

SCENIC RAILWAYS OF COLORADO

7 train excursions included
September 17, 2019 - 12 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$5695 double/twin

\$6895 single

\$5370 triple



- > Tour is exempt from GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$250 discount on first 15 seats; \$125 on next 10
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 127 points from this tour.
Redeem **127 points** if you book by **June 12**.

Includes

- Transfer to Victoria Airport and return
- Flight from Victoria to Denver
- Coach transportation in Colorado for 12 days
- 11 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Colorado Railroad Museum
- Georgetown Loop Railroad
- Cripple Creek & Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad
- Locally-guided tour of Colorado Springs
- Garden of the Gods Park
- US Air Force Academy
- Royal Gorge Route Railroad to Parkdale & return
- Royal Gorge Bridge & Aerial Gondola
- Rio Grande Route Railroad to La Veta
- Fort Garland Museum
- Cumbres & Toltec Steam Train to Chama
- Mesa Verde National Park fee
- Locally-guided tour of Mesa Verde Park
- Durango & Silverton Steam Train to Silverton
- Colorado National Monument
- Glenwood Springs hot pools
- Amtrak train from Glenwood to Denver
- Locally-guided tour of Denver
- Denver Art Museum
- History Colorado Center
- Gratuities for train staff and local guides
- Flight from Denver to Victoria
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **22 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 5 dinners

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Highlights

- **Georgetown Loop Railroad in Parlor Car Class**
- **Cripple Creek & Victor Narrow Gauge Steam Train**
- **Royal Gorge Railroad along the Arkansas River below Royal Gorge Bridge**
- **Rio Grande Railroad through Sangre de Cristo Mountains to La Veta**
- **Cumbres & Toltec Steam Train — 6-hour trip through Toltec Gorge and Cumbres Pass**
- **Durango & Silverton Steam Train — named #1 North America train trip in 2010**
- **Amtrak daylight train from Glenwood Springs through Rocky Mountains to Denver**
- **Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden**
- **Royal Gorge Bridge and Aerial Gondola**
- **Mesa Verde National Park**
- **Glenwood Hot Springs**

The magic of train travel

Each year, Wells Gray Tours offers one or two tours with a theme of train travel and all of them are immensely popular. Some customers are retired railroaders, some want to enjoy sights that cannot be seen from highways, and some want to relive the nostalgia of steam locomotives. All are fascinated by the different experiences offered by the huge variety of trains and rail routes. Each year, Wells Gray offers a Canadian coast to coast journey by train. A 2013 tour featured six unique rail excursions in Montana, Colorado, and Utah. A 2017 tour travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to Beijing. Five of the seven trains on this 2019 tour are pulled by steam locomotives, and all promise awesome scenery travelling through spectacular mountains and canyons, and alongside rushing rivers.

Itinerary

Tuesday, September 17:

A transfer is provided to Victoria Airport, and we fly to Denver. **Welcome to Colorado!** A local coach meets us at Denver Airport and we drive downtown for a two-night stay at the Hampton Inn.

Wednesday, September 18: *Meals: B,L*

First we go to the **Colorado Railroad Museum** in Golden which explains the state's flamboyant rail history. Our first train excursion is the **Georgetown Loop**, a narrow-gauge railroad with a steam locomotive. Completed in 1884, the trains hauled silver ore from Silver Plume Mine down to Denver until 1938. A section was rebuilt in 1973 and it is considered an engineering marvel with a descent of 200 metres in 7½ km and grades over 4%. An exciting stop is on the Devil's Gate Bridge, 60 metres above the creek.

Thursday, September 19:

Meals: B,D

We drive south to **Colorado Springs**, dominated by one of the highest mountains in the USA, Pikes Peak at 4,300 metres. (The famous Pikes Peak Cog Railway is closed for at least 2 years for major repairs.) **Cripple Creek** was the site of the last great Colorado gold rush in 1890. During the next 20 years, about \$500 million of gold was recovered. In 1961, much of Cripple Creek was declared a National Historic Site. In 1991, gambling was legalized, so casinos now occupy historic buildings. Our second train journey is the **Cripple Creek & Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad**, a 45-minute ride pulled by a steam locomotive past ghost towns and gold mines. Back in Colorado Springs, we tour the US Air Force Academy where about 4,300 officer cadets are in training at any time. This is followed by a drive among the spectacular red rock formations of the **Garden of the Gods**. We stay overnight at the Embassy Suites. Enjoy two hours of complimentary drinks at 5:30 pm.

Friday, September 20:*Meals: B,L,D*

At Canon City, we board train #3, the **Royal Gorge Route Railroad** and journey upstream close beside the rushing Arkansas River. The train squeezes through the awesome Royal Gorge, in places only 20 metres wide and 380 metres deep. High above is the **Royal Gorge Suspension Bridge**, until recently the world's highest bridge. After the train returns to Canon City, we drive up to the Royal Gorge Park. Take a walk across this awesome bridge with incredible views, then return via a thrilling aerial gondola ride. The next two nights are at the Hampton Inn in **Alamosa**.

