



American Empress



Mount St. Helens

## COLUMBIA RIVER CRUISE

April 17, 2021 – 12 Days

*On American Empress from Clarkston to Astoria*

Come and admire the spectacular sights along the storied Columbia as we cruise from Clarkston to Portland. All shore excursions and daily lectures by a Columbia River expert are included.

Highlights include Nez Perce National Park, Bridablik House, Lewis and Clark

Center for Arts & History, Franklin County Historical Society, First Territorial Capitol Interpretive Center, The Reach Interpretive Center, Sacajawea State Park, Original Courthouse Museum, Fort Dalles Museum & Interpretive Center, Bonneville Dam, Flavel House Museum, and the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center.

Activity Level: 2



26 Meals Included:

10 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners

Fares per Person: based on double/twin

\$7,020 Category E Cabin

\$7,415 Category C Cabin

\$9,015 Category B Cabin

Single staterooms and other categories may be available

Tour is exempt from GST

Experience Points:

Earn 50 points from this tour

Redeem 50 points if you book by January 13

TOUR

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## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Saturday, April 17

Transportation is provided to Victoria airport. We take an afternoon flight to Kelowna and stay overnight at the Best Western Hotel.

**Accommodation:** Best Western Hotel

### Day 2: Sunday, April 18

We meet the Interior passengers during pickups through the Okanagan Valley. We cross the border at Osoyoos and drive past Grand Coulee Dam to **Spokane** for an overnight stay at the historic Davenport Hotel. Our welcome dinner is at the unique **Steam Plant Grill**, built in 1915 to supply steam heat and power to downtown Spokane.

**Meals included:** Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Davenport Hotel

### Day 3: Monday, April 19

With the benefit of a local guide, we enjoy a city tour including Spokane Falls, Riverfront Park, the stunning mansions on "The Hill", majestic **Saint John's Cathedral**, and the Conservatory in Manito Park. This afternoon, we drive two hours south to Clarkston and board the **American Empress**. Settle into your stateroom, unpack, and explore the ship. We cast off and cruise the Snake River during dinner, then return to the dock for the night.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

### Day 4: Tuesday, April 20

Located at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers, **Clarkston** is the gateway to Hells Canyon, the USA's deepest gorge. We spend the day following the footsteps of the Lewis and Clark journey which is how the city and Lewiston, across the river, received their names. A shore excursion with a hop-on hop-off circuit visits Nez Perce National Historic Park, First Territorial Capitol Interpretive Center, and Bridablik House. Admission to all is included, but depending on time you spend at each, you

may not be able to visit them all. At 2 pm, the ship departs Clarkston, headed downstream on the **Snake River**. During the afternoon and night, we travel through **four locks** to bypass the dams: Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, and Ice Harbor.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

### Day 5: Wednesday, April 21

Early this morning, we reach the confluence of the **Snake and Columbia Rivers**, and cruise upstream on the Columbia past Pasco and Kennewick to dock at **Richland** at 7 am. The city was founded in 1905 and boomed during World War II when it was the bedroom community for the Manhattan Project. Later it became important for the Hanford nuclear power plant which closed in 1987. Excursions are offered to The Reach Center which explains the history, geology, science, and technology of the region; Sacajawea State Park at the meeting of the rivers; and Franklin County Museum which deals with Pasco's history. We stay overnight at the dock in Richland.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

### Day 6: Thursday, April 22

After departing Richland, we spend the day cruising down the Columbia River, past picturesque canyon walls and fascinating volcanic formations. You can keep guessing about what lies around the next bend. The ship's lecturer, the Riverlorian, is on-deck to offer entertaining narration. The ship is lowered through **three locks** at McNary Dam, John Day Dam, and The Dalles Dam. We dock at The Dalles and stay overnight.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

## Day 7: Friday, April 23

Prior to the arrival of the white man, **The Dalles** was a meeting place for indigenous people for 10,000 years and has become an important archaeological site. Celilo Falls was a major navigation challenge on the Columbia and natives met there for the salmon fishery. The falls were flooded when The Dalles Dam was built in 1957. One of the primary attractions here is the **Columbia Gorge Discovery Center** which has exhibits and films about the history and geology of the river. If you have time, you may want to visit the Original Courthouse Museum and Fort Dalles Museum. Admission to all these attractions is included and transportation is provided from the dock. We leave The Dalles at 5 PM to continue west and downstream into the **Columbia Gorge** where the river passes through the Cascade Range. This four-hour evening voyage offers spectacular scenery along this narrow stretch of the river, and we dock for the night at **Stevenson**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

