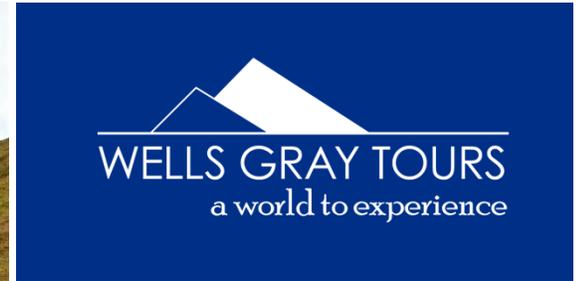




Straddling source
of Fraser River



Mt Robson rafting

FRASER RIVER FROM SOURCE TO MOUTH

September 7, 2021 – 11 Days

*Includes a helicopter ride to the source,
and 3 boat trips on the "Mighty Fraser"!*

The Fraser is truly British Columbia's great river. Flowing entirely within the province, it starts from a spring 50 km south of Yellowhead Pass and ends, 1390 km later, in the Strait of Georgia near Vancouver. Along the Fraser's tortuous route, it races past Mount Robson, highest in the Canadian Rockies; it tumbles over Rearguard Falls where salmon can swim no further; it meanders for 250 km through the broad Rocky Mountain Trench; it flows past old homesteads like the Huble Farm and under historic crossings such as the Lillooet and Alexandra Suspension Bridges; it passes industrial cities like Prince George and Quesnel; it plunges through the awesome Fraser Canyon and squeezes through Hells Gate. At the end of its journey, the Fraser spreads out into multiple channels and flows quietly into the ocean at Steveston. On this tour, you see all this as well as fly by helicopter to see the dripping spring that is the Fraser's birthplace.

Activity Level: 2



23 Meals Included:

10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 4 dinners

Fares per person:

\$4,095 double/twin; \$4,895 single; \$3,895 triple
Please add 5% GST.

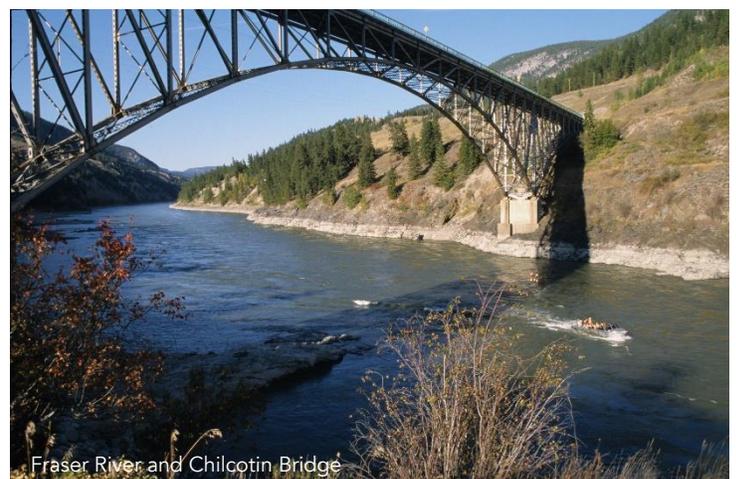
Early Bookers:

\$200 discount on first 12 seats; \$100 on next 8

Experience Points:

Earn 87 points on this tour.

Redeem 87 points if you book by July 21, 2021.



Fraser River and Chilcotin Bridge

ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, September 7

A transfer is provided to Victoria airport. We fly to Kelowna and stay overnight.

Accommodation: Best Western Hotel

Day 2: Wednesday, September 8

We meet the BC Interior passengers during pickups through the Okanagan Valley, then follow the Yellowhead Highway along the North Thompson River. There is a stop at 75-metre high Spahats Falls in **Wells Gray Park**. Our first two nights are in Valemount.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Super 8 Motel

Day 3: Thursday, September 9

Our scenic **helicopter flight** takes us past the rugged Ramparts and the Bennington Glacier to the source of the Fraser River high on the Continental Divide. The helicopter lands on the alpine meadows and you have about 45 minutes to stroll the area. Fewer than 200 people, most of them travelling with Wells Gray Tours, have seen the remarkable phenomenon of a **tiny dripping spring**



flowing into a pond from where the Fraser River, all of six inches wide, starts its long journey to the ocean. Your tour director guides you to the spring and you can have your picture taken straddling the "mighty Fraser".

