



STUNNING NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 12, 2023 – 12 Days

Inside Passage, Nisga'a Nation & Stewart

There is so much to see and so many unique experiences in Northwest British Columbia. Only two highways traverse this vast region. Yellowhead Highway #16 is a busy route between Prince George and Prince Rupert through the Coast Mountains. Stewart-Cassiar Highway #37 runs north-south and connects the Yellowhead Highway near Hazelton with the Alaska Highway near Watson Lake. This is a circle tour, heading north on the Inside Passage ferry to Prince Rupert, followed by an all-day catamaran excursion to the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary, the unique Nisga'a Nation in the Nass Valley, Stewart with its amazing Salmon Glacier, 'Ksan Heritage Village, and Fort St. James. The route presents many amazing sights that few people experience. If you have never been in a helicopter, here is your chance. Northwest BC is truly stunning.

Activity Level: 2



21 Meals Included:

7 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 6 dinners

Fares per person:

\$4,970 double/twin; \$5,920 single; \$4,685 triple

Please add 5% GST.

BC Seniors (65 & over): \$75 discount with BC Services Card.

Early Bookers:

\$250 discount on first 15 seats; \$125 on next 10

Experience Points:

Earn 105 points on this tour.

Redeem 105 points if you book by May 9, 2023.

Departure from: Lower Mainland



ITINERARY

Day 1: Wednesday, July 12

We take the ferry to Nanaimo, then drive north on the Island Highway through Campbell River to **Port Hardy**.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Kwa'lilas Hotel

Day 2: Thursday, July 13

The ***Northern Expedition*** departs Port Hardy for a 15-hour scenic voyage in the **Inside Passage**. Along 500 kilometres of magnificent coastline, we pass hundreds of islands and waterfalls, and probably see wildlife such as bald eagles, porpoises, or whales. Highlights are the narrows at Bella Bella, Princess Royal Channel, and the long canal-like Grenville Channel. Enjoy a comfortable reserved seat in the private, key-access Aurora Lounge for the whole voyage. On arrival at **Prince Rupert**, we stay three nights at the Crest Hotel, the finest in the city.

Cabin option: You can purchase an outside ferry cabin for \$135 or inside cabin for \$105 (per cabin), if available. Prices may increase in 2023. Each is equipped with two berths, sink, toilet, and shower. Please request when you book this tour.

Accommodation: Crest Hotel



Day 3: Friday, July 14

Sleep in a little after the late evening arrival of the ferry. Just before noon, there is a short tour around Prince Rupert, followed by time for lunch and shopping in Cow Bay, then the wonderful exhibits at **Museum of Northern British Columbia**.

Accommodation: Crest Hotel

Day 4: Saturday, July 15

The **Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary** was established in 1994 and preserves one of the largest populations of grizzly bears in B.C. We board a 22-metre catamaran for a seven-hour excursion to the sanctuary. The vessel has lots of outdoor deck space and floor to ceiling windows for unsurpassed viewing. We travel north through Chatham Sound, listening to fascinating stories about native villages and watching for dolphins, seals, sea lions, bald eagles, and blue herons as we learn first-hand about this diverse marine environment. July is a great month for easy viewing, as grizzlies are playing and feeding along the shoreline.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Crest Hotel

Day 5: Sunday, July 16

We drive to Port Edwards on the Skeena River and tour the restored **North Pacific Cannery** which was built in 1889. Afterwards, we continue east on the Yellowhead Highway to Terrace and stay for two nights.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express

Day 6: Monday, July 17

The day is devoted to touring the **Nisga'a Nation** in the Nass River Valley. After a century of negotiations, the Nisga'a people signed a land claims treaty with the federal and provincial governments in 1999. An expert guide accompanies us for the day while we visit four villages along the **Nass River**: Gitlakdamiks (New Aiyansh), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City), Laxqalts'ap (Greenville), and Gingolx (Kincolith), the last on the ocean at Portland Inlet. The day also includes the Nisga'a Museum and **Nisga'a Memorial Lava Beds** where Canada's most recent volcanic eruption occurred only 300 years ago, destroying two villages and diverting the Nass River.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express



Day 7: Tuesday, July 18

We turn north on the Stewart-Cassiar Highway which extends all the way to the Yukon border and joins the Alaska Highway. A short side trip is made at **Gitwangat** to view its old totem poles. At Meziadin Lake, we head west into the rugged



Coast Mountains and climb through a narrow pass to the **Bear Glacier**, truly an awesome sight as the road is built just a few hundred metres away. Soon we arrive in **Stewart**, Canada's most northerly ice-free port at the head of Portland Canal, and stay for two nights.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: King Edward Hotel

Day 8: Wednesday, July 19

We go early to the Fish Creek viewing platform and hopefully see feasting **grizzly and black bears**. We board a helicopter at Stewart for a spectacular flight high into the Coast Mountains and along the incredible **Salmon Glacier**. It is considered Canada's 5th largest, about 12 km long and 2 km wide, and has textbook examples of terminal, lateral, and medial moraines. The flight may also give views of the abandoned Premier gold mine and the Granduc copper mine. Premier opened in 1910 and became one of the province's richest gold mines, finally closing in 1953. It was noted

for a 17 km tramway to carry ore, one of the longest in North America. Back in Stewart, there is time to visit the Museum and stroll the Estuary Boardwalk. We drive across the Alaska border to **Hyder** and, if you dare, partake in a local tradition to be "Hyderized"; the Glacier Inn issues certifications to patrons who consume a shot of 151 proof (75.5% alcohol). Stewart's scenery has attracted several movie producers and you may recognize filming locations for the movies *Bear Island*, *The Thing*, *The Iceman*, and *Insomnia*. As bear viewing is best in the morning and evening, we take a second trip to Fish Creek tonight.

