

BLACK HILLS & YELLOWSTONE

September 15, 2019 - 16 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$4995 double/twin

\$6350 single

\$4605 triple



- > Please add 0.2% GST
- > **Early Bookers:** \$240 discount on first 15 seats; \$120 on next 10
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 107 points from this tour.
Redeem **107 points** if you book by **July 3**.

Includes

- Transfers to/from Victoria Airport
- Flight from Victoria to Kelowna and return
- Coach transportation for 15 days
- 15 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Fairmont Hot Springs pools
- Canadian Museum of Rail Travel
- Amtrak train from Whitefish to Glasgow, MT
- Fort Peck Dam Interpretive Center
- Theodore Roosevelt National Park
- Locally-guided tour of Roosevelt Park
- Journey Museum
- Black Hills Central Railroad
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial
- Crazy Horse Memorial
- Rushmore Borglum Historical Center
- Wall Drugstore
- Badlands National Park
- Wind Cave National Park & caverns tour
- Mammoth Site
- Fort Hays Chuckwagon dinner & entertainment
- Devils Tower National Monument
- Brinton Museum, House, and Gallery
- Bighorn Canyon cruise
- Buffalo Bill Center of the West (5 museums)
- Western Chuckwagon Experience
- Buffalo Bill Dam
- Yellowstone National Park
- Locally-guided historic tour of Butte
- Copper King Mansion
- Cataldo Mission
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides and boat crew
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **31 meals:** 14 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 5 dinners

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Black Hills & Yellowstone wonders

One of the first highlights is travelling through the Rockies and across Montana by train. In the Black Hills, we view two incredible mountain carvings, Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse, admire the strange formations of Badlands National Park, go underground at Wind Cave, and stroll the historic boardwalks of Deadwood. In Wyoming, we view the soaring Devils Tower and cruise between the lofty cliffs of Bighorn Canyon. Later, we are awed by the erupting geysers, bubbling mud pots, and roaring waterfalls of Yellowstone. We enjoy lively entertainment at the Fort Hays Chuckwagon and Buffalo Bill's Western Chuckwagon Experience. The fall foliage of the Black Hills, the brilliant colours of the Badlands, and the multitude of hues around the geyser basins all combine to create a kaleidoscope of colour. We visit seven national parks and monuments, ranging from famous to obscure: Theodore Roosevelt, Mount Rushmore, Badlands, Wind Cave, Devils Tower, Bighorn Canyon, and Yellowstone.

Itinerary

Sunday, September 15:

A transfer is provided to the airport. We fly from Victoria to Kelowna and stay overnight at the Best Western Hotel.

Monday, September 16: *Meals: L,D*

We meet the Interior passengers during pickups through the Okanagan Valley. We travel east across Rogers Pass through Glacier National Park, then south along the Rocky Mountain Trench to **Fairmont Hot Springs Resort**. Tonight, soak in the hot pool where the water temperature ranges from 104 to 110 degrees F. A get-acquainted dinner is arranged.

Tuesday, September 17: *Meals: B,D*

We take a guided tour of the **Canadian Museum of Rail Travel** in Cranbrook. It features a wonderful collection of railroad passenger cars including the 1927 Strathcona, the 1907 Curzon plus 11 other restored cars. Continuing south, we cross the border into Montana and stay overnight at the Hampton Inn in **Whitefish**.

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

We board **Amtrak's Empire Builder train** in Whitefish and follow the Middle Fork of the Flathead River east through the Montana Rockies, bordering the U.S. Glacier National Park. At Marias Pass, we top the **Continental Divide** at 1,580 metres. For the rest of the day, we cross the Blackfoot Indian Reservation and journey across the plains of northern Montana. Meanwhile, our driver deadheads the empty coach (conveniently carrying the luggage so we don't have to take it on/off the train) and meets us at Glasgow in eastern Montana. We stay overnight at the Cottonwood Inn.

Thursday, September 19: *Meals: B,L*

Fort Peck Dam stretches across the Missouri River for six km and backs up a reservoir that is 216 km long. We stop at the Interpretive Center which

tells the story of construction during the 1930s. We enter **North Dakota** and a local guide conducts a drive through **Theodore Roosevelt National Park**. It is dedicated to President Roosevelt, a one-time resident who devoted his efforts to conserving the Dakota Badlands. We stay at the Rough Rider Hotel in Medora.

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

We head south through the Little Missouri National Grassland and past White Butte, highest point in North Dakota. In **Rapid City**, South Dakota, we take a high-tech trip through 2½ billion years of Black Hills history at the Journey Museum. We stay four nights at the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn.

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

The day is devoted to touring the **Black Hills**. First, we view the famous gigantic carvings of the heads of four Presidents at **Mount Rushmore**, completed by Gutzon Borglum between 1927 and 1941. Next, we ride the Black Hills Central Railroad in antique cars pulled by an 1880s steam locomotive. We also visit **Crazy Horse** where a mountain is presently being carved into a giant memorial to native Americans. The work has been in progress for 70 years and is still far from complete. Lastly, we watch an interpretive film at the Rushmore Borglum Historical Center.

