



BRANSON

October 19, 2021 – 10 Days

Includes 13 amazing shows!

The entertainment in Branson, Missouri is nonstop—filled with music, laughter, and legends of the stage. It has been named the #1 U.S. destination for groups for the past five years and entertains more than six million visitors annually. It all began in 1959 when *The Baldknobbers Jamboree* opened the first live musical show in Branson, but the first theatre on Highway 76 was *Presley's Mountain Music Jubilee* in 1967. Currently there are 40 theatres operating in Branson and it has more theatre seats than Broadway or Las Vegas. During six days and nights in Branson, we experience 13 shows across a wide range of genres including country music, acrobatics, comedy, Celtic music, opera, and Broadway tunes! Come and find out why Branson is called the "Live Music Show Capital of the World."

Activity Level: 1



18 Meals Included:

8 breakfasts, 1 brunch, 4 lunches, 5 dinners

Fares per person:

\$4,585 double/twin; \$5,255 single; \$4,450 triple
Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

\$250 discount on first 15 seats; \$125 on next 10

Experience Points:

Earn 100 points on this tour.

Redeem 100 points if you book by July 14, 2021.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, October 19

Transportation is provided to Seattle and we stay overnight at the Embassy Suites near the airport. Meet your fellow travellers during a reception with cocktails, beer, and wine.

Accommodation: Embassy Suites Sea-Tac

Day 2: Wednesday, October 20

We fly on Alaska Airlines non-stop to **Kansas City, Missouri**. Our coach meets us at the airport and we stay overnight nearby.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Drury Inn Kansas City Airport

Day 3: Thursday, October 21

We journey south across Missouri with a stop at **Fantastic Caverns**. Discovered in 1862 by a farmer's dog, the cave is the only one in the USA that you can ride through on a tram. After lunch at Bass Pro in Springfield, it is a short drive into the hills of the Ozarks to reach **Branson**. We stay six nights at the full-service Radisson Hotel, located just off Country Music Blvd. It has 10 floors, interior corridors, restaurant, lounge, indoor/outdoor pool, sauna, whirlpool, and fitness centre. Tonight, enjoy the first of our 13 wonderful shows in Branson. The **Hughes Family** presents fantastic entertainment from a very talented group of singers, dancers, and musicians. The show is filled with a variety of music from pop, rock, and country to Broadway, gospel, and hip hop as they dance in unison with grace and style. With over



30 Hughes Kids in every show, the Hughes Brothers can claim to be the "World's Largest Performing Family."

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel

Day 4: Friday, October 22

Our morning show, **Down Home Country** at 76 Music Hall, features singer Bob Davidson and "Fiddle Player of the Year" Melody Hart. They present the classics of George Jones, Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, and Waylon Jennings, in addition to the comedy of Harley Worthit. Classic country, western swing, and gospel music are all expertly performed in one show. Lunch is at the Grand Country Buffet, followed by **The Dutton Family** show. They are international touring and recording artists who play everything from bluegrass to classical in their shows, featuring a variety of instruments: violin, guitar, bass, viola, banjo, mandolin, harmonica, and drums. Dinner is at the Pickin' Porch Grill, then we thrill to an entirely different show, **The Incredible Acrobats of China**. One of the most celebrated acrobatic companies, these performers have stunned audiences all around the world. Over 20 acrobats bring the Orient to Branson in a fast-paced production featuring Human Strength & Beauty, Plates Spinning, Juggling, Diabolo, Chair Stack, Butterfly Lovers, and Spinning Girls.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel

Day 5: Saturday, October 23

This morning, a locally-guided tour visits highlights of Branson including **College of the Ozarks** which has a unique approach to education and is nicknamed "Hard Work U." The Ralph Foster Museum on the campus is included. Lunch is at the Center Stage Grill, then we go to King's Castle Theatre to see the **Dublin Irish Tenors & Celtic Ladies**. The nine singers bring some of Ireland's best music to Branson, including opera, pop, swing, Irish classics, and traditional folk ballads.

