WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience

OTTAWA TULIP FESTIVAL & ST. LAWRENCE CRUISE

May 6, 2022 – 11 Days

Includes 4-day cruise on Canadian Empress

The world's largest tulip festival was established in 1953 in Ottawa to preserve the heritage of Canada's role in liberating the Dutch during World War II. The symbolic tulip – Ottawa's official flower – was given as a gift in perpetuity to the Canadian people for having provided safe harbour to the Dutch Royal Family during the German occupation of the Netherlands. The tulip remains a valuable symbol of friendship with special meaning to Canadians. Prepare to be impressed with over a million tulips blooming during the festival, the largest display being at Dows Lake with 30 beds, 60 varieties, and over 300,000 blooms.

Prior to the Tulip Festival, we board the *Canadian Empress* at Kingston for a 4-day cruise on the St. Lawrence River. Highlights are the 1000 Islands, Fulford Mansion, Fort Wellington, and Upper Canada Village.

Activity Level: 1

19 Meals Included:
9 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners

Fares per person:
$4,850 St. Lawrence cabin; $5,095 Ottawa cabin;
$5,190 Sterling cabin; $5,395 Premier cabin
Single fare St. Lawrence cabin: $6,380 (4 available)
Please add 5% GST.

Early Bookers:
$200 discount on first 12 seats; $100 on next 8

Experience Points:
Earn 96 points on this tour.
Redeem 96 points if you book by February 3, 2022.

Departures from: Interior, Victoria, Lower Mainland

Canadian Empress in 1000 Islands

ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, May 6

Transfers are provided from Kamloops, Salmon Arm and Okanagan cities to Kelowna airport. We fly on WestJet to **Toronto** and stay overnight at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel, conveniently located inside Terminal 3 where WestJet lands.
Accommodation: Sheraton Gateway Hotel

Day 2: Saturday, May 7

We drive to **Kingston** which played a vital role in Canada's birth. It was always a military fort, first as a French stronghold against both British and Iroquois enemies and then as a British fort defending against American invaders. After the Rideau Canal was built in 1832, Kingston became the primary economic centre for Upper Canada and was briefly the capital of the Province of Canada. A local guide conducts a drive past landmarks such as Queen's University, City Hall, the Martello Towers, Royal Military College, and infamous Kingston Penitentiary. Our hotel has a beautiful setting on the Lake Ontario waterfront.
Option: Tonight, join the Haunted Walk where a local guide shares some favourite ghost stories and leads you by lantern light to some haunted spots in downtown Kingston. $25 per person. Please book by final payment.
Meals included: Breakfast
Accommodation: Delta Kingston Hotel

Day 3: Sunday, May 8

We visit John A. Macdonald's Bellevue House. Lunch is included in a unique restaurant inside the stone walls of **Old Fort Henry**. Afterwards, we take a guided walk through the fort which has loomed over Kingston since the War of 1812. A much larger fort was constructed between 1832 and 1836 to defend Lake Ontario, the entrance to the Rideau Canal, and the harbour. These were the strongest defences in Canada west of Quebec City, but neither was ever attacked. At 5:30 pm, ***Canadian Empress*** is ready for boarding in downtown Kingston. The Captain's welcome reception is followed by dinner. We cruise out of Kingston's harbour at 7 pm and anchor for the night in the midst of the 1000 Islands.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: *Canadian Empress*

Day 4: Monday, May 9

The ship weaves among the **1000 Islands** and docks in **Gananoque** so we can visit the Arthur Child Heritage Museum. We continue among the islands via Wanderer's Channel, the Admiralty Islands, and Millionaires' Row where palatial mansions overlook the river. **Boldt Castle** was built in 1900 by George Boldt who owned the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. The castle was meant to be a gift for his wife with 120 rooms, 6 storeys, indoor pool, powerhouse, ballrooms, and gardens. In 1904, Mrs. Boldt suddenly died and work stopped on the castle, never to be completed. We sail around the castle, but do not land because it is in the USA. Nearby is the 42-room **Singer Castle**, built in 1896 by the owner of Singer Sewing Machines. Arriving in Brockville, we tour the splendid **Fulford Place Mansion**, built in 1901 by Senator George Fulford who made a fortune selling a cure-all medicine known as Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. Tonight, take a stroll around historic Brockville or enjoy local entertainment on the ship.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: *Canadian Empress*

Day 5: Tuesday, May 10

It is about an hour's cruise to Prescott. We visit **Fort Wellington National Historic Site** which defended the St. Lawrence during the War of 1812 and the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. This afternoon, the *Canadian Empress* cruises along the Galop Canal, built in 1846, and passes through the Iroquois Lock.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: *Canadian Empress*

