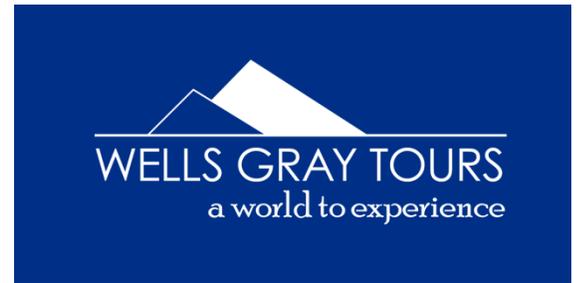




Dempster Highway



Virginia Falls

ROAD TO THE ARCTIC

July 29, 2022 – 24 Days

With 7-day cruise from Whittier to Vancouver on Noordam

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, and a Holland America cruise from Whittier to Vancouver. Some of the many highlights are: Yellowknife, the capital 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 landing at Virginia Falls, a swim at Liard Hot Springs, SS Klondike National Historic Site, Dawson City with goldpanning on Bonanza Creek, 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, a show at Diamond Tooth Gerties, Top of the World Highway, and Anchorage. Then we board Holland America's *Noordam* for a 7-day cruise to Vancouver via Hubbard Glacier, Glacier Bay, Skagway, and the Inside Passage. What an incredible journey through the North!

Activity Level: 2



51 Meals Included:

19 breakfasts, 18 lunches, 14 dinners

Fares per person (double/twin):

\$10,080 Inside Category I

\$10,530 Oceanview Category C

\$11,505 Verandah Category VC

Other cruise categories available along with single and triple fares.

Please add 2.4% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$300 discount on first 10 seats; \$150 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 210 points from this tour.

Redeem 210 points if you book by April 21, 2022.

Departure from: Victoria



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, July 29

We fly on WestJet from Victoria 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 30

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, July 31

We start our road journey across the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Alaska. 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 Sambaa 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 1

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 2

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 3

A trip is offered to nearby **Liard Hot Springs** where the water temperature ranges from 42° to 52° C. 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 4

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 5

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 6

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. Once Dawson had a population of 30,000 people, but now it is home to a mere 800.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel



Day 10: Sunday, August 7

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). The afternoon is free time and you may want to go to the visitor centre, see a presentation by the "Ghost of Robert Service", or tour the SS Keno sternwheeler. The Downtown Hotel's bar serves the famous Dawson drink, the Sour Toe Cocktail, if you dare!

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel



Day 11: Monday, 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 12: Tuesday, August 9

We cross the **Arctic Circle** and the Dempster 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. A popular attraction is Our Lady of Victory Church, nicknamed the Igloo Church.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Mackenzie Hotel

Day 13: Wednesday, August 10

A highway to Canada's Arctic Coast has been talked about since the 1960s. Construction began in 2014 and the new all-weather 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 14: Thursday, August 11

We fly at noon from Inuvik to Dawson City, a flight of 1¼ hours on Air North. This afternoon, we take a cruise on the *Klondike Spirit* paddlewheeler on the Yukon River. Out of the dozens of paddlewheelers that once operated during the

Gold Rush, this is the only one that still offers cruises in the Yukon. Tonight, we go to **Diamond Tooth Gerties** for casino gambling and a vaudeville show.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Downtown Hotel & Midnight Sun Hotel

Day 15: Friday, August 12

Today's drive traverses the magnificent **Top of the World Highway**, so named because it winds for miles across the tops of high ridges above treeline. A surprise is the isolated U.S. Customs building, for this is "Welcome to Alaska". Just past the border is the unique village of **Chicken** where you can mail your postcards with a very unusual postmark. We stay overnight in **Tok** on the Alaska Highway.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Young's Motel



Day 16: Saturday, August 13

We follow the Glenn Highway along the north side of the rugged Chugach Mountains, past Matanuska Glacier and through the fertile farmlands of the Matanuska Valley. We stay overnight in **Anchorage**, Alaska's largest city.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Marriott Hotel

Day 17: Sunday, August 14

We drive along Turnagain Arm, then through the 4-km long tunnel to **Whittier**. Here, we say goodbye to our driver who takes the coach home empty, a 4,000 km trip. We board Holland America's *Noordam* and an embarkation lunch is served in the Lido Market. Explore the ship this afternoon and familiarize yourself with her many facilities. Savour your first superb dinner, then be

on deck at 8 pm for a festive party as we sail away from Whittier along the awesome Alaska coast.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 18: Monday, August 15

We cruise across the Gulf of Alaska where some of the tallest peaks on the continent rise from the shoreline. In mid-afternoon, the ship turns into Yakutat Bay, then Disenchantment Bay and approaches the immense **Hubbard Glacier**. It is 122 km long from its source in the Yukon and about 10 km wide where it tumbles into the ocean. It is a very active glacier and huge pieces of ice regularly calve off the face.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*



Day 19: Tuesday, August 16

Nothing quite prepares you for waking up this morning amidst the grandeur of **Glacier Bay**. The *Noordam* pauses between the Margerie Glacier and the Grand Pacific Glacier, so you can see this spectacle of ice and soaring peaks on two sides of the ship. A National Park Ranger on board explains the natural phenomenon. We spend most of today exploring this unforgettable world of floating ice castles and tidewater glaciers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 20: Wednesday, August 17

The ship arrives in **Skagway** at 7 am and departs at 8 pm. The Klondike Gold Rush was in full swing 120 years ago and Skagway was the major

gateway to the Yukon. Today, that heritage is kept alive with old boardwalks, quaint false-fronted buildings, and interesting architecture. You may want to book an optional excursion on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 21: Thursday, August 18