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Super 8 Motel

Day 4: Friday, September 10

We board large **12-passenger rafts** and float gently down 8 km of the Fraser River for 1½ hours, watching for bears, moose, deer, bald eagles, beaver dams, and chinook salmon. Interpretive talks are provided by a guide on each raft. Dominating the view from the river is **Mount Robson**, highest in the Canadian Rockies at nearly 4,000 metres. There is no white water on this excursion. Back on our coach, a stop is made at Rearguard Falls, the upper limit of salmon migration on the Fraser. This afternoon, we drive west to Prince George, following the broad rift valley called the Rocky Mountain Trench and getting some views of the meandering Fraser.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Ramada Plaza Hotel

Day 5: Saturday, September 11

During a drive around **Prince George**, we enjoy the view from Connaught Hill and take a nature walk at Cottonwood Island. The Fraser River rounds its "Big Bend" near Prince George and turns south. At this point, it is only 12 km to the Arctic drainage and, starting in the mid-19th century, the Giscome Portage Trail served early travellers. **Huble Homestead** was built in 1912 at this strategic bend of the Fraser. A heritage tour is followed by lunch in the old barn. Then we drive the Cariboo Highway south through Quesnel and stay two nights in Williams Lake.



Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

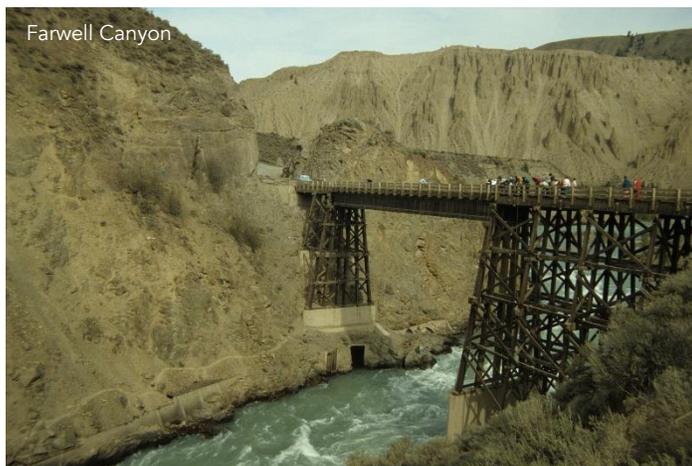
Accommodation: Coast Fraser Inn

Day 6: Sunday, September 12

The legendary **Chilcotin Highway** starts at Williams Lake and heads west to Bella Coola. We cross the Fraser River on a lofty bridge and drive across the vast ranchlands of the Chilcotin Plateau to Riske Creek. A highlight is the view of the glacial blue Chilcotin River as it races through **Farwell Canyon**. Some native pictographs and hoodoos are nearby. Lunch is included at historic Chilcotin Lodge. This afternoon, we visit the Cariboo Chilcotin Museum in Williams Lake.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Coast Fraser Inn



Day 7: Monday, September 13

Our first stop is at the colourful Painted Chasm, created by glacial meltwaters at the end of the last Ice Age. Next is **Hat Creek Ranch**, one of the last remaining roadhouses from the era of the Cariboo Wagon Road. We tour the buildings, ride the stagecoach, and listen to tales of the Gold Rush. We drive beneath the soaring white cliffs of **Marble Canyon** and along the terraces above Fountain Canyon and Moran Canyon where a gigantic dam was planned in the 1960s to harness the Fraser River. The Bridge of the 23 Camels crosses the Fraser into Lillooet and commemorates that oddity in B.C. history when camels were used as pack animals to the gold fields. A Lillooet **jade** expert talks to us about this much-prized rock, and we visit the Lillooet Museum.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Mile 0 Motel