Day 6: Wednesday, May 11

We ride a miniature train from our overnight dock to **Upper Canada Village**, an elaborate living history museum. A horse-drawn wagon ride provides an orientation. Step back 150 years and stroll the streets, visiting restored buildings and chatting to costumed actors about their work and life. Back on board, we cast off about noon and start heading upstream on the St. Lawrence. Our overnight dock is at **Ivy Lea**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Canadian Empress*

Upper Canada Village train

Day 7: Thursday, May 12

A short ride across half of the Thousand Islands Bridge takes us to the 40-storey tall **Thousand Islands Tower** which offers a panoramic view. Then it is a short cruise back to **Kingston** where we disembark the *Canadian Empress* at 2 pm. We have a two-hour drive north to Ottawa and the classic **Lord Elgin Hotel** where we check in for our four-night stay. Its location is ideal, just blocks away from the Tulip Plaza, Parliament Hill, Major's Hill Park, and the Rideau Canal. The hotel was built in 1941 and named for the first Governor General of the united Canadas.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Lord Elgin Hotel

Day 8: Friday, May 13

A local guide joins us this morning for a tour of the city and the garden sites of the **Ottawa Tulip Festival**, including Little Italy, Dows Lake and Elgin Street. The afternoon is free time.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Lord Elgin Hotel

Day 9: Saturday, May 14

Today we visit two of the most acclaimed national museums. First is the **Canadian Museum of History** with highlights such as the First Nations Hall, Canada Hall, and Canadian Personalities Hall. An Imax film is included here. This afternoon, we visit the **Canadian War Museum** which reflects on Canada's military history and how it shaped the country. The rest of the day is leisure time.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Lord Elgin Hotel

Day 10: Sunday, May 15

Today is a free day to spend in Ottawa as you wish, and your tour director can assist with suggestions. Take a tour of the Parliament Buildings (the Centre Block is closed for renovations). Join a fun tasting tour of Byward Market. Rent a bike and ride the trail along the Rideau Canal. Visit more exceptional attractions, such as the Museum of Nature or the National Gallery of Canada. Return to the Tulip Festival gardens for another delightful stroll.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Lord Elgin Hotel

Day 11: Monday, May 16

A transfer is provided to Ottawa Airport. We fly on WestJet via Calgary to Kelowna.

Canadian Empress

CANADIAN EMPRESS

The *M/V Canadian Empress* was the result of some fanciful thinking on the part of Bob Clark in 1979. Having lived on the St. Lawrence River for years and being familiar with its many attractions and scenic beauty, Bob could not understand why there wasn't an overnight cruise ship providing excursions up and down the river. He was active in the architecture, real estate, and housing industries, so Bob's entrepreneurial spirit wouldn't allow him to let go of this idea and soon the keel for the ship was being laid. The *Canadian Empress* was launched in 1981. The year 1908 was chosen as a design and decor theme because Bob wanted a vessel that would integrate well with the history of the St. Lawrence River. The ship is not a replica of any specific vessel, but is a composite of many vessels that were common in the St. Lawrence region during the last century.

The *Canadian Empress* is 33 metres long with a 9-metre beam and a draft of just 1.5 metres. She carries only 66 passengers in 32 cabins. There are three decks. St. Lawrence Deck is the lowest and has most of the cabins and the gift shop. Ottawa Deck has 8 cabins, the Grand Saloon Lounge and Dining Room, and forward and aft outdoor sitting areas. The Sun Deck has lots of outdoor seating. Most cabins have two single beds (4 have a double bed), toilet, shower, sink, and window(s). Cabins are compact compared to an ocean cruise ship, typically about 8 square metres. There is daily housekeeping service. You will likely spend most daylight time away from your cabin in the Grand Saloon or on deck enjoying the scenery. Nightly entertainment is provided, usually by a local group or person and can include music, singing or magic.

The ship docks most nights in a town along the St. Lawrence River, so you can go ashore at your leisure and explore the area. Although the ship enters the USA several times, it does not dock there, so passports are not required.

Three meals a day plus afternoon tea and in-between treats are served in the Grand Saloon. There are usually two entrees offered with dinner. The menus utilize fresh in-season locally produced fruits and vegetables, and bread may come from the pioneer ovens at Upper Canada Village. The bar is well-stocked with wine, beer, and liquor at reasonable prices. Wine and domestic beer is complimentary at dinner. Coffee and tea are available 24 hours a day.

