



Great Blue Heron

SAN JUAN ISLANDS CRUISE

September 12, 2021 - 5 Days

Small ship cruising on MV Salish Express

The San Juan Islands are an archipelago of 172 islands between Bellingham, WA, and Victoria. The islands are best enjoyed by boat, so 2½ days are devoted to cruising on the *Salish Express*, learning about the fascinating history and admiring the natural beauty. We weave among the islands to Friday Harbor, a delightful small town filled with interesting shops, galleries, and pubs. The ship's small size is an advantage because she can cruise through many narrow channels that are impassable to larger ships. Other highlights include a walking tour of Prevost Harbor, whale watching, and turbulent Deception Pass. We return home along the scenic North Cascades Highway. Our last night is at luxurious Sun Mountain Lodge, perched on a mountaintop above Winthrop with incredible views.

Activity Level: 2



10 Meals Included:

4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

\$2,895 double/twin; \$3,445 single; \$2,820 triple

Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

\$120 discount on first 10 seats; \$60 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 59 points on this tour.

Redeem 59 points if you book by July 8, 2021.



San Juan Island

ITINERARY

Day 1: Sunday, September 12

We meet the Victoria and Interior travellers, then cross the border and stay in **Bellingham** overnight. Bellis Fair Mall is within walking distance and is open until 6 pm.

Accommodation: Oxford Suites, Bellingham

Day 2: Monday, September 13

We board the *Salish Express* in Bellingham and sail away at 10 am among the **San Juan Islands**. They were first explored in 1791 by the Spanish expedition of Francisco de Eliza. These islands are rich with history, and the captain and crew tell entertaining tales of discovery, smuggling, and war. Lunch is served on board. We weave among the islands while the captain plans the route to **Friday Harbor** based on current weather conditions and wildlife reports, arriving about 4 pm. Friday Harbor got its name from Joseph Poalie Friday, a native Hawaiian man who worked at the Hudson's Bay Company farm from 1841 to 1859. This picturesque town is filled with interesting shops, artist galleries, and pubs. A museum devoted to Orca whales is here and, if you want to visit, ask the crew for a 50% discount coupon.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Friday Harbor Suites



Day 3: Tuesday, September 14

We leave Friday Harbor on the *Salish Express* at 8:30 and cruise north to **Stuart Island**, changing course as needed when wildlife is spotted. We

dock at Prevost Harbor for two hours. This protected harbour on the east shore was named for James Charles Prevost, an admiral in the British Navy who was the British commissioner during the negotiations between BC and the USA over the boundary through the islands. There is time for a walk around on your own or join the crew for a guided walk to **Turn Point Lighthouse**, built in 1893 overlooking Haro Strait. Stuart Island has no ferry service, so it is a very secluded place, accessible only by private vessels. This afternoon, we cruise the western San Juan Islands, while searching for more Orca whales, bald eagles, harbor seals, Dall's porpoise, Minke whales, and sea birds. Some nice **Washington wines** are served with appetizers while returning to Friday Harbor.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Friday Harbor Suites

Day 4: Wednesday, September 15

After departure at 8 am, we cruise along Lopez Island, past the parks of Deadman Island and Iceberg Point, then cross Rosario Strait to Burrows Island Lighthouse, built in 1905. A tasty, **cracked crab feast** is included on the boat. The exciting finale is the cruise under **Deception Pass Bridge**. It connects Fidalgo Island with Whidbey Island using two spans totalling 500 metres long, and the *Salish Express* sails through the turbulent tidal waters underneath. The bridge rises 55 metres above the water and was completed in 1935. Then we sail along narrow Swinomish Channel,



under Rainbow Bridge, and dock in the quaint village of La Conner. Back on our coach, we follow the **North Cascades Highway** through Washington Pass with splendid views of towering granite walls, jade-green Diablo Lake, and soaring Lib-



erty Bell Peak. Our destination is luxurious **Sun Mountain Lodge**, perched on a mountaintop above Winthrop with incredible views of the Cascades. Enjoy the spa, pool, hot tub, or a walk on the trails.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Sun Mountain Lodge

Day 5: Thursday, September 16

We have a leisurely 10 am departure with some shopping time in quaint **Winthrop**. Lunch is in Omak and we stop at the Duty-Free store at the Osoyoos border crossing. We fly from Kelowna to Vancouver this evening.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfer from Vancouver to Bellingham dock
- 4 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- 2½ days of cruising on *MV Salish Express*
- Gratuities for vessel crew
- 2 transfers between Friday Harbor dock & motel
- Walking tour on Stuart Island
- Turn Point Lighthouse
- Coach transportation from La Conner dock to Sun Mountain and Kelowna airport
- Flight from Kelowna to Vancouver
- Current air taxes and security fees
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **10 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

TOUR NOTES

MV Salish Express is the latest addition to the San Juan Cruises fleet. The vessel is 28 metres long and can carry over 100 passengers, but this tour is limited to 40 passengers for extra comfort and space on board. She has two decks with lots of indoor table seating and outdoor sitting and standing space. The vessel features a full bar, galley and buffet area, PA system, and restrooms. The bridge is fully equipped with all the latest navigation instruments. The size of *Salish Express* is an advantage because she can cruise through many narrow channels that are impassable to larger ships.



Activity Level 2: Moderate activity including short distances to walk and some stairs, such as at boat docks, and reaching the upper deck of *Salish Express*. On September 14, there is a walk of 6 blocks from motel to the dock, and return, or a shuttle bus is available. There is an optional walk on Stuart Island from the dock to Turn Point Lighthouse of 2.5 miles return. At low tide, ramps to the docks can be steep. The coach and vessel 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, driver and boat crew 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$200 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 8, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$120 discount on first 10 seats and \$60 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 8, 2021.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 8, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From June 9 to July 8, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person (your deposit). From July 9 to August 6, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After August 6, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from the boat company or 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 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 are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of \$40 per person round trip. Please request no later than at final payment.

Photo Credits: San Juan Cruises (lighthouse, heron, Friday Harbor, Deception Pass, *Salish Express*), Pixabay (San Juan Island), Sun Mountain Lodge.

Experience Points: This tour earns 59 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 July 8, 2021.

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

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