

PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Cruise on *Oosterdam* from Fort Lauderdale to San Diego
February 2, 2020 - 22 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person: based on double/twin

\$8285 Inside Category J

\$8775 Oceanview Category C

\$9835 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 130 points from this tour.

Redeem **130 points** if you book by **October 16, 2019**.



* PORTS OF CALL *

HALF MOON CAY (Bahamas)
ORANJESTAD (Aruba)
PUERTO CALDERA (Costa Rica)
CORINTO (Nicaragua)
PUERTO QUETZAL (Guatemala)

PUERTO CHIAPAS (Mexico)
HUATULCO (Mexico)
PUERTO VALLARTA (Mexico)
SAN DIEGO (California)

Includes

- Transportation to Seattle airport
- Flight from Seattle to Fort Lauderdale
- Current air transport taxes & security fees
- 4 nights hotel accommodation & taxes
- Transfer from Fort Lauderdale airport to hotel
- Transfer from hotel to cruise terminal
- 17 days on Holland America's *Oosterdam*
- Cruise gratuities
- Port charges, Panama Canal fees, cruise taxes
- Locally-guided tour in Costa Rica with Tarcoles River boat tour
- Locally-guided tour to Leon, Nicaragua
- Locally-guided tour to Antigua, Guatemala
- Dinner reservation in the Pinnacle Grill
- Coach transportation in San Diego
- San Diego Zoo
- San Diego harbour cruise
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Flight from San Diego to Victoria
- Transfer from Victoria airport to pickup point
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **55 meals:** 21 breakfasts, 17 lunches, 17 dinners

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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 design. The *Oosterdam*'s gross tonnage is 82,000 and she is 284 metres 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 pleasures 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. One dinner in the Pinnacle Grill is included. 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

Importance of booking early: Holland America has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour and they are normally held until three months before sailing (early November 2019). However, any unsold staterooms can be taken away from us at any time when the ship fills. When this has happened before, we had to waitlist disappointed customers, even though we still had seats available on the coaches and planes.

Shore excursions included: On many cruises, shore excursions are a significant additional expense. This cruise has three excursions included in 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.

 **Activity Level:** Light activity including short distances to walk and some stairs. Half Moon Cay is accessed by the ship's tenders. Due to the historic nature of Leon and Antigua, these included tours have lots of walking with frequent rest stops, and cobblestone streets are common. You can skip 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, Fort Lauderdale, and San Diego airports; request a cart or wheelchair at check-in 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.

Itinerary

Sunday, February 2:

Transportation is provided to **Seattle**, and we stay overnight at Embassy Suites Hotel near the airport. Get acquainted with your fellow travellers during a cocktail reception.

Monday, February 3:

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

Meals: B

Tuesday, February 4: *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.

Wednesday, February 5: *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 4 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.

Thursday, February 6: *Meals: B,L,D*
The **Oosterdam** arrives at **Half Moon Cay**, Holland America's private island in the Bahamas. We ride tenders ashore. There are plenty of recreational activities here, or you can laze on the long sandy beach. We stay here from 8 am to 5 pm.

Friday, February 7: *Meals: B,L,D*
Saturday, February 8: *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.

Sunday, February 9: *Meals: B,L,D*
The **Oosterdam** docks at **Oranjestad** on Aruba, a small island just off the coast of Venezuela. One of the Lesser Antilles, Aruba was granted home rule by the Netherlands in 1986 and became fully independent in 1996. The island has a population of about 70,000, but is only 30 km long and 8 km wide. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao, Aruba forms a group referred to as the ABC islands. Collectively, Aruba and the other Dutch islands in the Caribbean are often called the Dutch Caribbean. Driving and walking tours of Oranjestad can be purchased on the ship or on shore. The city is noted for its Dutch Colonial architecture and the Royal Plaza outdoor shopping mall. The **Oosterdam** arrives at 8 am and departs at 6 pm.

Monday, February 10: *Meals: B,L,D*
A day at sea.

Tuesday, February 11: *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 remarka-

ble **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 in June 2016. Most cruise ships will continue to use the old locks.

Wednesday, February 12: *Meals: B,L,D*
A day at sea with lots of activities on board.

Thursday, February 13: *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, featuring 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. We cruise through the mangrove, an impressive ecosystem that is an important feeding and mating area for local and migratory birds, and a refuge from mammals and reptiles.

Friday, February 14: *Meals: B,L,D*
The **Oosterdam** docks at Corinto in **Nicaragua** from 9 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.

Saturday, February 15: *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.

Sunday, February 16: *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 6th 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 over 4,000 metres.

Monday, February 17: *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 under development. Enjoy shopping in the plaza or at Tangolunda Bay. Sightseeing tours can be purchased.

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

A day at sea.

Wednesday, February 19: *Meals: B,L,D*

The *Oosterdam* calls next at **Puerto Vallarta** from 8 am to 5 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.

Thursday, February 20: *Meals: B,L,D*

Friday, February 21: *Meals: B,L,D*
During two days at sea, we cross the Sea of Cortez and cruise up the **Baja Peninsula's** west coast.

Saturday, February 22: *Meals: B*

We dock in **San Diego** and disembark about 9 am. First, we go to the **San Diego Zoo**, one of the largest in the world with over 4,000 animals representing 800 species. An aerial tram, shuttle trolleys and a narrated bus tour make it easy for you to get around. Afterwards, we get a different perspective on California's second largest city with a cruise around the busy **San Diego harbour** including lofty Coronado Bridge, the shipyards, Point Loma, and the Naval Air Station. We stay overnight at Homewood Suites downtown.

Sunday, February 23: *Meals: B*

We fly from San Diego to Victoria. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due October 16, 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 October 16.

Cancellation Policy: Up to September 16, 2019, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From September 17 to October 16, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From October 17 to November 29, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From November 30 to December 30, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After December 30, there is no refund.

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

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: Holland America Line

E-points: This tour earns 130 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 October 16.

Consumer Protection BC licence: #65842