



Mount Robson



COAST TO COAST BY TRAIN

May 28, 2021 – 17 Days

Across Canada by Via Rail from Vancouver to Halifax

The railway in Canada is an integral and essential foundation for the country. When the last spike of the cross-country rail line was driven at Craigellachie on November 7, 1885, something truly magnificent had been accomplished: Canada had been united. The railway was written into the agreement of Confederation on that historic day when the Dominion of Canada was formed in 1867. The railway was a condition of entry into Confederation by British Columbia and it was the common thread that linked the vast spaces and diverse cultures of the grand new nation. Experience Canada's national railway on this epic journey from Vancouver on the Pacific coast to Halifax on the Atlantic coast. From the towering giants of the Rocky Mountains to the sea of grass in the vast prairies; from the unique mix of cultures in Montréal to the Scottish influence in the Maritimes; from the awesome view at the Olympic Tower to the spectacle of Niagara Falls — all aboard for the adventure of a lifetime!

Activity Level: 2



31 Meals Included:

11 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners

Fares per person:

\$8,895 double/twin; \$10,175 single; \$8,045 triple
Please add 5% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$300 discount on first 12 seats; \$150 on next 8

Experience Points:

Earn 190 points on this tour

Redeem 190 points if you book by February 18, 2021



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, May 28

We travel via the Coquihalla Highway to the Vancouver rail station. At 3 pm, we begin our epic journey on **VIA Rail's *The Canadian***, touring Canada's most breathtaking expanses across five provinces. Relax in the luxury and comfort of Sleeper Plus Class with superbly refurbished Art-Deco rail cars from the 1950s. From your armchair or the dome car, admire the views as we travel through the Fraser Valley and the awesome Fraser Canyon until dark. Wander over to the Skyline Car and meet some fellow travellers. All meals are included in the elegant dining car with freshly prepared dishes served on china with silverware and linen. Later, your room steward converts your private sitting area to bunk beds. We travel through Kamloops during the night.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 2: Saturday, May 29

We follow the North Thompson Valley past soaring **Mount Robson**, highest in the Canadian Rockies. After crossing Yellowhead Pass and the Continental Divide, we stop in **Jasper** about 11 am. Savour afternoon tea while following the Athabasca River through the foothills. There is a stop in **Edmonton** during our second sumptuous dinner on board.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 3: Sunday, May 30

We disembark in **Saskatoon** early this morning. After breakfast, a local guide meets us for a tour including its beautiful parks, the South Saskatchewan River, and the University of Saskatchewan. Next, we visit the Western Development Museum which is themed around Saskatchewan a century ago and features a remarkable re-creation of a 1910 city street with exhibits inside each of the buildings, all under one roof. We stay three nights at the **Delta Bessborough Hotel** which was built by the Canadian National Railway in 1928

and is a historic waterfront landmark for Saskatoon.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Delta Bessborough Hotel

Day 4: Monday, May 31

We spend the morning at **Wanuskewin Heritage Park** which showcases 6,000 years of aboriginal history including 19 archeological sites and a buffalo jump. A demonstration of traditional First Nations dances is featured. The afternoon is leisure time.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Delta Bessborough Hotel

Day 5: Tuesday, June 1

We walk about 10 minutes through the lovely riverside park to the Ukrainian Museum. It contains irreplaceable artifacts such as clothing, linens, tools, books, photographs, and other treasures donated from the first, second and third waves of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. Next, we visit the **Remai Modern**, a spectacular art gallery which opened in 2017. Local philanthropist Ellen Remai gave \$30 million towards construction and also donated her collection of Picasso linocuts. We board the *Prairie Lily* sternwheeler for a **dinner cruise on the South Saskatchewan River**, viewing landmarks and passing under bridges.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Delta Bessborough Hotel

Day 6: Wednesday, June 2

At 7 am, we are back on the train departing Saskatoon with breakfast served on board. As we cross the rest of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, enjoy the views of the broad prairie with the wheat swaying in the wind. The train stops in **Winnipeg** at 10 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 7: Thursday, June 3

When you wake up, the train is travelling through northern Ontario where you can admire the rugged **Canadian Shield**, the immense forests, and many sparkling lakes for most of the day.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 8: Friday, June 4

The train is now east of Georgian Bay and headed into the urban sprawl of Toronto. *The Canadian* arrives at cavernous Union Station about 3 pm, the end of the second leg of our cross-Canada journey. We walk across the street to the renowned **Fairmont Royal York Hotel** and stay three nights. When the hotel opened in 1929, it was a landmark of downtown Toronto and today seems dwarfed by the nearby skyscrapers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel

Day 9: Saturday, June 5

We take a city tour of **Toronto** with a local guide, seeing landmarks such as the CN Tower, Rogers Centre, Eaton Centre, Queen's Park, City Hall, Yonge Street, and the Lake Ontario waterfront. This afternoon, we tour **Casa Loma**, Toronto's fabulous castle built by Sir Henry Pellatt between 1911 and 1914, and today used in many movie productions. It has 98 rooms, secret passages, and two towers, and cost \$3½ million to build. There is free time afterwards. Tonight, we go to one of the Mirvish Theatres for a live performance to be announced.

