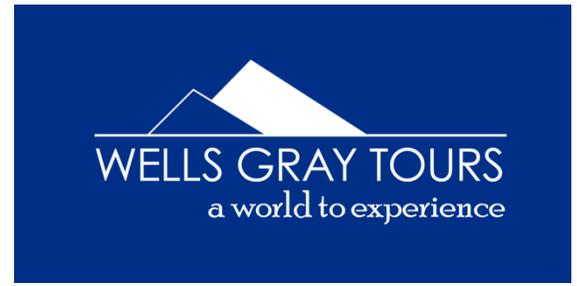


Dempster Highway



Virginia Falls

ROAD TO THE ARCTIC

July 30, 2021 – 15 Days

Explore the Mackenzie, Liard, Alaska, Klondike, and Dempster Highways

This epic journey to the Arctic Ocean has only been possible since the road to Tuktoyaktuk opened in late 2017. Come and enjoy a great variety of sights and experiences in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Some of the many highlights are: Yellowknife, the capital and largest community of the Northwest Territories; a boat trip on Great Slave Lake with a fish fry lunch served on an island, a scenic flight to Nahanni National Park with landing at Virginia Falls, a swim at Liard Hot Springs, SS Klondike National Historic Site, the storied Dempster Highway, crossing the Arctic Circle, the new Tuktoyaktuk road, a locally-guided tour of Tuktoyaktuk with a visit to an Inuit home and a fashion show, and Dawson City with goldpanning on Bonanza Creek and a show at Diamond Tooth Gerties.

Activity Level: 2



25 Meals Included:

10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 6 dinners

Fares per Person:

\$7,330 double/twin; \$8,410 single
Please add 5% GST.

Experience Points:

Earn 200 points from this tour.

Redeem 200 points if you book by May 27, 2021.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, July 30

We fly on WestJet from Vancouver via Calgary to **Yellowknife**, the capital and largest community of the Northwest Territories. Dinner is a chance to meet your fellow travellers as we embark on our Arctic road tour.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Explorer Hotel

Day 2: Saturday, July 31

A locally-guided tour features highlights of Yellowknife, followed by a boat trip on **Great Slave Lake** with a fish fry lunch served on an island. This is the deepest lake in North America at 610 metres, and the 10th largest lake in the world, covering 27,195 square km. The rest of the day is free time for you to explore Yellowknife and visit the outstanding **Prince of Wales Museum**.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Explorer Hotel

Day 3: Sunday, August 1

We start our road journey across the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. The Mackenzie Highway winds around the north arm of Great Slave Lake to Fort Providence. We cross the mighty **Mackenzie River** on the Deh Cho Bridge which opened in 2012 at a cost of \$200 million. The Mackenzie starts just upstream in Great Slave Lake and flows 1,742 km to the Arctic Ocean, making it Canada's longest river. We stop at Samba Deh Falls, then a ferry takes us over the broad Liard River to **Fort Simpson**.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Nahanni Inn

Day 4: Monday, August 2

Today is one of the most memorable of our Arctic journey. We board charter planes for a thrilling air excursion into the wilderness of **Nahanni National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The highlight is 100-metre high **Virginia Falls**, one of Canada's greatest cataracts and also one of the least-visited. The planes land near the falls

and you have 1½ hours to visit the awesome viewpoints. Downstream from the falls, the Nahanni River boils through miles of rapids below 1,000-metre tall cliffs. These canyonlands were made famous by prospectors' tales a century ago of lost gold and the Headless Valley. A recommended book is Raymond Patterson's *The Dangerous River*, a gripping account of his 1927 journey into the Nahanni. Weather permitting, our flight route follows the Nahanni River from 1st to 4th Canyon past Pulpit Rock, then goes to Little Doctor Lake, the rugged **Mackenzie Mountains**, and the soaring cliffs of Ram Plateau.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Nahanni Inn

