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.

**Photo Credit:** Holland America 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 Cartagena, 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 Fort Lauderdale airports; request a cart or wheelchair in advance if this could be an issue for you. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. 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 132 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 4.

**Consumer Protection BC licences:** Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924