



ALASKA WILDLIFE & GLACIERS

August 25, 2023 – 17 Days

Travel by coach, train, helicopter & ship

This fabulous new tour of Alaska was created following the National Tour Association convention in Anchorage in spring 2022 when several Wells Gray staff were treated to a week-long tour of the state's highlights. In addition to travelling by coach, we ride the Alaska Railroad twice (Fairbanks to Talkeetna and Anchorage to Seward), fly by helicopter to the awesome Knik Glacier, cruise to tidewater glaciers in Kenai Fjords National Park, and finish with a 7-day cruise on Holland America's *Nieuw Amsterdam* to Vancouver. We fly to Fairbanks to start the tour. Other highlights are the *Riverboat Discovery*, Alaska Salmon Bake, the Muskox Farm, Alaska Sealife Center, Wildlife Conservation Center, a cable car ride up Mount Alyeska, and wildlife viewing while cruising in Prince William Sound. Accommodation is in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Seward, and Alyeska Resort. Some wonderful Alaskan experiences are waiting!

Activity Level: 2



40 Meals Included:

16 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 9 dinners

Fares per person double/twin:

\$9,445 Interior Stateroom category I

\$9,960 Oceanview Stateroom category C

\$10,520 Veranda Stateroom category VD

Single & triple fares and ship suites also available.

Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

\$300 discount on first 12 seats; \$150 on next 8

Experience Points:

Earn 198 points on this tour.

Redeem 198 points if you book by May 18, 2023.

Departure from: BC Interior



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, August 25

We travel via the Coquihalla Highway, cross the border, and follow I-5 south to Seattle. We stay overnight at the Embassy Suites Hotel near the Seattle airport. Meet your fellow travellers during a reception after arrival.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Embassy Suites Sea-Tac

Day 2: Saturday, August 26

Our flight on Alaska Airlines departs in late morning and takes nearly four hours to Fairbanks. Welcome to Alaska! Move your clocks back 1 hour for Alaska time. We visit the superb **University of Alaska Museum of the North**, a cultural heritage centre with exhibits about Alaska's diverse wild-life, people, and land.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Springhill Suites Fairbanks

Day 3: Sunday, August 27

This morning, we board the **Riverboat Discovery** paddlewheeler for a 3½-hour excursion along the Chena River to its meeting with the Tanana River. We also see Susan Butcher's Iditarod champion sled dogs in action, view a bush pilot demonstration, and take a walk through the authentic Chena Athabaskan native village. The afternoon



is free time. This evening, we go to Pioneer Park and enjoy a Fairbanks summer tradition, the **Alaska Salmon Bake**. Afterwards, there is a performance in the restored Palace Theatre of the lively *Golden Heart Revue*, a comedy show about early days in Fairbanks.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Springhill Suites Fairbanks

Day 4: Monday, August 28

Today is a highlight of our Alaska journey. We board the **Alaska Railroad**, riding in the luxurious dome cars of Gold Star class. It's a nine-hour journey from Fairbanks to Talkeetna with fabulous scenery along the way. Weather permitting, there may be views of **Denali** (formerly Mount McKinley), North America's highest peak at 20,320 feet. The train follows the rushing Susitna River for many miles, stops at the Denali resort town, and crosses lofty **Hurricane Gulch bridge**. A superb lunch is served in the lower-level dining room. Each car has an open-air viewing platform and a GPS-guided narration system heard through personal headphones. Our coach meets us in Talkeetna and we drive the rest of the way into **Anchorage**, Alaska's largest city. We stay three nights.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Marriott Hotel Anchorage

Day 5: Tuesday, August 29

Have you ever **ridden in a helicopter**? It's an exhilarating experience and especially when you can land on or beside a big glacier. Today, we drive to Knik River Lodge and board helicopters for the awesome flight to the river's origin in the vast **Knik Glacier**. The sheet of ice, full of crevasses and towering seracs, stretches as far as you can see. The helicopters may land on the glacier if it is safe, otherwise on the rocks close beside it, and you have a chance to walk around and take some fabulous photos. This afternoon, we visit the **Muskox Farm** in Palmer and meet these strange looking animals with huge antlers and long beards.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Marriott Hotel Anchorage



Day 6: Wednesday, August 30

Please choose two of the following four Anchorage attractions. Both are included in the tour fare. We must know your selection by final payment date.