Their repertoire includes a variety of songs such as *Scarborough Fair*, *Nessun Dorma*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Rolling in the Deep*, and the Irish favourite, *Danny Boy*. Dinner is at the 1950s style Up-town Café, then we go to the Mansion Theatre to see **Larry Gatlin & the Gatlin Brothers**. With 15 top-five hits in the 1970s and 1980s, Larry, Steve and Rudy continue to enjoy huge popularity as they entertain audiences with favourites such as *Black Gold*, *Houston*, *I Just Wish You Were Someone I Loved*, *I Don't Wanna Cry Anymore*, and *Night Time Magic*. The song that got them an Academy of Country Music Award was *All the Gold in California*, one of the catchiest tunes to ever hit the country music scene.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel



Gatlin Brothers

Day 6: Sunday, October 24

The day starts with a sumptuous brunch in elegant Keeter Hall at the College of the Ozarks, prepared and served by students. This afternoon, we attend a show starring **Yakov Smirnoff**, an uplifting comedian who tells hilarious tales of life in his native Russia contrasted with his new homeland of America. He has kept audiences laughing in Branson since 1992. Dinner is at the Wildwood Bistro in the Radisson Hotel, then we



Yakov Smirnoff

attend **C.J. Newsom's Classic Country and Comedy** show at the Americana Theatre. Newsom gives Branson the best of country's legendary ladies and has been sharing the music of the incomparable Patsy Cline for years. Her show now features huge hits from other leading ladies of song such as Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire, and Judy Garland. On top of all that phenomenal music, enjoy another local comedian, Terry Sanders.

Meals included: Brunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel

Day 7: Monday, October 25

This morning, we go to **A Tribute to John Denver** at the Little Opry Theatre. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Denver from his friend, James Garrett. He shares personal stories that will make you laugh, cry, and hear Denver's songs with more in-depth perspective. Garrett performs some of Denver's most beloved hits, including *Leavin' on a Jet Plane* and *Rocky Mountain High*. Lunch is at McFarlain's, then our matinee show is **#1 Hits of the Sixties**. Enjoy a high energy party as this group of 10 revisits the days of the British Invasion, Motown, California Surfin' and the Age of Aquarius with over 100 songs, 100 costume changes, and even some classic Fifties tunes! Dinner is at Getting Basted BBQ. Tonight, we attend the wonderful show that is usually top-rated every year by Wells Gray customers — **Presley's Country Jubilee**. It is two memorable hours of music and comedy with one of Branson's longest running shows, still popular after 54 years and four generations of Presleys on the stage.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel



Presley's Country Jubilee

Day 8: Tuesday, October 26

This morning, we explore the **Titanic Exhibit** which contains hundreds of artifacts from the famous ship as well as experiences such as a slanted deck and a vat of water as cold as the ocean. There is free time to browse the shops and have lunch at Branson Landing. This afternoon, we see the **Johnson Strings** performance — one dynamic family, 20 dazzling instruments, 8 voices in close harmony, and plenty of family humour. Before opening their Branson show in 2017, The Johnson Strings spent 10 years touring across the USA. Each of the six kids began taking music lessons as 3 to 6 year-olds. Some of their songs are Ed Sheeran's *Perfect*, Michael Buble's *Feelin' Good* and *The Orange Blossom Special*, Brad Paisley's *Mud on the Tires*, The Judds' *Love Can Build a Bridge*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, and *What a Wonderful World*; and Disney's *Let It Go* and *Foggy Mountain Breakdown*. Our "Farewell to Branson" dinner is at Florentina's Restaurant, then tonight's show, **Jesus**, is an awesome finale to our week in Branson. It follows the history of Jesus, from his humble beginnings as the son of a carpenter to the miracles that he performed and his role as prophet. It is performed in a grand style on the Sight and Sound Theatre's 100-metre

wraparound stage, with lavish staging, gorgeous costumes, a dramatic storm, colourful characters, live animals, and memorable songs.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Radisson Hotel



Day 9: Wednesday, October 27

We must say goodbye to Branson and the Ozarks after six days of fabulous entertainment. The coach takes us to **Kansas City**, then we fly to Seattle and stay overnight at the Embassy Suites near the airport.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Embassy Suites Sea-Tac

Day 10: Thursday, October 28

Transportation is provided from Seattle to your pickup point in Victoria.

Meals included: Breakfast

TOUR NOTES



Activity Level 1: Light activity including short distances to walk and some stairs, mainly going to/from your theatre seats. There can be longer walks in Seattle and Kansas City airports; request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at airline check-in if this could be an issue for you. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coaches by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 1, 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.

