

BELLA COOLA & TWEEDSMUIR PARK

July 12, 2019 - 8 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$3070 double/twin at Stewart's Lodge

\$3450 single at Waterfront Motel

\$2910 triple at Waterfront Motel

> Please add 5% GST.

> **Early Bookers:** \$150 discount on first 10 seats; \$75 on next 5

> **BC Seniors (65 & over):** \$56 discount with BC Services Card

> **Experience Points:** Earn 68 points from this tour.

Redeem **68 points** if you book by **May 21**.



Includes

- Coach transportation for 8 days
- 7 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Ferry from Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo
- Campbell River Museum
- *Northern Sea Wolf* ferry voyage from Port Hardy to Bella Coola
- 1½-day guided tour of Bella Coola Valley with long-time resident, Rene Morton
- Bella Coola Museum
- Augsborg Church & Heritage House
- Slide show of Bella Coola with local author
- Sightseeing flight to Hunlen Falls, Monarch Icefields and Rainbow Range
- Presentation by author Chris Czajkowski
- Ashcroft Manor
- Flight from Kelowna to Vancouver
- Gratuities to Bella Coola guide and pilots
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels (except Nimpo)
- **14 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 4 dinners

Ferry service to Bella Coola fully restored in 2019!

Bella Coola was an isolated community on the central coast of British Columbia for a century, served by periodic coastal steamers. By 1950, the residents decided that they should have road access, but they were unable to convince the government that a third road through the Coast Mountains should be built. So they raised money themselves and built their own road which opened in 1953. It was nicknamed "The Freedom Road" and the tortuous hill out of the Valley was an amazing achievement. Wells Gray Tours began to offer tours to Bella Coola in 1987, travelling both ways on Highway #20. In the mid-1990s, BC Ferries introduced a new route called the Discovery Coast Passage, served by the *Queen of Chilliwack*, and our tour route changed to utilize the ferry one-way. In 2014, the ferry was abruptly cancelled despite 3,500 letters of protest from the tourist industry. After three years of disastrous tourism numbers, the government bought a ferry and announced that service would be restored in 2018. However, the *Northern Sea Wolf* needed \$10 million in upgrades and was not ready in time. It will finally start operating in 2019 and this tour will be one of the first to again enjoy the amazing Discovery Coast.

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**** Highlights ****

Northern Sea Wolf ferry from Port Hardy to Bella Coola
Local guiding by Rene Morton, life-long Bella Coola resident
Bella Coola Hill — a pioneering marvel
Nimpo Lake — BC's float plane capital
Flight to Hunlen Falls, Monarch Icefields & Rainbow Range
Chilcotin Highway

Tour notes



Activity Level: Moderate activity including walking over uneven surfaces, steep terrain, or stairs. There is more strenuous activity on July 17: getting in/out of float planes, and up to a one hour return hike on a rough trail to the Hunlen Falls viewpoint. This day is rated as "Activity Level 3". If you cannot do this walk, there is an option available for a fly-over of Hunlen Falls which you must choose at time of booking. Please be realistic about your walking ability and your mobility, and choose the fly-over if you think you cannot complete this one-hour hike. Seeing everything on this itinerary requires active participation. 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 (especially the landing option at Hunlen Falls). 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.

- **Bella Coola accommodation** — Accommodation is extremely limited in Bella Coola. This tour stays at Bella Coola Valley Inn (13 rooms) and Cumbrian Inn (7 rooms) which are 1 block apart. The restaurant is at the Valley Inn. Singles are usually booked at Cumbrian Inn.
- This tour has a limited capacity due to a shortage of rooms in Bella Coola and Nimpo Lake. Early booking is recommended.

Nimpo Lake accommodation

Nimpo Lake is a small community in the west Chilcotin which caters mainly to anglers. For our two nights here, customers booking double or twin can choose between two places to stay.

