

OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY

Switzerland, Austria & southern Germany

August 2, 2020 - 24 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$13,095 double/twin

\$14,635 single



- > Early booking recommended! Tour is offered once every 10 years.
- > Please add 0.3% GST.
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 230 points from this tour.
Redeem 230 points if you book by January 31, 2020.

Includes

- Transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- Flight from Vancouver to Frankfurt and return (estimated cost)
- Current air transport tax, security fees and fuel surcharge (estimated cost)
- 22 nights of accommodation and taxes
- Coach transportation in Europe for 21 days
- Orientation tour of Frankfurt
- Locally-guided tour of Heidelberg
- Heidelberg Castle
- Rhine Falls
- Guided walking tour of Lucerne
- Lion Monument
- Guided walking tour of Salzburg & Mozart sites
- Fortress Hohensalzburg
- Mozart-themed dinner with musicians
- Hitler's "Eagle's Nest"
- Swarovski Crystal World
- Locally-guided tour of Innsbruck
- Tyrolean dinner with dances and music
- Cable car up Mount Patscherkofel
- Mittenwald Violin Museum
- Neuschwanstein Castle
- Monastery Ettal
- Linderhof Castle
- First Class (Category 1) ticket to Oberammergau Passion Play
- Locally-guided tour of Munich
- Dachau Museum
- Rothenburg walking tour with Night Watchman
- Schloss Rudesheim winery with vintner's dinner
- Cruise on Rhine River
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Multilingual European tour guide
- Luggage handling fees at hotels and airline
- Road and bridge tolls
- Gratuities to European guide & driver, local guides, and wait staff
- **39 meals:** 22 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 14 dinners

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Tour Notes

Tour director & guides: Your Wells Gray tour director, Marion Wienhold, is very experienced with European travel and has accompanied many of our previous groups to Europe. She is also fluent in German and French. All tour arrangements have been handled by Ruijs Travel in Amsterdam, including the tickets to the Passion Play. A multilingual tour guide meets you at Frankfurt Airport and stays with you throughout the tour. In addition, city sightseeing is conducted by knowledgeable local guides. You will be expertly guided and well looked after!

Passport and Visa: A passport is required for this tour and must be valid for three months after your tour returns. If you do not have a passport, go to a Service Canada office and allow at least one month for processing. A Canadian citizen does not require a visa to enter these countries.

Early booking: We strongly recommend that you book early for this tour. Many Wells Gray customers have booked our pre-sale offer. Only one coach is scheduled and the tour is limited to 44 travellers. The next departure will be 10 years later, in 2030.

The flight: Air fares and schedules will be available in September 2019 for summer 2020. Our best estimate of the air fare, based on 2018 summer fares, has been included in the price of this tour. When 2020 air fares are announced, we may need to adjust the tour fare up or down and you will be notified of the difference. A typical schedule has a late afternoon departure from Vancouver, arriving in Frankfurt in late morning (local time) the following day. Transportation is provided from Victoria to New Westminster with overnight stay on August 2, the day before the flight, to avoid the risk of a ferry delay. The return flight is usually an afternoon departure from Frankfurt, arriving in Vancouver on the afternoon of the same day.

Currency exchange: As this tour has been planned and priced nearly two years before departure, it is possible that exchange fluctuations between the Canadian dollar and the Euro could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease.

Other changes: Hotels named in this itinerary have been confirmed, but could change in the next 1½ years due to reasons beyond Wells Gray's control. Similar or better hotels will generally be offered. There could also be changes to the itinerary and attractions, and you will be notified of any major changes.

Singles: In Europe, rooms for singles are often a different style or smaller size than rooms for twins. Many hotels limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group. Please book early if you prefer to travel single.

Triples are not available on this tour.

Gratuities to the European guide, motorcoach driver, and local city guides are included in the tour fare. Gratuities to the Wells Gray tour director and Canadian drivers are not included and left to your discretion.

A leisurely tour: When Wells Gray Tours staff were researching European itineraries for this tour in early 2018, we found many were too short and far too rushed, covering many countries in the style of the film *If it's Tuesday, It Must be Belgium*. Therefore, we designed our own itinerary which is a leisurely tour with six stops for two nights and one for three nights and easy travelling days to enjoy each destination.