Day 8: Tuesday, September 14

Today features sights through the famous **Fraser Canyon**. We view the "Meeting of the Waters" in Lytton where the clear Thompson River flows into the muddy Fraser. We ride the **Hell's Gate Airtram** down to this awesome spectacle where the Fraser squeezes between sheer rock walls. We stop in Yale at St. John the Divine, B.C.'s oldest church which dates to 1863. At Hope, the Fraser emerges from its canyon into the fertile farmlands of the Fraser Valley and turns west for its final 160 km to the ocean. We stay at **Harrison Hot Springs Resort** in the east tower rooms, all with lake views. Relax in the soothing hot pools, then dine in elegance in the Copper Room with music and dancing by the Jones Boys.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Harrison Hot Springs Resort

Day 9: Wednesday, September 15

During today's **Fraser River Safari**, we take a two-hour jet-boat excursion from Mission to the mouth of the Harrison River while viewing bird and animal life with an expert naturalist. Although the Fraser flows near cities such as Chilliwack and Abbotsford, this 40-km section is less visited because the major highways on the north and south shore are well away from the river. At Mission, we walk the grounds of **Westminster Abbey** and visit the neo-Gothic church with 64 stained-glass windows. We also explore **Kilby General Store** which was operated by the Kilby family from 1906 to 1977 and is now a provincial historic site. We stay

two nights in New Westminster at the Inn at the Quay, built on a pier jutting into the Fraser River.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Inn at the Quay

Day 10: Thursday, September 16

We board the **paddlewheeler *MV Native*** at New Westminster for a four-hour excursion down the last 30 km of the Fraser River. We sail under the Pattullo Bridge, Skytrain Bridge and Alex Fraser Bridge, and over the Massey Tunnel. At Steveston, the Fraser finally flows into the Strait of Georgia and we cruise offshore to see its brown fresh water mingling with the blue salt water. A Spanish captain, José María Narváez, is credited with being the first European to see the Fraser



Fraser River paddlewheeler

River in 1791 when he saw “a vast brown stain lying upon the sea.” He called it Boca de Florida Blanca and noted that the water was “more sweet than salt”. Don’t miss your tour director’s “**Water Ceremony**” where a bottle of water collected from the Fraser’s source is solemnly poured into the ocean, completing our journey along the entire river. Back on shore, we tour the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site then return to New Westminster by coach. A farewell dinner is planned with a guest



speaker about the Fraser River.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Inn at the Quay

Day 11: Friday, September 17

We take the 11 am ferry to Swartz Bay. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfers to Victoria Airport and Kelowna Airport to hotel
- Flight from Victoria to Kelowna
- Current air taxes and security fees
- Coach transportation for 9 days
- 10 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Helicopter to the source of the Fraser River
- Fraser River raft float trip
- Huble Homestead tour
- Farwell Canyon and pictographs
- Cariboo Chilcotin Museum
- Hat Creek Ranch and historic roadhouse tour
- Lillooet Museum
- Hell’s Gate Airtram
- St. John the Divine Church in Yale
- Harrison Hot Springs pools
- Copper Room entertainment with music by the Jones Boys and dancing
- Fraser River Safari boat excursion
- Kilby Store Historic Site
- Westminster Abbey
- Paddlewheeler cruise from New Westminster to the mouth of the Fraser River
- Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site
- Fraser River guest speaker
- Transfer from New Westminster to Victoria
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides, museum docents, raft guides, and boat crew
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **23 meals:** 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 4 dinners

THE MIGHTY FRASER

"Our past, present and future are linked with the Fraser. The past saw fur-traders, the gold rush of 1858, and early settlers. The present sees waters teeming with migrating salmon and a highway and railways confined to the gorge carved by the river. The Fraser, beautiful, bountiful and powerful, must always flow in the pattern of our future."

So read one of British Columbia's stop-of-interest plaques, erected in the early 1960s by the Department of Recreation & Conservation to provide travellers with 50-word snippets of roadside history. "The Mighty Fraser" plaque was located on the Trans-Canada Highway near Laidlaw and was relocated to the riverside park in Hope when the freeway was built in the 1980s.