Stewart's Lodge features handcrafted log cabins on the shore of Nimpo Lake, all with private bathroom. Seven cabins accommodate two people each in twin beds. One large cabin has two bedrooms with two beds each and one bedroom with one bed. Another large cabin has two bedrooms with two beds in each. Four people will be booked into these large cabins. All cabins have a view of Nimpo Lake. Hearty family-style meals are included at Stewart's dining room in a beautiful setting overlooking the lake. Stewart's Lodge can accommodate 22 guests. The Tweedsmuir Park flights depart from the dock here. For pictures and more details, refer to the website www.stewartslodge.com

Tour fares with Stewart's Lodge accommodation: \$2895 double/twin, \$2795 triple

Waterfront Motel is located on the shore of Nimpo Lake and has motel rooms and log cabins. The three motel rooms have bathroom, TV, telephone, microwave, and mini-fridge. The two log cabins have different layouts; please ask your office or agent for details. A suite with two bedrooms is suitable for a triple booking. All rooms and cabins have a view of Nimpo Lake. Transfers are provided to nearby Stewart's Lodge for all meals. Ten guests can stay here. Passengers travelling single are booked in the Waterfront motel rooms (3 rooms available). For pictures and more details, refer to www.nimpolakewaterfrontresort.com.

Tour fares with Waterfront Motel accommodation: \$3275 single (motel room), \$2735 triple (2 bedroom suite). Log cabin A is \$3020 double/twin; log cabin B is \$2895 double/twin.

Northern Sea Wolf

B.C. Ferries' **Northern Sea Wolf** is a new vessel for the Bella Coola route, replacing the *Queen of Chilliwack* which operated for nearly 20 years until this service was shut down in 2014. The ship was built in 2000 and was named *Aqua Spirit* in 2011. From the home port of Piraeus (near Athens), she served as a passenger and car ferry to several Greek islands. BC Ferries purchased the ship in 2017 for \$12.6 million and sailed her to British Columbia. Major problems were found after her arrival which cost about \$10 million to rectify. She has been renamed **Northern Sea Wolf**, a name inspired by a Heiltsuk legend in which the Sea Wolf is a manifestation of the Orca. The Sea Wolf symbolizes family and loyalty, and the spirit of the Sea Wolf protects those travelling their waters. The vessel was supposed to start service in June 2018, but this was delayed repeatedly and the summer of 2019 will be her first on the Bella Coola route.

Northern Sea Wolf is 75 metres long with a beam of 15 metres and a draft of 2.8 metres. She carries about 35 vehicles and 150 passengers at a travelling speed of 17 knots. Facilities include restaurant, gift shop, and indoor and outdoor seating. The journey from Port Hardy to Bella Coola takes 10 hours, all in daylight to permit great viewing of the rugged coastline and abundant wildlife, marine life, and bird life. Our motorcoach travels on the ferry, so luggage and other belongings can be stored there.

Itinerary

Friday, July 12:

We take an afternoon ferry to Nanaimo and stay overnight at the Coast Bastion Hotel. Home pickups are available within Greater Vancouver for a small additional cost.

Saturday, July 13:

Meals: B,L,D

We meet our Victoria travellers, then drive north on the Island Highway. We visit the Campbell River Museum and learn the story of the Ripple Rock explosion. We stay overnight in **Port Hardy** at the Kwa'lilas Hotel.

Sunday, July 14:

The **Northern Sea Wolf** departs from Port Hardy at 7:30 am for the 10-hour journey north through the magnificent scenery of the famed **Inside Passage**. On the outside decks, there is plenty of seating or strolling space, so you can watch the ever-changing panorama of the passing coastline. During the voyage, we pass hundreds of islands and waterfalls, and probably see wildlife such as bald eagles, porpoises or Orca whales. First, we cross Queen Charlotte Sound north of Vancouver Island, then see the entrance to Rivers Inlet, and traverse Hakai Pass. After turning east through Fitzhugh Sound, the ferry follows the narrow fjords of **Burke Channel** and North Bentinck Arm, and arrives in **Bella Coola** about 5:30 pm. Accommodation for two nights is at the Bella Coola Valley Inn and Cumbrian Inn.

Monday, July 15:

Meals: L,D

Rene Morton, daughter of Bella Coola pioneer Cliff Kopas and a lifetime resident, boards our coach and conducts a fascinating guided tour

around the Bella Coola Valley. We visit local attractions such as Clayton Falls, a fish hatchery, **Augsborg Church**, and the Hagensborg Heritage House; stroll among the towering giants of the Saloompt Forest; and shop at a pottery studio and salmon plant. There is leisure time to explore Bella Coola or browse the shops such as the popular Kopas Store. After dinner, there is a slide-illustrated talk by either local forester, Hans Granander, or naturalist, Mike Wigle, co-authors of *Bella Coola: Life in the Heart of the Coast Mountains*.