Helpful Hints & Tour Info: This information letter will be provided at final payment and will include details about weather, clothing, currency, power supply, hotel contacts, flight schedule, itinerary changes, and other tips.

If you compare tours: There are numerous competing tours to see the Oberammergau Passion Play. If you compare, please consider:

- (1) You are staying at a hotel in Oberammergau that is a short walk from the theatre. Some companies stay up to 50 km away which is much cheaper. In order to manage dinner service for the 5,000 play attendees, you are required to return to your hotel during the intermission.
- (2) You have a First Class (Category 1) play ticket so you have superb seating in a 5,000-seat theatre.
- (3) The Wells Gray itinerary offers three weeks of experiences in southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The Passion Play is certainly a highlight, but the tour includes many other memorable experiences.



Activity Level: Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces such as cobblestone streets, and walk up to a kilometre, plus stand for an extended time on walking tours. Rooms in some hotels may be reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. 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. There can be long walks in Vancouver and Frankfurt airports. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. Seeing and experiencing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation. The tour director, European guide and driver, and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you need frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

The Passion Play

In 1632, as the Black Plague ravaged the people of Europe, the elders of the church in the tiny Bavarian community of Oberammergau prayed that no more deaths would occur here. Eighty-four people had already died, so they vowed to keep a promise if they were spared more deaths. Not one more person died and the promise "to enact the passion of Christ every ten years" has been faithfully kept since then. The first Passion Play was presented outdoors in an alpine meadow in 1634. Starting in 1680, the play was held during the first summer of each new decade and, with the exception of wars and political bans, the residents of Oberammergau have upheld their promise for over 380 years. The Passion Play Theatre, built in 1930, seats almost 5,000 people in upholstered seats that are under cover with a view of the nearby Bavarian Alps, but the stage is in the open air. The play lasts five hours in the afternoon and evening plus a three-hour intermission for dinner. The performance is in German, but a translation booklet is provided. Over 2,000 performers, musicians and stage technicians are involved in the production. All must be residents of Oberammergau and must have lived there for ten years to hold a leading role. Preparations and rehearsals for each 10th year production start several years in advance and residents are proud to have a role. One scene, "Entry to Jerusalem", has over 600 people simultaneously on the huge stage. The splendid music, a 50-voice choir, live animals, dedicated performers of all ages, lavish costumes, and spectacular sets all combine to make the Oberammergau Passion Play a truly memorable event.

Itinerary

Sunday, August 2, 2020:

Meals: D

Transportation is provided from the Victoria area to New Westminster and we stay overnight at the Inn at Westminster Quay, overlooking the Fraser River. Meet the BC Interior travellers at a get-acquainted dinner.

Monday, August 3:

Meals: B

The morning is leisure time and you may want to take a stroll along Westminster Quay. Our flight departs in late afternoon and is non-stop to Frankfurt. A night flight such as this makes it easier to sleep on the plane and adjust to the new time.

Tuesday, August 4:

Meals: D

The flight arrives in **Frankfurt** in the morning and we meet our European guide, driver and coach. We start with an orientation drive through Frankfurt, then continue to **Darmstadt** for a night at the Maritim Darmstadt Hotel. A "Welcome to Germany" reception with your guide is followed by a traditional German dinner.

Wednesday, August 5:

Meals: B,D

We drive along Hessische Bergstrasse past terraced vineyards and ruined castles to **Heidelberg**, Germany's oldest university town. Sightseeing includes the red castle of the Palatine Electors and the Old Town, and admission to Heidelberg Castle which dates to 1214. We continue to the legendary **Black Forest** area and, following the "Schwarzwaldpanoramahochstraße", we reach Lake Titisee. Our hotel, the Maritim Titisee, has a splendid setting by the lakeshore.

Thursday, August 6:

Meals: B,D

The morning is free time to explore the Village. Maybe you can find a traditional Black Forest cuckoo-clock as a souvenir. Afterwards, we leave for a scenic drive through the Black Forest and arrive at Schaffhausen where the spectacular **Rhine Falls** divide Germany and Switzerland. After crossing the border, we continue to Lucerne and stay two nights at Monopol Hotel.