The message is still true today, 60 years later, because the Fraser is truly British Columbia's great river. Flowing entirely within the province, it starts from a spring 50 km south of Yellowhead Pass and ends, 1390 km later, in the Strait of Georgia near Vancouver. Along the Fraser's tortuous route, it races past Mount Robson, highest in the Canadian Rockies; it tumbles over Rearguard Falls where salmon can swim no further; it meanders for 250 km through the broad Rocky Mountain Trench; it flows past old homesteads like the Huble Farm and under historic crossings such as the Lillooet and Alexandra Suspension Bridges; it passes industrial cities like Prince George and Quesnel; it plunges through the awesome Fraser Canyon and squeezes through Hell's Gate. At the end of its journey, the Fraser spreads out into multiple channels and carries its huge load of sediment quietly into the ocean at Steveston.



The Fraser River's intrigue is not only its geography, but the vital role it has played in British Columbia's history. First Nations tribes lived and worked on its banks long before Europeans arrived; fur traders such as Simon Fraser and Alexander Mackenzie travelled on its waters over 200 years ago; thousands of miners sought gold on its sandbars in the 1850s; a route for the Canadian Pacific Railway was blasted through its canyons in the 1880s; and Vancouver grew from hamlet to metropolis at its outlet.

The source of the Fraser River was discovered by a *Beautiful British Columbia Magazine* team in the mid-1980s. The nearest road is 50 km away and there is no trail to the site, so the only access is by a helicopter. Fewer than 200 people, most of them travelling with Wells Gray Tours, have seen the remarkable phenomenon of a tiny dripping spring flowing into a pond from where the Fraser River, all of six inches wide, starts its long journey to the ocean. This tour lets you experience the thrill of a helicopter ride, as well as planting your feet on each side of the not-so-mighty Fraser. You have bragging rights for a truly unique opportunity!

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In the United States, there is lots of enthusiasm for its great river, the Mississippi. Coach tours follow it from source to mouth and sightseeing vessels ply its waters to the end of navigation. In 2000, Roland Neave, owner of Wells Gray Tours, reasoned that if Americans can celebrate the Mississippi, we should do the same with British Columbia's own great river, the Fraser, and so this tour was born in 2001. The tour has been offered every 3 to 4 years since and 2008 was a special year being the 200th Anniversary of Simon Fraser's journey down his namesake river in 1808. Come and join Wells Gray Tours' own celebration of Simon Fraser and the mighty Fraser as you follow it from source to mouth.

TOUR NOTES

Accommodation: Some nights of this tour are “off the beaten track” so please do not expect luxury hotels in Valemount and Lillooet.

Helicopter: Most people have never flown in a helicopter and it is an exhilarating experience. We will not know the size of the helicopter until early September, probably 4-6 passengers. The flight to the Fraser River source is arranged with Yellowhead Helicopters, based in Valemount. Depending on numbers, flights may go from their base in Valemount or from near Yellowhead Pass. A safety briefing is provided.



Activity Level 2: This is a unique tour with lots of activity and time outdoors while you experience many aspects of the Fraser River. The trip to the source of the Fraser requires getting in and out of a helicopter, and walking about ½ km in an alpine meadow at 2,000 metres altitude. On other days, you are boarding a large raft and two boats. Walks include Farwell Canyon pictographs and Othello Tunnels. This tour has activity ranging from somewhat rigorous to sedentary. It is not a suitable tour for people who depend on a walker. Seeing everything mentioned in this brochure requires active participation. The coach 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 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 tour days.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due July 21, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 12 seats and \$100 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 21, 2021.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 21, 2021, the cancellation charge is \$50 per person. From June 22 to July 21, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From July 22 to August 6, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From August 7 to August 20, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After August 20, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from 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 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, 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: Marion Wienhold (Fraser source, thanks to Barbara for posing), Mount Robson Rafting, Roland Neave (Chilcotin Bridge, helicopter at source, Huble Homestead, Farwell Canyon, Hell's Gate, Water Ceremony, Fountain Canyon), Paddle-wheeler Riverboat Tours

Experience Points: This tour earns 87 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 21, 2021.

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

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