



Great Blue Heron

SAN JUAN ISLANDS CRUISE

September 5, 2022 - 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 where we stay 2 nights. It is 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 visit to the unique town of La Conner, a cruise through turbulent Deception Pass, a driving tour of San Juan Island, and lots of opportunities for seeing whales and other marine wildlife.

Activity Level: 2



9 Meals Included:

4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 1 dinner

Fares per person:

\$2,640 double/twin; \$3,160 single

Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

\$150 discount on first 12 seats; \$75 on next 8

Experience Points:

Earn 62 points on this tour.

Redeem 62 points if you book by July 4, 2022.

Departure from: BC Interior



Friday Harbor

ITINERARY

Day 1: Monday, September 5

We cross the border at Sumas and stay in Bellingham overnight. Bellis Fair Mall is within walking distance and is open until 6 pm.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Oxford Suites, Bellingham

Day 2: Tuesday, September 6

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, probably cruising past historic Burrows Island lighthouse, Iceberg Point, Deadman's Island, and Cattle Pass. The captain plans our flexible 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. During free time, you may wish to visit the museum devoted to Orca whales. Our hotel is six blocks from the harbour and two blocks from downtown. A transfer from ship to hotel is provided.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Friday Harbor Suites

Day 3: Wednesday, September 7

After breakfast, stroll down the main street to the harbour and board the *Salish Express* at 8:30. We spend 2½ hours cruising the islands while searching for more Orca whales, bald eagles, harbor seals, Dall's porpoise, Minke whales, and sea birds. Then we sail along narrow Swinomish Channel, under Rainbow Bridge, and dock in the quaint village of **La Conner** for two hours, giving an opportunity to browse the many waterfront

shops. As we sail away at 1 pm to Hole in the Wall, savour a tasty, **cracked crab feast**. Today's 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Friday Harbor Suites



Day 4: Thursday, September 8

A morning driving tour of **San Juan Island** passes attractions such as Lime Kiln State Park, Whale Watch Park, the Alpaca Ranch, English Camp, Roche Harbor Resort, and Westcott Bay Sculpture Park. There is free time for lunch in Friday Harbor, then we board the *Salish Express* for the final leg of our voyage, taking us through channels and past islands not yet explored. As always we are on the lookout for the wide variety of wildlife that inhabits the San Juan Islands archipelago. We arrive in Bellingham around 4 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Oxford Suites, Bellingham

Day 5: Friday, September 9

There are shopping stops at Trader Joe's and the Duty-Free Store, then we cross the border at Sumas and travel home.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation to/from Bellingham dock
- 4 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- 2½ days of cruising on MV *Salish Express*
- 2 transfers between Friday Harbor dock & motel
- Driving tour of San Juan Island
- Gratuities for vessel crew
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **9 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 1 dinner

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 narrow channels 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*. At low tide, ramps to the docks can be steep. On September 7, there is a walk of 6 blocks from motel to the dock, and return; a shuttle bus may be available. The coach and vessel cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you are urged to 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 4, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$150 discount on first 12 seats and \$75 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 4, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 3, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From June 4 to July 4, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From July 5 to August 4, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After August 4, 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.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to a remote destination where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

Photo Credits: San Juan Cruises (lighthouse, heron, Friday Harbor, Deception Pass, *Salish Express*)

Experience Points: This tour earns 62 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 4, 2022.

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

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