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel

Day 10: Sunday, June 6

We spend the day at **Niagara Falls**, one of the world's mightiest cataracts, measured by its great width of nearly 1 km, its water volume of about 3 million litres per second, and its height of 50 metres. We take a Hornblower cruise to the bottom of the falls for an awesome view of the Horseshoe and American Falls from the river. Lunch is included at Table Rock, then a sightseeing tour of the Niagara area is conducted by a local guide

and visits several impressive viewpoints. One of the landmarks of Niagara is the **Skylon Tower** which soars 160 metres above the falls, and dinner is included in the revolving restaurant with a terrific view. We return to Toronto in the evening.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel

Day 11: Monday, June 7

We relax in the exclusive Panorama Lounge at Union Station while waiting for our train departure at 11:30 am. We are whisked from **Toronto to Montréal** at up to 160 kph while enjoying the luxury of Business Class with large seats, a delicious three-course lunch with wine, and many amenities. Arrival is at 5 pm, and we ride the elevator from the train station up to the lobby of the famed **Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel**, a Canadian icon. The hotel is located above Montréal's vast underground city full of interesting shops and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel

Day 12: Tuesday, June 8

The city of **Montréal** awaits! Explore this vibrant centre of French Canadian traditions with a locally-guided tour that includes Mount Royal, Ile Sainte-Hélène, downtown landmarks, and Olympic Park. The tour ends in Old Montréal, where there is free time for lunch and maybe a visit to the imposing Notre Dame Basilica. This afternoon, we see Montréal's landmarks from a different vantage point during a **cruise on the St. Lawrence River**. Tonight, enjoy revelry and fun entertainment at Le Festin du Gouverneur dinner theatre.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel

Day 13: Wednesday, June 9

The morning is free time. In the afternoon, we visit the **Biodome** which was built as the cycling stadium for the 1976 Olympics. You can walk through four ecosystems of the Americas: a tropical rainforest, a Laurentian maple forest, the

Saint Lawrence marine ecosystem, and the Arctic and Antarctic polar habitat. Next, we ride the glass funicular up the **Montréal Olympic Tower**, the tallest inclined tower in the world at 165 metres. There is a fabulous view of Montréal and Olympic Park from the top. At 7 pm, **The Ocean**, the last of our VIA Rail trains, pulls out of Montréal headed to Halifax. When Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia joined in Confederation to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867, a railway to connect Halifax with the St. Lawrence River was promised. During the night, the train follows the south shore of the St. Lawrence and crosses the neck of the Gaspé Peninsula. Our Sleeper Plus Class of service includes access to the dome car.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 14: Thursday, June 10

In the morning, we travel along Chaleur Bay, then through New Brunswick to Moncton. In the afternoon, the train skirts the **Bay of Fundy** to Truro, and arrives in Halifax about 6 pm. Having crossed our great nation by rail, we celebrate the sight of the **Atlantic Ocean**. We stay three nights in the centre of Halifax.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 15: Friday, June 11

The day starts with a locally-guided tour of historic **Halifax** including the waterfront, St. Paul's

church, the universities, the colourful Public Gardens, and residential areas. The **Halifax Citadel National Historic Site** is a fortress perched on the hill overlooking the city. Nova Scotia's naval heritage comes alive during a visit to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and we celebrate a maritime tradition during the lively and flavourful **Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour**. Tonight, get set for musical comedy, fun, and frivolity at Grafton Street Dinner Theatre.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 16: Saturday, June 12

We head to **Peggy's Cove**, one of the most picturesque fishing villages along the Eastern seaboard. There is time to stroll the waterfront and take pictures of its famous lighthouse before continuing along the delightful coastal drive to **Lunenburg**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic highlights the ship building industry and the fisheries of Nova Scotia.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 17: Sunday, June 13

We fly on WestJet from Halifax via Toronto to Kelowna. Transfers are provided to home cities.