## Day 8: Saturday, April 24

The Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center is Washington's impressive equivalent to yesterday's Discovery Center. Also included is a drive across the lofty **Bridge of the Gods** at the narrowest point of the gorge, followed by a tour of **Bonneville Dam**, built in 1937. This evening, during the rest of the cruise through the Columbia Gorge, we pass underneath the Bridge of the Gods, descend 60 metres in the lock at Bonneville, and view Multnomah Falls which tumbles 190 metres off the south side cliffs.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

## Day 9: Sunday, April 25

During the night, *American Empress* cruises down the last 200 km of the Columbia River, arriving at **Astoria** at 6 am. There is a lot of history here, including the arrival of Lewis & Clark in 1805, the founding of Fort Astoria in 1811, and the fascinating architecture of the 19th century. The shore excursion choices include the **Columbia River Maritime Museum** to learn about all the shipwrecks at the mouth and the maritime heritage; the **Astoria Column** where there is a panoramic view of the city and the river's mouth; and the elegant **Flavel Mansion**, built by a sea captain in 1885. You can also stroll the lovely Riverwalk. We sail at 6 pm, enjoying a gala farewell dinner while cruising up the Columbia River.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
**Accommodation:** *American Empress*

## Day 10: Monday, April 26

We arrive in **Vancouver (Washington)** and disembark the *American Empress*. A locally guided tour of **Portland** includes city landmarks, the lovely waterfront promenade of the Willamette River, and the aerial tram. We stay overnight at the Embassy Suites Hotel downtown. Built in 1912 as the Multnomah Hotel, a \$20 million restoration in 1998 brought this beautiful structure back to life. Visit with fellow travellers at a two-hour reception with complimentary wine, beer and cocktails.

**Meals included:** Breakfast  
**Accommodation:** Embassy Suites Hotel

## Day 11: Tuesday, April 27

We drive to **Mount St. Helens**, the famous volcano which blew its top on May 18, 1980, destroying 150,000 acres of forests, killing every living thing above ground, and creating a moonlike landscape. Forty years later, admire the rebirth of the land as trees and plants re-establish themselves. At the end of the road,



Johnston Ridge Observatory is just 8 km from the crater and offers panoramic views. We stay overnight at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lynnwood.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Embassy Suites Hotel

## Day 12: Wednesday, April 28

There are stops at Bellis Fair Mall and the Duty-Free Store, then we cross the border and take an afternoon ferry to Victoria.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

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## THE COLUMBIA RIVER

The Columbia River rises near Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia, and flows 2,048 km along a meandering path across B.C. and Washington to the Pacific Ocean at Astoria, Oregon. Its drainage basin including tributaries is 671,000 square km, second largest in the United States after the Mississippi. The river was discovered by Captain Robert Gray in 1792 who named it for his ship, Columbia Rediviva. He was sailing the west coast in search of sea otters and subsequently named many features along B.C.'s coast.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark followed the Missouri and Columbia Rivers westward, exploring the vast Louisiana and Oregon Territories. In 1805, they reached the Pacific Ocean at Astoria, spent the winter there, then returned to St. Louis with detailed reports about the west and the Columbia.

The Columbia River is the largest producer of hydro-electric power in North America, due to 14 dams that now tame its once-wild flow; from source to mouth, they are Mica, Revelstoke, Keenleyside, Grand Coulee, Chief Joseph, Wells, Rocky Reach, Rock Island, Wanapum, Priest Rapids, McNary, John Day, The Dalles, and Bonneville. The Columbia is the western USA's major salmon producing stream. Its waters irrigate more land in the west than any other river. It is the second busiest for shipping in the nation and locks bypass the lower dams, allowing ships to reach Lewiston-Clarkston on the Snake River in Idaho.

This is the second time that Wells Gray Tours has offered a cruise on American Empress. Come and admire the spectacular sights along the storied Columbia.



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to Victoria Airport
- Flight from Victoria to Kelowna
- 5 days of coach transportation before and after the cruise
- 4 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes in Kelowna, Spokane, Portland and Lynnwood
- 7 nights stateroom accommodation on *American Empress*
- Port charges and cruise taxes
- Cruise gratuities
- Wine and beer with dinner during the cruise
- Shore excursions in every port of call including transportation and admissions
- Daily lectures by a Columbia River expert
- Entertainment on board
- Nez Perce National Historic Park
- First Territorial Capitol Interpretive Center
- Bridablik House
- The Reach Interpretive Center
- Sacajawea State Park
- Franklin County Historical Society & Museum
- Columbia Gorge Discovery Center
- Original Courthouse Museum
- Fort Dalles Museum & Interpretive Center
- Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center
- Bonneville Dam
- Flavel House Museum
- Astoria Column
- Heritage Museum
- Columbia River Maritime Museum
- Locally-guided tour of Portland
- Pittock Mansion
- Portland Aerial Tram
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels, airline, and ship
- **27 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners

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## ON BOARD THE PADDLEWHEELER *AMERICAN EMPRESS*

The *American Empress* is a 110-metre long diesel-powered paddle wheeler, built in 2002 for \$50 million. Originally operated by Majestic America Line and named the *Empress of the North*, she cruised the Inside Passage, Alaska waters, the Pacific Northwest, and the Columbia River. In 2013, the ship was acquired by the American Queen Steamboat Company, well-known on the Mississippi River, and renamed *American Empress*. The ship carries 223 passengers. There are four decks and elevators access all decks. With just 112 staterooms, the experience is intimate yet diverse enough that you can meet people from many places. The Astoria Dining Room on Deck 1 serves breakfast, lunch and dinner with menu ordering. The River Grill on Deck 4 offers breakfast and lunch buffets and dinner by reservation with a limit of two visits per voyage. Complimentary wine, beer and soft drinks are offered with dinner.

Wells Gray Tours has staterooms in five categories. E staterooms are on Deck 4 and are the most economical. They have a semi-private veranda with direct access to the outdoor vista deck, and measure 14 sq metres (150 sq feet). C staterooms are on Decks 2 and 3, measure 17 sq metres (180 sq feet), and have a private veranda. B staterooms are on Deck 3, measure 21 sq metres (230 sq feet), and have a private veranda and small sitting area. Please enquire about the deluxe A stateroom and LS

suite if interested. All rooms have twin beds or a queen bed, flat-screen TV, alarm clock, mini refrigerator, safe, and private bathroom.

Entertainment is provided nightly in the Show Lounge on Deck 1. Solo singers from local ports and talks by Columbia River experts are offered in the Paddlewheel Lounge on Deck 2.

Comfort is essential. Dress code is relaxed and casual with just one dress-up dinner on the final evening.


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## TOUR NOTES

- Because the size of the ship is so small, Wells Gray Tours must commit to the number of staterooms needed about 6 months prior to departure. This cruise is very popular and the ship is usually sold out long before departure. **It is essential that you book early for this cruise. It is unlikely that we will be able to secure more space after *American Empress* recalls our unsold rooms.**
  - Dinner sittings are at 5:30 and 7:45 pm. Early bookers get first choice of their preferred time, but the first sitting is the most popular.
  - If more than 20 people book on this tour, a Wells Gray tour director is with you throughout the tour including the days on the ship. Otherwise, the tour director accompanies you to Spokane and home from Portland.
  - A valid passport is required.
  - **Changes:** This tour has been released for sale 10 months before departure. Currency exchange rates can fluctuate considerably during this time, and taxes and fuel surcharges can change as well. Tour fares are based on costs at time of planning, so the fare could change, even after your final payment.
  - Gratuities for cruise staff, local guides and shore excursion drivers are included. The customary gratuity to your Wells Gray tour director and Canadian coach driver is left to your discretion.
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**TOUR 30** Tour 30: This is a Tour 30 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 30 participants or less, a more intimate travel experience. This tour is limited to 30 travellers.

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 **Activity Level 2:** Expect light activity on the ship and moderate activity during most shore excursions, including stairs and short distances to walk. There is an elevator on the ship. The coaches 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, local guides, and drivers 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 \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due January 13, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Cancellation Policy:** Customers who transferred from 2020 to 2021 due to Covid-19 can cancel up to March 13, 2021 and the non-refundable portion from 2020 will be held back as a cancellation fee. There is no refund after March 13. New bookings after May 25, 2020: Up to December 11, 2020, your tour payments will be refunded less a cruise line fee of \$400 per person. From December 12, 2020 to January 13, the cancellation charge is \$800 per person (your deposit). From January 14 to February 12, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From February 13 to March 13, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After March 13, 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.

**Photo Credits:** *American Empress* (Wikimedia Commons), Mount St. Helens (Pixabay).

**Experience Points:** This tour earns 50 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 13, 2021.

**Consumer Protection BC Licences:** Victoria 65842, Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924

**VICTORIA**  
102-736 Broughton St.  
Victoria, BC V8W 1E1  
250-590-7889

Office Hours:  
8:30 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed holidays &  
weekends

**KAMLOOPS**  
(Head Office)  
250 Lansdowne St.  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1X7  
250-374-0831

Office Hours:  
8:30am to 4:30pm  
Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri  
Weds 9:00am to 4:30pm  
Closed holidays &  
weekends

**KELOWNA**  
2575 Richter St.  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2R1  
250-762-3435

Office Hours:  
9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed holidays &  
weekends

**VERNON**  
3206 35th St.  
Vernon, BC V1T 6B7  
250-545-9197

Office Hours:  
9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed holidays &  
weekends

**PENTICTON**  
100-159 Wade Ave East  
Penticton, BC V2A 8B6  
250-493-1255

Office Hours:  
9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed holidays &  
weekends

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[www.wellsgraytours.com](http://www.wellsgraytours.com)

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