



WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience

VIA  TM
VIA Rail Canada

COAST TO COAST BY TRAIN

May 11, 2023 – 18 Days

Travel across Canada by VIA Rail from Vancouver to Halifax

The railway in Canada is an integral and essential foundation for the country. When the last spike of the cross-country rail line was driven at Craigellachie on November 7, 1885, something truly magnificent had been accomplished: Canada had been united. The railway was written into the agreement of Confederation on that historic day when the Dominion of Canada was formed in 1867. The project was a condition of entry into Confederation by British Columbia and it was the common thread that linked the vast spaces and diverse cultures of the grand new nation. Experience Canada's national railway on this epic journey from Vancouver on the Pacific Coast to Halifax on the Atlantic Coast.. From the soaring giants of the Rocky Mountains to the sea of grass in the vast prairies; from the unique mix of cultures in Montréal to the Scottish influence in the Maritimes; from the awesome view at Niagara's Skylon Tower to the iconic Peggy's Cove — all aboard for the adventure of a lifetime!

Activity Level: 2



30 Meals Included:

9 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 11 dinners

Fares per person:

\$9,490 double/twin; \$10,995 single
Please add 5% GST.

Experience Points:

Earn 195 points on this tour.

Redeem 195 points if you book by February 1, 2023.

Departure from: BC Interior



ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, May 11

We drive to New Westminster and stay overnight at the Inn at the Quay where every room has a view of the Fraser River. Dinner is an opportunity to meet your fellow travellers.

Note: While it may seem unnecessary to travel to the Lower Mainland the day before your flight, the Coquihalla can have long closures or flights can be cancelled by weather which would cause a missed train.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Inn at the Quay

Day 2: Friday, May 12

Stroll the boardwalk along the riverfront this morning. We leave at 11 am for downtown Vancouver to have lunch and ceremonially view the "Pacific Ocean" prior to our journey to the Atlantic Ocean. At 3 pm, we begin our epic adventure on **VIA Rail's The Canadian**, touring Canada's most breathtaking expanses across eight provinces. Relax in the luxury and comfort of Sleeper Plus Class with superbly refurbished Art-Deco rail cars from the 1950s. From your armchair or the dome car, admire the views as we travel through the Fraser Valley and the awesome Fraser Canyon until dark. Wander over to the Skyline Car and meet other travellers. All meals are included in the elegant dining car with freshly prepared dishes served on china with silverware and linen. Later, your room steward converts your private sitting area to bunk beds. We travel through Kamloops about midnight.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail



Along Moose Lake



Day 3: Saturday, May 13

We follow the North Thompson Valley past soaring **Mount Robson**, highest in the Canadian Rockies. After crossing Yellowhead Pass and the Continental Divide, we stop in **Jasper** about 11 am. Savour afternoon tea while following the Athabasca River through the foothills. There is a stop in **Edmonton** during our second sumptuous dinner on board.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail



Day 4: Sunday, May 14

At dawn, the train stops in Saskatoon, then we travel across eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba with the sight of the wheat swaying in the wind on the broad prairie. Our scheduled arrival in Winnipeg is at 10 pm and we stay three nights downtown.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Delta Hotel Winnipeg

Day 5: Monday, May 15

Winnipeg is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada where you can hear some 100 languages. This morning's tour of Manitoba's capital with a local guide includes St. Boniface and its cathedral, the Legislative Building, Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, and the fine homes along Wellington Crescent. This afternoon, we visit the

Manitoba Museum to discover the fascinating landscape and history of Manitoba.