Meals included: Breakfast



NOTES ABOUT THE TRAINS

VANCOUVER TO TORONTO – You are reserved in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Canadian*. Sleeping accommodation is in private bedrooms, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include couch-style seats that convert to beds at night, electrical outlet, toilet, sink, and mirror. Shower facilities are located nearby. Exclusive access to the dome car with its excellent views and Bullet Lounge is included. All meals are included in the elegant dining car which offers exclusive service for first-class travellers. You also have access to the Skyline Car which has books, games, lectures on local topics, and refreshments.

TORONTO TO MONTRÉAL – Enjoy the luxury of Business Class on this 5½ hour fast train with large comfortable seats, wi-fi, and a three-course gourmet lunch with wine. Travel at speeds up to 160 kph.

MONTRÉAL TO HALIFAX — Space is booked in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Ocean* with dinner, breakfast and lunch included. Sleeping accommodation is in private cabins, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include toilet, handbasin, and couch(es) that convert into bed(s). Exclusive access to the dome car is included.

TRAIN SCHEDULE – Rail travel in Canada is subject to unexpected delays, and Wells Gray Tours cannot be held responsible for missed attractions due to a late train. Listed times are from VIA Rail's published schedule. In some years, the train has been many hours late into Toronto as freight trains have priority, but in 2019 the train was 2 hours early! VIA Rail made major changes to its 2019 schedule in an effort to arrive closer to published times, and has added about 12 hours for the journey from Vancouver to Toronto. Also, only two trains a week are scheduled now, instead of three. Our tour stopped in Winnipeg for two days for many years, but the 2019 schedule had the train arriving and departing in the middle of the night, so we moved the stop to Saskatoon, a city full of interesting things to do.

LUGGAGE – While on the train, your suitcase is stored in the baggage car. You may bring your suitcase to your private room for overnight stays, but it is highly recommended that you bring a more compact bag with just your needs for those few days while on board.

GRATUITIES – The customary gratuities for train room attendants are not included in your tour fare due to the challenges of distribution on board, so please budget \$5 per person per day. Gratuities are included for the dining car train staff, and for all included meals off the train, local guides, museum docents, boat crew, and coach drivers (outside of BC). Gratuities to the Wells Gray tour director and BC coach driver are not included and are left to your discretion.

EARLY BOOKING is recommended as this tour is limited to 40 travellers and it goes full every year.



ACTIVITY LEVEL 2 — Moderate activity including walking medium distances over uneven surfaces and steps. You may have to walk through up to 5 train cars to access the dining car. If booking a single bedroom, be aware that at night you may need to go down the hall to a toilet.

Double bedrooms have upper and lower berths, so one person must be able to get into the upper berth. Steps on and off the train may be awkward for those with mobility challenges. There can be longer walks in Halifax and Toronto airports while flying home; request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if this could be an issue for you. The coaches and trains 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 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 tour days. 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.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation to Vancouver
- Coach transportation for 10 days in Saskatoon, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax
- 11 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
- 5 nights bedroom accommodation on VIA Rail
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Vancouver to Saskatoon in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Saskatoon
- Western Development Museum
- Wanuskewin Heritage Park with dance demo
- Ukrainian Museum
- Remai Modern Art Gallery
- Dinner cruise on South Saskatchewan River
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Saskatoon to Toronto in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Toronto with Casa Loma
- Theatre production in Toronto (show TBA)
- Hornblower cruise to bottom of Niagara Falls
- Niagara Parks fee
- Locally-guided tour of Niagara Falls
- Skylon Tower & dinner in revolving restaurant
- Business Class VIA Rail train from Toronto to Montréal with lounge access in Toronto
- Locally-guided tour of Montréal
- St. Lawrence River cruise at Montréal
- Le Festin du Gouverneur dinner theatre
- Montréal Biodome & Olympic Stadium Tower
- VIA Rail's *The Ocean* from Montréal to Halifax in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Halifax
- Halifax Citadel National Historic Site
- Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
- Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour
- Grafton Street Dinner Theatre
- Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic
- Transfer from Halifax hotel to airport
- WestJet flight from Halifax to Kelowna
- Current air transport tax & security fees
- Airline fee for one suitcase per person
- Transfer from Kelowna airport to pickup point
- Gratuities for local guides, docents, boat crew, and coach drivers
- Gratuities for dining car staff on trains
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels and trains
- **31 meals:** 11 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due February 18, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. ,

Cancellation Policy: Up to January 18, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From January 19 to February 18, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From February 19 to March 18, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From March 19 to April 16, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After April 16, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from trains, airline 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 to 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.

Photo Credit: VIA Rail, Wikimedia Commons

Experience Points: This tour earns 190 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 February 18, 2021.

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

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