Note: You must have your passport to visit Hyder and the Fish Creek bear viewing area.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: King Edward Hotel

Day 9: Thursday, July 20

We return to the Yellowhead Highway and follow the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers east. Near Hazelton, we view the narrow **Hagwilget Gorge** from a lofty suspension bridge over the rushing Bulkley River. '**Ksan Village** is a re-creation of the Gitanmaax village that was located at the confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers for centuries. We tour three buildings and the museum with a First Nations guide, viewing priceless artifacts. Another stop is at Moricetown Canyon where people are often fishing from the rocks beside the Bulkley River. We stay overnight in Smithers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Prestige Hudson Bay Lodge



Day 10: Friday, July 21

We leave the Coast Mountains at Smithers and enter the lake country of the vast Fraser Plateau. Originally established by Simon Fraser for the North West Company in 1806, **Fort St. James** displays the largest group of original wooden buildings representing the fur trade in Canada. Now preserved as a National Historic Site and operated as a living history museum, the fort is a fascinating glimpse into the past. We continue to **Prince George** for the night.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Ramada Hotel

Day 11: Saturday, July 22

We visit the 300-acre **Woodhouse Ranch** near Prince George. Take a wagon ride and meet the horses. After lunch, we go to the **Northern Lights Estate Winery** on the banks of the Nechako River and enjoy a tour and tasting. We stay overnight in Quesnel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Billy Barker Inn

Day 12: Sunday, July 23

We follow the Cariboo Highway to Cache Creek, hearing stories about the gold rush and pioneer characters. Lunch is at **Ashcroft Manor**, a roadhouse built in 1862 to serve travellers on the Cariboo Wagon Road. In early evening, we fly from Kelowna to Vancouver.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 12 days
- 11 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Ferry from Tsawwassen to Nanaimo
- *Northern Expedition* ferry through Inside Passage from Port Hardy to Prince Rupert
- Reserved seat in the ferry's Aurora Lounge
- Museum of Northern British Columbia
- All-day boat excursion to Khutzeymateen Sanctuary for grizzly bear viewing
- North Pacific Cannery Museum
- First Nations guide for a day visiting Nisga'a Nation and Nass Valley
- Nisga'a Museum
- Nisga'a Memorial Lava Beds
- Two grizzly bear viewings at Fish Creek
- Stewart Museum
- Helicopter flight over Salmon Glacier
- Moricetown Canyon
- Fort St. James National Historic Site
- Woodhouse Ranch tour and wagon ride
- Northern Lights Estate Winery
- Historic Ashcroft Manor
- Flight from Kelowna to Vancouver
- Current air taxes and security fees
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides, boat crew & pilot
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **21 meals:** 7 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 6 dinners

TOUR NOTES

- **Please book early!** There is high demand for rooms in the summer, so hotels want group rooms guaranteed early and may cancel unsold rooms. When that happens, we may have seats on the coach, but not enough rooms and the limited hotel choices mean we cannot go elsewhere.
- This tour is scheduled for July, so you can enjoy pleasantly warm days, cool nights 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.
- You must bring government issued photo ID, otherwise you will not be allowed to board the ferry or the flight from Kelowna to Vancouver.
- You must bring your passport if you want to visit Hyder, Alaska, and Fish Creek bear viewing. There is no customs building entering USA, but there is one when we return to Canada.
- This tour is limited to 40 travellers, due to some lodging and the helicopter seating capacity.



Activity Level 2: Some travelling days are long as towns are far apart in the north. There are walks to some viewpoints. There are steps or a short ladder to get into the helicopter. Some towns do not have paved streets and sidewalks, so the walking surface may be uneven. 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. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you must bring a companion who is able 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$400 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due May 9, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking, cheque, Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person per booking on credit cards).

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$250 discount on first 15 seats and \$125 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after May 9, 2023. BC seniors (65 & over) receive \$75 discount extended by BC Ferries. Deadline is May 9. You must show your BC Services Card to receive the discount when you book and also bring it with you on the tour. Your photo ID is required to board the ferry.

Cancellation Policy: Up to April 6, 2023, your payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From April 7 to May 9, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From May 10 to June 9, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After June 9, 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 tour component due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire 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.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Restaurants in remote areas 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.

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, 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 \$75 per person round trip. Transfer is to and from the coach route along Highways #1 and #17 to Tsawwassen on July 12, and home from YVR on July 23. Please request no later than at final payment.

Photo Credits: Wikimedia Commons (Salmon Glacier, Lava Beds, 'Ksan Village), Adobe Stock (grizzly bear), B.C. Ferries (Inside Passage, *Northern Expedition*), Roland Neave (Bear Glacier),

Experience Points: This tour earns 105 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 9, 2023.

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

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