Friday, August 7:

Meals: B

Our day starts with a guided walking tour through the old town of **Lucerne**, past the Kornmarkt (grain market), the Old Town Hall, and the restored houses at the Hirschenplatz and the Weinmarkt, decorated with paintings and guild flags. Walk across the covered Mill Bridge with the little chapel in the middle and see the **Lion Monument** which remembers the heroic deaths of Swiss mercenaries at the Tuileries in 1792. The afternoon is leisure time; you may wish to take the cable car up Mount Pilatus, cruise Lake Lucerne, or shop for mementoes.

Saturday, August 8:

Meals: B

This is a day of magnificent scenery as we travel through the **Swiss Alps!** First, we enjoy the lakes region, passing Lake Zug, Lake Zurich, Oberensee and Walensee, and picturesque towns such as Sargans and Chur. We even have a short visit to the tiny principality of **Liechtenstein**. Then we ascend the spectacular Oberhalbstein Highway over the Julier Pass and arrive in **St. Moritz** in early afternoon. We stay overnight at the Hotel Steffani, an intimate family-operated inn.

Sunday, August 9:*Meals: B,L*

Today's drive goes through three countries. As we climb out of St. Moritz, we cross the Pass dal Fuorn into Italy and enjoy lunch in St. Ulrich, at the base of the awesome peaks of the **Dolomites**. This afternoon, we continue through the Val Gardena and Dobbiacco to enter the Tyrol region of Austria. Our overnight stop is in **Lienz** at the delightful Hotel Traube on the town square.

Monday, August 10:*Meals: B,D*

Leaving Lienz, we drive the scenic alpine road over 2,500-metre **Grossglocknerhochalpenstraße** past the Franz Josef Glacier and summer ski resorts such as Kaprun and Zell am See. Upon arrival in **Salzburg**, we stay three nights at the Hotel Arcotel Castellani.

Tuesday, August 11:*Meals: B,D*

In the morning, we take a guided stroll through the city centre – a pedestrian zone where we see many historic sites related to Mozart. Salzburg is also known as the “Rome of the North” and has many magnificent monuments from both the Baroque and Renaissance periods. Designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site, Salzburg was ruled for centuries by princes and archbishops. Highlights of our walk include **Mozart's birthplace**, St Peter's Church, Salzburg Cathedral, and the 12th century Fortress of Hohensalzburg. Tonight, we have a special treat – a **Mozart-themed dinner** where young musicians perform and introduce us to the musical world of Mozart.

Wednesday, August 12:*Meals: B,D*

A different experience awaits today as we venture into the Bavarian Mountains to visit Hitler's historic **Eagle's Nest**. Perched on a ridge at a height of 2,000 metres, the building offers a magnificent view across the Salzburg Alps. Back in the valley, there is free time to explore the village of Berchtesgaden. Our last stop is at **Lake Königssee**, the deepest lake in Germany and noted for its crystal clear waters.

Thursday, August 13:*Meals: B,D*

During the scenic drive through the Tyrol, we visit **Swarovski Crystal World** which features crystals, light and sound designs. Upon arrival in **Innsbruck**, a local guide is waiting to show us the sights of the “Jewel of the Alps” such as the “Goldenes Dachl”, a roof of gilded copper shingles symbolic of Innsbruck's old Town; the bright yellow and white Hofburg, the Triumphal Arch of 1765, and Europa-bruecke, Europe's highest bridge. We stay two nights at Hotel Grauer Bar. Tonight, enjoy a special dinner with Tyrolean dances and music.

Friday, August 14:*Meals: B*

We ride by cable car up **Mount Patscherkofel** for a breathtaking view over the Austrian, German and Italian Alps. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Saturday, August 15:*Meals: B,D*

After crossing the border into Germany, we stop in **Mittenwald**, a town famous for violin-making. We visit a small violin museum and learn how to build a violin. During the afternoon, we continue to **Garmisch-Partenkirchen**, a popular mountain resort at the foot of Germany's highest mountain, the Zugspitze. We stay two nights at the Grandhotel Atlas.