Tuesday, July 16:

Meals: L,D

At the Bella Coola Museum, Rene Morton presents **A Morning with Alexander Mackenzie**, a tribute to his amazing expedition to this region in 1793. Accompanied by Rene, we enjoy the scenic drive east through the Bella Coola Valley where the road is hemmed by soaring mountains with descriptive names such as Stupendous, Defiance and Matterhorn. After stops at the Mackenzie Monument and the "Split Rock", we arrive at the bottom of the famous **Bella Coola Hill**. The road was built and initially financed by local people with bulldozers working from the top and bottom. When they met on September 26, 1953, British Columbia's third highway to the Pacific became a reality and was nicknamed "The Freedom Road". The 50th anniversary celebration was held in 2003 and attended by some of the original workers. During the 1,500-metre climb over the next 20 km, we stop at two thrilling viewpoints and top the Coast Mountains at Heckman Pass. We stay two nights at **Nimpo Lake** at either Stewart's Lodge or Waterfront Motel (see descriptions on previous page).

Wednesday, July 17:*Meals: B,L,D*

We board charter aircraft for a day in the wilderness of **Tweedsmuir Provincial Park** which protects some dramatic scenery of the Coast Mountains. We land first at Turner Lake near the awesome **Hunlen Falls** which plunges 400 metres and is Canada's highest waterfall, measured as a continuous drop. Please read the "Activity Level" paragraph on the second page for details about the choices to see the falls — either a hike or a fly-over. In the valley below is **Lonesome Lake** and the remote abandoned homestead of the famous pioneer, Ralph Edwards, about whom three books have been written, including *Crusoe of Lonesome Lake*. Then we fly into the Talchako Range where dozens of tumbling glaciers cling to sheer cliffs, icebergs float around Ape Lake, and the vast **Monarch Icefields** stretch to the horizon. The next spectacle is the **Rainbow Range** where eruptions eight million years ago created a huge shield volcano and lava flows with brilliant colours. The planes return to Nimpo Lake in mid-afternoon. After dinner, **Chris Czajkowski**, the author, poet and botanist, talks to us about her pioneer lifestyle

in the wilderness and how she built the Nuk Tessli cabin single-handed. Her many books, such as *Cabin at Singing River* and *Diary of a Wilderness Dweller*, describe her experiences in the Coast Mountains.

Thursday, July 18:*Meals: B,L*

During the rest of our journey across the vast ranchlands of the **Chilcotin**, we pass villages such as Tatla Lake, Alexis Creek, and Riske Creek. There are impressive views of the glacial blue Chilcotin River as it roars through Bull Canyon and **Farwell Canyon**. A picnic lunch is included at Bull Canyon Park. Another highlight is the lofty bridge over the Fraser River where we enter the Cariboo. Our last night is in **Williams Lake** at the Coast Fraser Inn.

Friday, July 19:*Meals: B,L*

We follow the Cariboo Highway to Cache Creek. Lunch is included at **Ashcroft Manor**, a roadhouse built in 1862 to serve travellers on the Cariboo Wagon Road. We fly from Kelowna back to Vancouver.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due May 21, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$150 discount on first 10 seats and \$75 on next 5 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after May 21. Seniors (65 & over) receive \$56 discount extended by BC Ferries, so you must bring your B.C. Services Card.

Cancellation Policy: Up to April 19, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From April 20 to May 21, the cancellation charge is \$150 per person. From May 22 to June 11, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After June 11, there is no refund.

Identification: Even though you are travelling within British Columbia, photo ID is essential and mandatory. You will not be allowed to board the ferry in Port Hardy without photo ID in hand. This could be your BC Services Card, a passport, or any other government issued ID with your photo. There is no refund of your tour fare if you are denied boarding at the ferry, and travel insurance is unlikely to cover this reason for cancellation.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from 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, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credit: Roland Neave (Hunlen Falls)

E-points: This tour earns 68 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 May 21.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842