The *Noordam* docks in **Juneau**, the capital of Alaska, at 8 am and departs at 6 pm. City tours can be purchased on the dock or on the ship which visit the Capitol Building, Governor's Mansion, and the sprawling Mendenhall Glacier. During the rest of the day, you can shop the many boutiques, visit the Museum, ride the cablecar up Mount Roberts for a terrific view, or enjoy the action at the Red Dog Saloon.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 22: Friday, August 19

We dock in **Ketchikan** from 11 am to 7 pm. This picturesque town has waterfront buildings on stilts, weathered stairways clinging to steep hillsides, and the famous Creek Street boardwalk.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 23: Saturday, August 20

Today, we admire the magnificent scenery of B.C.'s famed **Inside Passage**. We pass hundreds of islands and waterfalls, and will probably see wildlife such as bald eagles, porpoises, or killer whales. We sail through the narrow, sheltered waterways of Princess Royal Channel and Seymour Narrows where Ripple Rock used to menace ships.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Noordam*

Day 24: Sunday, August 21

We dock at Canada Place in **Vancouver** this morning and disembark the *Noordam*. A transfer is provided to your pickup point in Victoria.

Meals included: Breakfast

MS NOORDAM

MS Noordam made its inaugural cruise in 2006. It was the last of four Vista-class ships launched, preceded by *Zuiderdam* in 2002, *Oosterdam* in 2003 and *Westerdam* in 2004, each named for the primary points of the compass. Carrying 1,972 passengers, *Noordam* is one of Holland America's mid-sized, but she is still more intimate than some mammoth cruise ships nowadays. *Noordam's* gross tonnage is 82,000 and she is 284 metres long. Her 11 decks feature a 900-seat live entertainment theatre, seven lounges, casino, shopping arcade, movie theatre, beauty shop, library, games room, Internet centre, spa, gymnasium and two swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover). *Noordam* has 14 elevators and four of them are glass with panoramic views. The elegant two-deck Dining Room serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner with full choice of menu. The Lido Market offers buffet-style serving stations for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the 11 pm snack. The Pinnacle Grill and the Canaletto Restaurant with Italian cuisine all offer extraordinary service, reserved seating, and gourmet menus for an extra charge.

Staterooms have twin lower beds (some convert to queen-size double), television, music, telephone, and bathroom with toilet, sink and shower or bathtub. A crew of over 900 ensures top-quality service and entertainment. Every day has a full schedule of optional activities: dance class, bridge, bingo, shuffleboard, table-tennis, karaoke, board games, and fitness activities. Every evening, there is live stage entertainment and several other venues each offer a performance schedule.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 17 days
- 16 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Stateroom for 7 nights on *Noordam*
- Flight from Victoria to Yellowknife on WestJet
- Current air taxes and fuel surcharges
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- Transfer to Victoria Airport
- 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
- Locally-guided tour of Dawson City
- Dredge #4 National Historic Site
- Goldpanning on Bonanza Creek
- 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
- Flight on Air North from Inuvik to Dawson City
- Transfer from Dawson Airport to hotel
- Paddlewheeler cruise on Yukon River
- Diamond Tooth Gerties with show
- Whittier Tunnel toll
- 7-day Holland America cruise from Whittier to Vancouver on board *Noordam*
- Cruise gratuities
- Cruise taxes and port charges
- Entertainment and other services on ship
- Transfer Vancouver cruise terminal to Victoria
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides
- Luggage fees at most hotels and ship
- **51 meals:** 19 breakfasts, 18 lunches, 14 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.
- A passport is required to enter the USA and to board the ship.
- **Please book early!** Holland America has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour and they are normally held until 90 days before sailing. However, any unsold staterooms can be recalled when the ship fills and this has happened on several recent cruises. We had to waitlist disappointed customers, even though we had seats available on the motorcoach portion of the tour.
- **Dinner reservations on ship:** *Noordam* offers both open dining and fixed dining. Open dining means you can go to a restaurant when you are ready with your friends or make a reservation earlier in the day. All Wells Gray customers are automatically assigned to open dining by Holland America, but if you prefer to dine at the same time with the same people each day, we can request fixed dining. The specialty restaurants take reservations online starting 3 months in advance.



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, Inuvik to Dawson plane, and the lake cruise. This tour is not appropriate if you depend upon a walker. The coach and planes cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. 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. Seeing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation. 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 ongoing assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be asked / 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 April 21, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 10 seats and \$150 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after April 21, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to February 18, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From February 19 to April 21, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From April 22 to May 19, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From May 20 to June 21, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After June 21, there is no refund.

Changes to tour: As this tour has been planned 13 months in advance, changes to air taxes, cruise taxes and other costs (either up or down) could occur, in which case the tour fare will be adjusted. Please note that with the current volatile fuel costs, the airlines and Holland America can add fuel surcharges any time, even after your final payment, and we must collect those extra costs from you. Flights to Yellowknife and from Inuvik to Dawson cannot be booked until September 2021, so the air fare has been estimated. 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 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: Roland Neave (Arctic Circle, Virginia Falls, Arctic Ocean, goldpanning), Aina Juzups (Signpost Forest), Wikimedia (SS Klondike, Dawson City), Klondike Visitor Association (Top of World Highway), Holland America Line (Hubbard Glacier, Glacier Bay)

Experience Points: This tour earns 210 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 April 21, 2022.

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

KAMLOOPS

(Head Office)
250 Lansdowne St.
Kamloops, BC V2C 1X7
250-374-0831

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1-800-667-9552