Sunday, August 16:*Meals: B*

We tour King Ludwig's white-turreted fairytale **Neuschwanstein Castle** overlooking the Bavarian Alps. Continuing to Wies, we see its magnificent church, a rococo masterpiece with a sublime ceiling fresco. During the return to Garmisch, there is an orientation drive through Oberammergau.

Monday, August 17:*Meals: B, D*

Our first stop is the Monastery Ettal, founded in 1330 as a meeting place for an order of knighthood. At **Castle Linderhof**, Ludwig's summer residence and favourite rococo castle, we stroll the beautifully decorated halls and admire the colourful gardens. Then we arrive at **Oberammergau**, the exciting highlight of our tour. Our accommodation is at the Hotel Alte Poste which is centrally located and a short walk from the Passion Play theatre. The hotel was built in 1612 and has been owned by the Preisinger family since 1896; Toni portrayed Judas in the 2000 play. This afternoon, there is time to stroll the plaza, admire murals on the wood-carved houses, or browse the shops.

Tuesday, August 18:*Meals: B,L,D*

The morning is free time, then the renowned **Oberammergau Passion Play** starts at 1:30 pm and runs until 9 pm, with an intermission for dinner.

Wednesday, August 19:*Meals: B,L*

It is less than two hours drive north to **Munich**, the capital of Bavaria. A guided tour shows off some sights such as Nymphenburg Palace, the 1468 Frauenkirche Cathedral, the Olympic Stadium, and the Oktoberfest area. A traditional Bavarian lunch is included at a typical Bierkeller. The afternoon is leisure time. We stay two nights at the Mercure City Center Hotel.

Thursday, August 20:*Meals: B*

On the outskirts of Munich is the former notorious **Dachau concentration camp** whose museum and grounds document the incarceration and deaths of nearly 200,000 prisoners between 1933 and 1945. If you prefer not to visit a place of such tragedy, you are welcome to do other activities in Munich today – take a stroll through the pedestrian zone, or enjoy a leisurely lunch in one of the many cafés, or a beer in a Biergarten.

Friday, August 21:*Meals: B,D*

We drive along the **Romantic Road** through Augsburg, a city with 2,000 years of history, and across the mighty **Danube River**. We stay overnight in **Rothenburg ob der Tauber** at the Hotel Eisenhut. This evening, the city's Night Watchman conducts a walking tour of this remarkable medieval town, complete with ramparts, towers, cobblestone streets, and 16th century houses.

Saturday, August 22:*Meals: B,D*

Continuing along the Romantic Road, we explore Würzburg, dominated by massive Fortress Marienberg. In the afternoon, we arrive in **Rüdesheim** for the last two nights of our tour, staying at the delightful family-owned Hotel Central. It is located

close to the banks of the Rhine and the picturesque Drosselgasse street of shops and gabled houses. Tonight, we visit **Schloss Rüdesheim**, a typical Rhine Valley winery, and savour a vintner's meal including wine tasting.

Sunday, August 23:*Meals: B,D*

This morning, we embark on a **Rhine River cruise** along the most scenic section of this storied river, passing hilltop castles, historic towns, terraced vineyards, and the Loreley Cliff. The coach meets us at St. Goar to take us back to Rüdesheim. Our "Farewell Dinner" is held tonight, a chance to reminisce about our many exciting experiences in Europe and the dramatic presentation of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

Monday, August 24:*Meals: B*

Rüdesheim is less than an hour's drive from Frankfurt Airport. Our flight to Vancouver leaves in the afternoon and arrives same day, then we stay overnight near the airport.

Tuesday, August 25:*Meals: B*

Transportation is provided to Victoria and your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due January 31, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 29, 2019, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$250 per person. From March 30, 2019, to January 31, 2020, the cancellation charge is \$800 per person. From February 1, 2020, to March 31, 2020, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From April 1, 2020, to May 29, 2020, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After May 29, 2020, there is no refund.

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

Photo credit: Wikipedia

e-points: This tour earns 230 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 31, 2020.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842