Accommodation: Delta Hotel Winnipeg

Day 6: Tuesday, May 16

We drive to Steinbach to visit an authentic **Mennonite Heritage Village** which has 20 preserved buildings and brings to life the Mennonite way of life from the 16th century to the present. A lunch of traditional Russian cuisine is served in the livery barn. Later, we tour the **Royal Canadian Mint** which produces every coin used in Canada and manufactures coins for about 75 other countries. See how massive strips of metal meet 50-ton presses to produce 1,000 coins per second, or about 55 billion coins since 1976.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Delta Hotel Winnipeg



Day 7: Wednesday, May 17

The morning is leisure time, then we visit the **Canadian Museum for Human Rights**, an imposing spectacle of architecture. Opened in 2014, it was Canada's first new national museum since 1967 and cost \$300 million to build. Then we go to The Forks National Historic Site where the Assiniboine River meets the Red River. The Forks Market consists of dozens of charming shops with unique wares. Tonight, we attend a cultural presentation by **Winnipeg Folklorama** including dinner and entertainment. Afterwards, we reboard *The Canadian* and the train leaves at 11:30 pm.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail



Panoramic views from dome car

Day 8: Thursday, May 18

When you wake up, the train is travelling through northern Ontario where you can admire the rugged **Canadian Shield**, the immense forests, and many sparkling lakes for most of the day.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 9: Friday, May 19

During the morning, the train travels east of **Georgian Bay** with some glimpses of this vast expanse of water, part of Lake Huron. We are headed into the urban sprawl of Toronto and *The Canadian* arrives at cavernous Union Station about 2:30 pm, the end of the second leg of our cross-Canada journey. We walk across the street to the renowned **Fairmont Royal York Hotel** and stay three nights. When the hotel opened in 1929, it was a landmark of downtown Toronto and today seems dwarfed by nearby skyscrapers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel



Fairmont Royal York Hotel

Day 10: Saturday, May 20

We spend the day at **Niagara Falls**, one of the world's mightiest cataracts, measured by its great width of nearly 1 km, its water volume of about 3 million litres per second, and its height of 50 metres. We take a **Hornblower cruise** to the bottom of the falls for an awesome view of the Horseshoe and American Falls from the river. Lunch is included at Table Rock, then a sightseeing tour of the Niagara area is conducted by a local guide and visits several impressive viewpoints. One of the landmarks of Niagara is the **Skyline Tower** which soars 160 metres above the falls, and dinner is in the revolving restaurant with a terrific view. We return to Toronto in the evening.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel



Day 11: Sunday, May 21

We take a city tour of **Toronto** with a local guide, seeing landmarks such as the CN Tower, Rogers Centre, Eaton Centre, Queen's Park, City Hall, Yonge Street, and the Lake Ontario waterfront. We visit **Casa Loma**, Toronto's fabulous castle built by Sir Henry Pellatt between 1911 and 1914, and today used in many movie productions. It has 98 rooms, secret passages, and two towers, and cost \$3½ million to build. There is free time afterwards. Tonight, we go to one of the Mirvish Theatres for a live stage performance (show title to be announced when 2023 theatre schedules are available).

Accommodation: Fairmont Royal York Hotel

Day 12: Monday, May 22

We relax in the exclusive Panorama Lounge at Union Station while waiting for our train departure at 11:30 am. We are whisked from **Toronto to Montréal** at up to 160 kph while enjoying the luxury of Business Class with large seats, a delicious three-course lunch with wine, and many amenities. Arrival is at 5 pm, and we ride the elevator from the train station up to the lobby of the famed **Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel**, a Canadian icon. The hotel is located above Montréal's vast underground city full of interesting shops and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel



Day 13: Tuesday, May 23

The city of **Montréal** awaits! Explore this vibrant centre of French Canadian traditions with a locally-guided tour that includes Mount Royal, Île Sainte-Hélène, and downtown landmarks. The tour ends in Old Montréal, where there is free time for lunch and maybe a visit to the imposing Notre Dame Basilica. Later, we see Montréal's landmarks from a different vantage point during a **cruise on the St. Lawrence River**. Tonight, we go to the 44th floor of Place Ville Marie for dinner and a view at Les Enfants Terribles.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel

Day 14: Wednesday, May 24

The morning is free time. In the afternoon, we visit the **Biodome** which was built as the cycling stadium for the 1976 Olympics. You can walk through four ecosystems of the Americas: a tropical rainforest, a Laurentian maple forest, the Saint Lawrence marine ecosystem, and the Arctic

and Antarctic polar habitat. The **Botanical Gardens** have 30 themed gardens, 10 exhibition greenhouses, and 22,000 species. Both are in Olympic Park and the huge Olympic Stadium and Tower dominates the site. At 7 pm, ***The Ocean***, the last of our VIA Rail trains, pulls out of Montréal headed to Halifax. When Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia joined in Confederation to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867, a railway to connect Halifax with the St. Lawrence River was promised. During the night, the train follows the south shore of the St. Lawrence and crosses the neck of the Gaspé Peninsula. Our Sleeper Plus Class of service includes access to the dome car.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: VIA Rail

Day 15: Thursday, May 25

In the morning, we travel along Chaleur Bay, then through New Brunswick to Moncton. In the afternoon, the train skirts the **Bay of Fundy** to Truro, and arrives in Halifax about 7 pm. Having crossed our great nation by rail, we celebrate the sight of the **Atlantic Ocean**. We stay three nights in the centre of Halifax.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 16: Friday, May 26

The day starts with a locally-guided tour of historic **Halifax** including the waterfront, St. Paul's church, the universities, the colourful Public Gardens, and residential areas. **Halifax Citadel National Historic Site** is a fortress perched on the hill overlooking the city. Nova Scotia's naval heritage comes alive during a visit to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and we celebrate a maritime tradition during the lively and flavourful **Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour**. Tonight, get set for musical comedy, fun, and frivolity at Grafton Street Dinner Theatre.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 17: Saturday, May 27

We head to **Peggy's Cove**, one of the most picturesque fishing villages along the Eastern seaboard. There is time to stroll the waterfront and take pictures of its famous lighthouse. We continue along the delightful coastal drive to **Lunenburg**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic highlights the Nova Scotia ship building and fishing industries.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Cambridge Suites Hotel

Day 18: Sunday, May 28

We fly on WestJet from Halifax via Toronto to Kelowna. Transfers are provided to home cities.

Meals included: Breakfast



Fraser Valley

NOTES ABOUT THE TRAINS

VANCOUVER TO TORONTO – You are reserved in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Canadian*. Sleeping accommodation is in private bedrooms, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include seats by day and beds at night, electrical outlet, toilet, sink, and mirror. Shower facilities are located nearby. There is access after 4 pm to the Park Car with its excellent views and the Bullet Lounge. All meals are included in the elegant dining car which offers exclusive service for first-class travellers. Wander over to one of the two Skyline Dome Cars which has books, games, lectures on local topics, and refreshments.



TORONTO TO MONTRÉAL – Enjoy the luxury of Business Class on this 5½ hour fast train with large comfortable seats, wi-fi, and a three-course gourmet lunch with wine. Travel at speeds up to 160 kph.

MONTRÉAL TO HALIFAX — You are booked in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Ocean* with breakfast, lunch and dinner included. Sleeping accommodation is in private cabins, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include toilet, handbasin, and couch(es) that convert into bed(s).

TRAIN SCHEDULE – Rail travel in Canada is subject to unexpected delays, and Wells Gray Tours cannot be held responsible for missed attractions due to a late train. Listed times are from VIA Rail's published schedule. Sometimes the train has been many hours late into Toronto as freight trains have priority, but other times it arrives early! VIA Rail made major changes to its 2019 schedule in an effort to arrive closer to published times and has added about 12 hours for the journey from Vancouver to Toronto. Also, only two trains a week are offered now, instead of three. The off-train break is in Winnipeg in 2023 as that fits best into the schedule and there are many activities offered during these three days between trains.



LUGGAGE – While on the train, your suitcase is stored in the baggage car. Large suitcases are not permitted in private rooms for overnight stays, so bring a smaller carry-on case with the things you need for the train journey.