THE 1000 ISLANDS

With each nautical mile, nature's northern masterpiece unfolds. Within one 80-kilometre stretch of the mighty St. Lawrence River, there are no less than 1,870 islands. In these "1000 Islands", birthplace of the famous 1000 Islands Dressing, we explore intricate river channels, sumptuous greenery, mysterious coves, and nooks and crannies veiled in folklore. We sail past summer cottages, opulent mansions, and even two castles, Boldt and Singer. These islands have been the summer homes of the rich and famous: the Astors, the Pullmans, the McNallys, Helena Rubenstein, Irving Berlin, Mary Pickford, and a host of others. We cruise under several bridges including the multiple spans of the Thousand Islands Bridge and ride the fast elevator to the fabulous view atop the 40-storey Thousand Islands Tower. Early Canadian history is well-demonstrated during our visits to the Fulford Mansion, Fort Wellington, and Upper Canada Village. There is plenty of time to relax on deck as the scenery of the St. Lawrence River glides past. The New York Times wrote, “When the time comes for sleep, sleep comes easily on a ship surrounded by a thousand islands and a million stars.”

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfers to/from Kelowna Airport
- WestJet flight from Kelowna to Toronto
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- Airline luggage fees for 1 suitcase
- 6 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
- Coach transportation for 5 days in Ontario
- Locally-guided tour of Kingston
- Bellevue House National Historic Site
- Old Fort Henry with guided tour
- 4 days/4 nights on board *Canadian Empress*
- Cruise gratuities
- Port charges and cruise taxes
- St. Lawrence Seaway ship transit fees
- Entertainment and other services on the ship
- Transfers from ship to attractions and return
- Arthur Child Heritage Museum
- Fulford Mansion
- Fort Wellington National Historic Site
- Upper Canada Village
- Miniature train from the ship to Upper Canada Village and return
- Horse-drawn wagon ride around Upper Canada Village
- Thousand Islands Tower
- Locally-guided tour of Ottawa tulip attractions
- Canadian Museum of History
- Imax Theatre
- Canadian War Museum
- Transfer from Ottawa hotel to airport
- WestJet flight from Ottawa to Kelowna
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities to guides and drivers on city tours
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **19 meals:** 9 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners

TOUR & CRUISE NOTES

All shore excursions included. On many cruises, shore excursions are a significant additional expense. On this cruise, all shore excursions are included. Usually a bus picks you up beside the ship and takes you to a local attraction. To reach Upper Canada Village, you ride on a miniature train.

Please book early. *Canadian Empress* has confirmed a block of cabins for this tour, mostly on the St. Lawrence Deck. These are normally held until 60 days before sailing. However, any unsold cabins can be taken away from us at any time if the ship fills.

Singles: Four ship cabins are designated for singles with a lower single supplement. Book early for these!

Activity Level 1: Light activity including short distances to walk and some stairs. The walk into Fort Henry from the parking lot is less than 10 mins. There is no elevator on the ship. No matter which deck you are on, expect to use some stairs such as up to the dining room from St. Lawrence Deck or down to the dock from Ottawa Deck, or up from both those decks to the Sun Deck. There is walking during the Ottawa tulips tour to see several gardens and the free day in Ottawa could have some walking, depending on the activities you choose to do. This tour is not suitable for people who depend on walkers or have mobility challenges with a flight of stairs. The coaches and ship cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. There can be longer walks in the airports; request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if this could be an issue for you. 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, ship crew, local guides, 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 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 $500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due February 3, 2022. 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 February 3, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to January 4, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of $50 per person. From January 5 to February 3, the cancellation charge is $300 per person. From February 4 to March 3, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From March 4 to April 1, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After April 1, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from airlines, the cruise ship and other tour suppliers can occur at any time. The flights cannot be booked until June 2021, so air fares could be different than expected. These factors 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 for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons (tulips page 1), St. Lawrence Cruise Lines (page 1 and 2), Roland Neave (miniature train, ship, on-deck, ship dining room)

Experience Points: This tour earns 96 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 February 3, 2022.

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

KAMLOOPS	KELOWNA	VERNON	PENTICTON	VICTORIA
(Head Office)	2575 Richter St.	3206 35th St.	159 Wade Ave E	102-736 Broughton St.
250 Lansdowne St.	Kelowna, BC V1Y 2R1	Vernon, BC V1T 6B7	Penticton, BC V2A 8B6	Victoria, BC V8W 1E1
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Ship's sun deck

Dinner on ship