BRANSON, MISSOURI

Branson had its modest beginning in 1882 when Reuben Branson opened a general store and post office in the area. The first tourist attraction opened in 1894 when William Lynch bought Marble Cave, renamed it Marvel Cave, and began charging for tours. Fame came to Branson in 1907 when Harold Bell Wright published his novel about the Ozarks, *The Shepherd of the Hills*. Hugo and Mary Herschend acquired Marvel Cave in 1950 then, ten years later, built Silver Dollar City, a re-creation of a frontier town which still operates today with rides and shows. *The Baldknobbers*

Jamboree opened the first live musical show in Branson in 1959, but the first theatre on Highway 76 was *Presley's Mountain Music Jubilee* in 1967. Branson began its transformation into a major tourist attraction in 1983 when the Roy Clark Celebrity Theatre opened and began to bring famous country music stars to Branson. During the next ten years, performers such as Box Car Willie, Andy Williams, Shoji Tabuchi, and Glen Campbell built their own theatres. The television series *60 Minutes* aired an episode in 1991 which declared that Branson was the "music capital of the entire universe", much to Nashville's chagrin. Currently there are 40 theatres operating in Branson and it has more theatre seats than Broadway or Las Vegas. It was named the #1 U.S. destination for groups for six years and entertains more than six million visitors annually, but has a year-round population of only 11,000. Branson's title today is the "Live Music Show Capital of the World."



Hwy 76 in Branson

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to Seattle airport and return
- Flight from Seattle to Kansas City and return
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- Airline luggage fees for one checked bag
- Coach transportation for 8 days in Missouri
- 9 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Fantastic Caverns underground tour by tram
- *Hughes Family* show
- *Down Home Country* show
- *The Dutton Family* show
- *The Incredible Acrobats of China* show
- Locally-guided sightseeing tour of Branson area with College of the Ozarks
- Ralph Foster Museum
- *Dublin Irish Tenors & Celtic Ladies* show
- *Larry Gatlin & the Gatlin Brothers* show
- *The Yakov Smirnoff* show
- *Newsom's Classic Country & Comedy* show
- *A Tribute to John Denver* show
- *The #1 Hits of the 60s* show
- *Presley's Country Jubilee* show
- Titanic exhibit
- *Johnson Strings* show
- Sight and Sound Theatre's *Jesus* show
- Gratuities for Branson driver & guide
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **18 meals:** 8 breakfasts, 1 brunch, 4 lunches, 5 dinners

HOW ARE THE BRANSON SHOWS SELECTED?

The 2021 tour will be the 24th time that Wells Gray Tours has visited Branson. Many customers repeat the tour, knowing that some shows will be offered again, some are new, and many change their songs and stories. After each tour, our travellers turn in their comment sheets, rating each of the shows as excellent, good, average, or poor. A weighting of 10, 5, 1 or 0 respectively is applied. Most of Branson was closed in 2020, due to Covid-19, so we looked at the 2019 ratings. Nine of those shows scored very high and are being offered again in 2021. Two are not performing (*Daniel O'Donnell* and *George Dyer*) and two did not score well, so four new shows are being offered: *Hughes Family*, *Larry Gatlin*, *#1 Hits of the 60s*, and *Johnson Strings*. In addition, the Sight and Sound Theatre changes its production every year, and the spectacular show, *Jesus*, is scheduled for 2021. With up to 40 shows to choose from, there is always something new and exciting to see in Branson.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$400 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 14, 2021. 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 July 14, 2021.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 14, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From June 15 to July 14, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 15 to August 13, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From August 14 to September 14, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After September 14, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates and taxes, and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond Wells Gray Tours' control, therefore, we reserve 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 Credits: Dutton Family, Fantastic Caverns, Acrobats of China, Hughes Family, Gatlin Brothers, Yakov Smirnoff, Presley's Country Jubilee, Sight and Sound Theatres, Branson Tourism Centre.

Experience Points: This tour earns 100 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 July 14, 2021.

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

VICTORIA

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

Office Hours:

8:30 am to 4 pm
Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri
Wed 9 am to 4 pm
Closed holidays &
weekends

KAMLOOPS

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8:30 am to 4:30 pm
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Wed 9 am to 4:30 pm
Closed holidays &
weekends

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www.wellsgraytours.com

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