Day 5: Tuesday, August 3

We follow the Liard Highway south into B.C. and join the **Alaska Highway**. This world-famous road was built in 1942 in just eight months and has been continually upgraded. This scenic part of the Alaska Highway winds through the barren Rocky Mountains. We stay two nights on the shore of Muncho Lake at **Northern Rockies Lodge**, one of Canada's largest log structures.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Northern Rockies Lodge



Day 6: Wednesday, August 4

A trip is offered to nearby **Liard Hot Springs** where the water temperature ranges from 108°

to 126°F. This afternoon, you may want to take a pleasant stroll along the shore of Muncho Lake.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Northern Rockies Lodge

Day 7: Thursday, August 5

We continue along the Alaska Highway following the Liard River and enter the Yukon at an elaborate monument. In **Watson Lake**, we see the famous Signpost Forest, started by a homesick roadbuilder in 1942 and now numbering over 77,000 city signs. We drive along the east shore of **Teslin Lake** which is 120 km long and cross the Nisutlin Bay Bridge, longest on the highway at 584 metres. We stay two nights in **Whitehorse**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn



Day 8: Friday, August 6

We visit the **Yukon Beringia Centre** which tells the story of native people and animals that lived in a prehistoric land between Alaska and Siberia known as the Bering Land Bridge. Then we go aboard the restored sternwheeler **SS Klondike**



which used to ply the Yukon River downstream to Dawson City and is now a National Historic Site.

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 9: Saturday, August 7

We leave Whitehorse via the **Klondike Highway** and follow the Yukon River past Lake Laberge, made famous by Robert Service in *The Cremation of Sam McGee*. Further downstream are the Five Finger Rapids which were a challenge for the Yukon River sternwheelers. Our destination is **Dawson City**, the partly-restored town where the fabulous Klondike Gold Rush started in 1898. Dawson once had a population of 30,000 people, but now it is home to a mere 800.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel

Day 10: Sunday, August 8

Canada's renowned wilderness road, **Dempster Highway**, heads north from Dawson City across the Arctic Circle to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. Surveying of the route began in 1958 and it took 21 years to build. The road was named for William Dempster of the Northwest Mounted Police who searched for the Lost Patrol in 1911. During our first day on the Dempster, a local guide is with us as far as the rugged **Tombstone Mountains**. We follow the Klondike and Ogilvie Rivers through stunning scenery of barren mountains and tundra. We stay overnight at Eagle Plains Hotel which perches on a lofty ridge with views in every direction of Arctic wilderness.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Eagle Plains Hotel

Day 11: Monday, August 9

We soon cross the **Arctic Circle** and the highway winds over miles of mountain ridges without a tree in sight. We ride on small ferries across the Peel and Mackenzie Rivers. At **Fort McPherson**, we see a traditional northern Hudson's Bay store and the graves of the Lost Patrol. **Inuvik** is a modern town of 3,200 people on the Mackenzie River where it widens into its huge delta.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Mackenzie Hotel

Day 12: Tuesday, August 10

A highway to Canada's Arctic Coast has been talked about since the 1960s. Construction began in 2014 and the new road, 138 km from Inuvik to **Tuktoyaktuk**, opened in November 2017. The Ice Road which had served Tuktoyaktuk in winter for decades closed for the last time in April 2017. Today, we have the exciting experience of driving to the Arctic Ocean, across the permafrost of the **Mackenzie River Delta**. A tour of Tuktoyaktuk, Canada's most northerly mainland town, is conducted by a long-time local resident and includes a chance to dip a toe or finger in the frigid **Arctic Ocean**. We also enjoy a traditional lunch at an Inuit home and a presentation on Inuit fashions and lifestyles.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Mackenzie Hotel



Day 13: Wednesday, August 11

A popular attraction is Our Lady of Victory Church, nicknamed the Igloo Church. We fly at noon from Inuvik to Dawson City, a flight of 1¼ hours on Air North. This afternoon, a local guide accompanies us on a drive around **Dawson City** and up Bonanza Creek to the gold diggings. The gigantic Dredge #4, now a National Historic Site, is included and you can try panning for gold yourself at Claim #33 (you keep what you find, even at \$1,700 an ounce).