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

An amazing shopping experience awaits at **Wall Drugstore**, a family-run store which covers over an acre and sells almost anything. In the 1930s, founder Ted Hustead erected billboards along the highways advertising free ice water, and today two million people visit Wall Drug each year and the ice water is still free. In the afternoon, we explore **Badlands National Park** which contains spectacular examples of erosion and the fossils of many creatures.

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

This morning, we explore the caverns and passages of the exquisite **Wind Cave**. At Hot Springs, we see the **Mammoth Site** where dozens of prehistoric bones have been unearthed and archeological discoveries are continuing. Dinner with entertainment is included at the Fort Hays Chuckwagon.

Tuesday, September 24:*Meals: B*

We start heading west, skirting the northern part of the Black Hills. **Deadwood** is a fascinating town, born from a gold rush in 1874 when its population quickly soared to 5,000 people. The entire town is a National Historic Landmark District, for its well-preserved architecture. Soon, we cross the border into Wyoming and take a side trip to **Devils Tower National Monument**. The volcanic tower, composed of beautiful fluted columns, soars 386 metres. The 1977 movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was partly filmed at Devils Tower and brought great fame to the site. We stay overnight in Buffalo at Surestay Plus Hotel.

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

The Brinton Museum is located in the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains on the historic 620-acre Quarter Circle A Ranch. We tour the ranchhouse and the fabulous new gallery which presents 19th and 20th century Western and American Indian art. After crossing the mountains via scenic rural roads, we enjoy a two-hour cruise among the lofty cliffs of **Bighorn Canyon**. This once-wild river was tamed by Yellowtail Dam in 1967. We stay two nights in **Cody** at the Comfort Inn.

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

Cody's **Buffalo Bill Center of the West** is a huge complex of five museums featuring artifacts of the American West. The museums are the Buffalo Bill Museum, the Plains Indians Museum, the Whitney Western Art Museum, the Draper Natural History Museum, and the Cody Firearms Museum. Founded in 1917 by Cornelius Whitney to preserve the legacy of Colonel William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, this is the oldest and most comprehensive museum complex in the West. Some people claim that it takes two days to see everything, but we only have today! If you want a change of scene this afternoon, you can hop on our coach for a tour of the Buffalo Bill Dam in Shoshone Canyon which is 110 metres tall. Tonight, we enjoy dinner and entertainment at Buffalo Bill's Western Chuckwagon Experience in Cody.

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

Entering **Yellowstone National Park**, the United States' oldest national park, we visit several highlights of this renowned park. We walk the shore of huge Yellowstone Lake, and admire awesome **Yellowstone Falls** and the colourful Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. We stroll the boardwalks of Norris Geyser Basin with its many fumaroles, bubbling mud pots, and spouts, and watch an eruption at famous **Old Faithful Geyser**. The day is devoted to the wonders of Yellowstone and we stay overnight at the Lodge at Big Sky.

Saturday, September 28:*Meals: B,L*

There is leisure time this morning at Big Sky. We stop at the Three Forks viewpoint where three rivers come together to form the mighty Missouri River. **Butte** has been nicknamed "richest hill on earth" for its vast mine workings that started in 1864. The city's entire Uptown District is on the National Register of Historic Places and contains over 5,000 properties. With the benefit of a local guide, we take a historical tour of Butte, admiring its many remarkable buildings and architecture, and stopping at the infamous Berkley Open Pit. We also watch a film about Our Lady of the Rockies statue on a nearby mountaintop. We stay overnight at the Best Western Butte Plaza Inn.

Sunday, September 29:*Meals: B,L,D*

We follow the Clark Fork River west through Missoula, then across the panhandle of Idaho. A stop is made at historic **Cataldo Mission**, Idaho's oldest building. Our last night is at Spokane's splendid **Davenport Hotel** which opened in 1914 at a cost of \$3 million and was soon famous around the world for its luxury and amenities. For 70 years, the Davenport hosted the world's elite, but it fell on hard times and closed in 1985. It reopened in 2002 after a \$38 million renovation and has become the centrepiece of downtown Spokane. A farewell dinner is planned at the nearby Steam Plant Grill.

Monday, September 30:*Meals: B,L*

We drive across the volcanic plateaux of central Washington past immense Grand Coulee Dam. At the border, there is a stop at the Duty-Free Store, then we head up the Okanagan Valley. An evening flight from Kelowna to Victoria is arranged, then a transfer is provided to your pickup point.



Activity Level: To fully enjoy the many sights on this itinerary, you must be capable of moderate activity including walking up to 1 km on paved or gravel trails and boardwalks with some steps. Expect various distances of walking in Roosevelt Park, Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Badlands, Devils Tower, and Yellowstone, and also to see all five museums in the Buffalo Bill complex. There are steps getting on and off the trains. The Wind Cave tour utilizes an elevator with 150 steps during the one-hour underground tour. Some stops in Yellowstone are up to 2,400 metres altitude. There is no white water during the Bighorn Canyon boat tour. 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. The coach 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. 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 required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$400 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 3, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$240 discount on first 15 seats and \$120 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 3.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 3, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From June 4 to July 3, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 4 to August 2, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After August 2, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and currency exchange rates, and surcharges from railroads 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 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 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: National Park Service

e-points: This tour earns 107 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 July 3.

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