Saturday, September 21:*Meals: B,L*

Train #4 is the **Rio Grande Scenic Railroad**. We board in Alamosa for a 3½-hour trip pulled by a steam locomotive to La Veta. The Great Sand Dunes can be seen to the north while crossing the broad San Luis Valley. The route winds through the soaring **Sangre de Cristo Mountains** and climbs to the highest standard-gauge rail pass in the USA at 2,800 metres. La Veta is a charming art town where you may wish to browse galleries and shops. We return to Alamosa on our coach with a stop at historic Fort Garland. The fort was established in 1858 to protect settlers in the San Luis Valley, and was abandoned in 1883.

Sunday, September 22:*Meals: B,L*

One of the most incredible steam train journeys in North America is the **Cumbres & Toltec Railroad**. It is the longest and highest narrow gauge rail trip in the USA. The steam locomotive pulls out of Antonito at 10 am for the six-hour journey through the majestic Rocky Mountains to Chama, New Mexico. It climbs steadily through many loops and several tunnels, hops the New Mexico & Colorado border 11 times, pierces awesome **Toltec Gorge**, crosses several lofty trestles, and attains its highest point at 3,000-metre high Cumbres Pass. A hearty lunch is included at the remote station of Osier. Our coach drives around to meet us at Chama. We stay two nights at the Hampton Inn in **Durango**.

Monday, September 23:*Meals: B,L*

Today is devoted to **Mesa Verde National Park**, the location of America's best-preserved cliff dwellings which date from the 13th century. The Anasazi Indians inhabited Mesa Verde between 600 and 1300 AD. They were mainly subsistence farmers, growing crops such as corn on nearby mesas. Mesa Verde became a national park in 1906 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. With the benefit of a local guide, we drive to several viewpoints of the cliff houses such as the famous **Cliff Palace** with 200 rooms. Lunch is included at Far View Lodge in the park.

Tuesday, September 24:*Meals: B,D*

Train #6 is another amazing experience aboard the steam-powered narrow-gauge **Durango & Silverton Railroad**. It was named North America's #1 train excursion in 2010 by National Geographic. This all-day excursion follows the Animas River Canyon through the rugged San Juan Mountains to the mining town of Silverton, climbing 1,000 metres in 75 km. Built to haul gold and silver ore and passengers in 1882, the train has been in continuous service for 131 years. The locomotives are in original condition, built around 1925, and are still coal-fired, and the coaches have been lovingly restored. We ride one-way to Silverton, about 3½ hours, then board our coach to continue north to **Grand Junction**. We stay overnight at the Grand Vista Hotel.

Wednesday, September 25:*Meals: B,L*

This morning, we admire the red rocks of **Colorado National Monument** from several vista points. In the afternoon, there is a short drive along the Colorado River and we stay overnight at **Glenwood Hot Springs Resort**. The large hot pool is kept at 34°C year round and is the world's largest hot mineral springs pool. The smaller "Therapy Pool" averages 40°C and has a higher mineral content.

Thursday, September 26:*Meals: B,D*

Our seven train excursions culminate in one last memorable trip — **Amtrak's California Zephyr**. We board at noon at Glenwood Springs and enjoy a 6½ hour daylight journey through Colorado's Rocky Mountains with some of the USA's most impressive railway vistas. The train closely follows the rushing Colorado River and one engineering marvel is **Glenwood Canyon** where railway, freeway and river all share this extraordinary gap. Another highlight is the trip through roadless Gore Canyon and Byers Canyon with the Colorado River roaring through rapids below the track. The train crosses under the Continental Divide in the 10-km long **Moffat Tunnel**, completed in 1928 at a cost of \$16 million. Then we descend the east slope of the Rocky Mountains to return to Denver. Our last two nights are at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Denver.

Friday, September 27:*Meals: B,D*

A sightseeing tour of **Denver** with a local guide includes the State Capitol and U.S. Mint. This afternoon, we visit the Denver Art Museum and the History Colorado Center. A farewell dinner is arranged tonight when you can reminisce about your experiences riding the rails around Colorado.

Saturday, September 28:*Meals: B*

We fly from Denver to Victoria, and a transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$600 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due June 12, 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 June 12.

Cancellation Policy: Up to May 10, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From May 11 to June 12, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From June 13 to July 12, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From July 13 to August 12, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After August 12, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates and taxes, and surcharges from airlines, trains 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.

Airline luggage fee: Please note that this fee of \$30 each way is not included as the airline requires payment individually at airport check-in.

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: Durango & Silverton Railroad



Activity Level: Moderate activity including short distances to walk and stairs. There are stairs on and off most trains. Some parts of the tour are at altitudes over 2,000 metres. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to/from Denver; request a cart or wheelchair at check-in if this could be an issue for you. The coach cannot carry a scooter. 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 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. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require 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 asked or required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

E-points: This tour earns 127 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 June 12.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842