GRATUITIES – The customary gratuities for train room attendants are not included in your tour fare due to the challenges of distribution on board, so please budget \$5 per person per day. Gratuities are included for the dining car train staff, and for all included meals off the train, local guides, museum docents, boat crew, and coach drivers (outside of BC). Gratuities to the Wells Gray tour director and BC coach driver are not included and are left to your discretion.

EARLY BOOKING is recommended as this tour is limited to 40 travellers. Another departure of this tour is one week later and is already sold out.



Activity Level 2: Moderate activity including walking medium distances over uneven surfaces and steps. You may have to walk through up to 5 train cars to access the dining car. If booking a single bedroom, be aware that at night you may need to go down the hall to a toilet. Double bedrooms have upper and lower berths, so one person must be able to get into the upper berth. Steps on and off the train may be awkward for those with mobility challenges. There can be longer walks in Halifax and Toronto airports while flying home. The coaches and trains cannot carry a scooter. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you must bring a companion who is able to assist you. The tour director 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 tour days. 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.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation to Vancouver train station
- Coach transportation for 9 days in Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax
- 12 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
- 5 nights bedroom accommodation on VIA Rail
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Vancouver to Winnipeg in Sleeper Plus Class
- Transfer from Winnipeg train station to hotel
- Locally-guided tour of Winnipeg
- Manitoba Museum
- Mennonite Heritage Village
- Royal Canadian Mint
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- The Forks National Historic Site
- Cultural evening of Folklorama
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Winnipeg to Toronto in Sleeper Plus Class
- Hornblower cruise to bottom of Niagara Falls
- Niagara Parks fee
- Locally-guided tour of Niagara Falls
- Skylon Tower & dinner in revolving restaurant
- Locally-guided tour of Toronto
- Casa Loma
- Theatre production in Toronto (show TBA)
- Business Class VIA Rail train from Toronto to Montréal with lounge access in Toronto
- Locally-guided tour of Montréal
- St. Lawrence River cruise in Montréal
- Montréal Biodome
- Botanical Gardens
- VIA Rail's *The Ocean* from Montréal to Halifax in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Halifax
- Halifax Citadel National Historic Site
- Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
- Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour
- Grafton Street Dinner Theatre
- Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic
- Transfer from Halifax hotel to airport
- WestJet flight from Halifax to Kelowna
- Current air transport tax & security fees
- Airline fee for one suitcase per person
- Transfer from Kelowna airport to pickup point
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides, docents, boat crew, and coach drivers outside BC
- Gratuities for dining car staff on trains
- Luggage handling fees at hotels
- Luggage handling gratuities on and off trains
- Luggage handling gratuities between trains and hotels in Toronto and Montréal
- **30 meals:** 9 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 11 dinners

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due February 1, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to January 6, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From January 7 to February 1, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From February 2 to March 1, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From March 2 to March 31, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After March 31, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: As the world emerges from the pandemic, many of our suppliers such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers are struggling with shortage of staff, inflated costs, and supply line challenges. Sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a component of an extensive tour due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to 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.

Flight seating: We are unable to take requests for window or aisle seating on the planes. The airline will not accept them, as group seating is assigned as a block. If this is important to you, we suggest you take the "No Flight" option with a fare reduction of \$425 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. The train may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. As restaurants recover from two years of pandemic restrictions, many facing severe labour shortages, we have been informed that food allergies should be honoured, but it is impossible to handle everybody's requests for food preferences. (An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.) 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: VIA Rail (Train near Jasper, logo, Bullet Lounge, Moose Lake, Mount Robson, dome car, business class, Fraser Valley, dining car), Tourism Winnipeg (Museum for Human Rights), Fairmont Hotels (Royal York), Wikimedia Commons (Niagara Falls, Park car)

Experience Points: This tour earns 195 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 February 1, 2023.

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

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