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel



Day 14: Thursday, August 12

This is a free day and there are many optional activities to enjoy: the visitor centre, a presentation by the "Ghost of Robert Service", a cruise on the Yukon River, or the SS Keno sternwheeler. The Downtown Hotel's bar serves the famous Dawson drink, the Sour Toe Cocktail, if you dare! Tonight, we go to **Diamond Tooth Gerties** for casino gambling and a vaudeville show.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel

Day 15: Friday, August 13

We fly out of Dawson City at noon on Air North with a connection in Whitehorse, and arrive in Vancouver about 6 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 13 days
- 14 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- WestJet flight from Vancouver to Yellowknife
- Transfer from Yellowknife Airport to hotel
- Locally-guided tour of Yellowknife
- Great Slave Lake boat trip with fish fry lunch
- Prince of Wales Museum
- Deh Cho Mackenzie River bridge toll
- Liard River ferry twice
- Scenic flight to Nahanni National Park with landing at Virginia Falls
- Nahanni National Park fee
- Swim at Liard Hot Springs
- Yukon Beringia Centre
- SS Klondike National Historic Site with guide
- Local guide to Tombstone on Dempster Hwy
- Locally-guided tour of Tuktoyaktuk
- Visit to an Inuit home in Tuktoyaktuk with traditional lunch and Inuit fashion show
- Transfer from Inuvik hotel to airport
- Flight on Air North from Inuvik to Dawson City
- Locally-guided tour of Dawson City
- Dredge #4 National Historic Site
- Goldpanning on Bonanza Creek
- Diamond Tooth Gerties with show
- Transfer from Dawson City hotel to airport
- Flight on Air North from Dawson City via Whitehorse to Vancouver
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Current air taxes and fuel surcharges (all flights)
- Airline luggage fees for 1 suitcase per person
- Gratuities for local guides
- Luggage handling at most hotels
- **25 meals:** 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 6 dinners

NOTES ABOUT YOUR ARCTIC TOUR

- Accommodation in the North is the best available, but it may not be up to the standard you expect in the rest of Canada. In places such as Fort Simpson and Eagle Plains, there is only one place to stay. Since hotels in the North have a limited season and enormous operating expenses, room rates are very high, so that is why this tour costs more per day than most Wells Gray tours.
- This tour is scheduled for August, so you can enjoy pleasantly warm days and cool nights, possibly the aurora borealis, and a minimum of mosquitoes or other insects. Some customers ask for a June tour to the North, but that is the height of bug season and some people have difficulty sleeping with nearly 24 hours of daylight.
- This tour was originally planned to enter Alaska, then take a cruise from Skagway to Vancouver. The 2021 Alaska cruises have been cancelled as Canadian ports are closed due to Covid-19 and it is uncertain when the USA border will re-open. Therefore, this tour has been re-planned to stay entirely in Canada. A flight to Vancouver replaces the cruise.



Activity Level 2: Some travelling days are long as hotels and towns are far apart in the north. There are walks to some viewpoints. Some communities do not have paved streets and sidewalks, so the walking surface may be uneven. There are stairs on and off the Nahanni plane, the 3 Air North flights, and the Great Slave Lake cruise. This tour is not appropriate if you depend upon a walker. The coach and planes cannot carry a scooter. Seeing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. 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 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 May 27, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to May 27, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From May 28 to June 17, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From June 18 to July 5, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After July 5, there is no refund.

Changes to tour: As this tour has been planned many months in advance, changes to air taxes and other costs (either up or down) could occur, in which case the tour fare will be adjusted. Hotels named in the itinerary could change. Inclement weather could cancel the Nahanni flight, but a refund of that cost will be provided.

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. The transfer is to/from YVR. Please request no later than at final payment.

Photo Credits: Roland Neave (Arctic Circle, Virginia Falls, Arctic Ocean, goldpanning), Wikimedia (Liard Hot Springs, SS Klondike), Aina Juzups (Signpost Forest)

Experience Points: This tour earns 200 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 May 27, 2021.

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

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