- 1) **Native Heritage Center** is the premier cultural attraction in Alaska, featuring indoor exhibits, outdoor village sites, a dance theatre, and workshops.
- 2) **Aviation Museum** is on the shore of Lake Hood, the busiest seaplane base in the world. It presents a superb display of Alaskan aviation history with four hangars of vintage aircraft, interactive exhibits, and artifacts from personal collections of pioneer aviators.
- 3) **Botanical Garden** offers 110 acres of colourful displays in the perennial garden, the herb garden, and the rock garden featuring alpine plants, and along a wildflower walk.
- 4) **Anchorage Museum** is a world-class facility featuring art, history, ethnography, ecology, and science. It is dedicated to studying and exploring the land, peoples, art, and history of Alaska.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Marriott Hotel Anchorage

Day 7: Thursday, August 31

We settle into our Gold Star seats on board the **Alaska Railroad** and breakfast is served as we pull out of Anchorage. There is fabulous scenery during the 3½ hour ride along Turnagain Arm and through the lush forests of the Chugach Mountains to **Seward**. After lunch in Seward, we visit the **Alaska Sealife Center** which displays puffins, octopus, sea lions, harbour seals, and many other creatures.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Harbor 360 Hotel, Seward

Day 8: Friday, September 1

We board a Major Marine vessel for an all-day cruise into the incredible **Kenai Fjords National Park**. The wildlife is abundant and tidewater glaciers are massive. The captain and naturalist provide commentary about the myriad of wildlife and birdlife and the fascinating geology of the fjords and glaciers. There should be sightings of



Steller sea lion colonies and rookeries that are home to thousands of seabirds. We also spend time in front of two active tidewater glaciers, Holgate and Aialik.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Harbor 360 Hotel, Seward

Day 9: Saturday, September 2

At the **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center**, we drive slowly around a circular route past large pens that contain a variety of wildlife – grizzly bear, muskox, wood bison, reindeer, wolf, elk, and moose. Many have been orphaned or injured and are given a new home here because they cannot survive on their own. A special program, **Moose Encounter**, is included. After the drive, you can walk to visit the animals that are of the most interest. Next, we go to **Alyeska Resort**, the premier winter and summer destination in the state. We ride the cable car 700 metres up Mount Alyeska, enjoying lunch at the Boretide Deli and a fabulous view over Turnagain Arm. After check-in at the resort, you can take advantage of the many amenities such as the pool, whirlpool, spa, and nature walks, or just relax in the grand lobby and admire the many Alaskan native art works.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Alyeska Resort



Day 10: Sunday, September 3

Leaving Alyeska, we drive through the 4-km long tunnel to **Whittier**. Two vessels from Lazy Otter are waiting for us and we thrill to a four-hour cruise through Prince William Sound. This cruise allows plenty of time for the captain to seek out the best whale and wildlife viewing opportunities. Back in Whittier, we board **Holland America's Nieuw Amsterdam**. 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 rugged Alaska coast.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 11: Monday, September 4

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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*



Day 12: Tuesday, September 5

Nothing quite prepares you for waking up this morning amidst the grandeur of **Glacier Bay**. The *Nieuw Amsterdam* pauses between Margerie and Grand Pacific Glaciers, 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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 13: Wednesday, September 6

The ship arrives in **Skagway** at 7 am and departs at 9 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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 14: Thursday, September 7

The *Nieuw Amsterdam* 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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 15: Friday, September 8

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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 16: Saturday, September 9

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: *Nieuw Amsterdam*

Day 17: Sunday, September 10

We dock at Canada Place in **Vancouver** this morning and disembark the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. Our motorcoach meets us there and we travel home to the Interior.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

MS NIEUW AMSTERDAM

The *Nieuw Amsterdam* made her inaugural cruise in 2010 and she is a medium size Holland America vessel with a capacity of 2,100 passengers. The *Nieuw Amsterdam's* gross tonnage is 86,000 and she is 300 metres long. Her 11 decks feature a 1,000-seat live entertainment theatre, movie theatre, nine lounges, casino, shopping arcade, beauty shop, library, games room, Internet centre, spa, gymnasium and two swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover). The *Nieuw Amsterdam* has 14 elevators and four of them are glass with panoramic views. A \$3 million collection of art and artifacts is showcased throughout the ship.

Dining is one of the highlights of a cruise. The elegant two-floor 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 buffet. The Pinnacle Grill, Canaletto Restaurant (Italian cuisine), and Tamarind Restaurant (Asian cuisine) offer extraordinary service, reserved seating, and gourmet menus for an extra charge. You can also dine in the privacy of your stateroom by ordering from the complimentary room service menu 24 hours a day.

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 to Seattle Airport
- Flight from Seattle to Fairbanks, Alaska
- Current air taxes and fuel surcharges
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- 9 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- University of Alaska Museum of the North
- Paddlewheeler cruise on *Riverboat Discovery* with Chena Indian Village and sled dog demo
- Alaska Salmon Bake Dinner
- Palace Theatre show
- Alaska Railroad from Fairbanks to Talkeetna in Gold Star class
- Knik Glacier helicopter tour
- Muskox Farm
- Choice of 2 attractions: Native Heritage Center, Aviation Museum, Botanical Gardens or Anchorage Museum
- Alaska Railroad from Anchorage to Seward in Gold Star class
- Alaska Sealife Center
- Kenai Fjords Cruise
- Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center with Moose Encounter
- Alyeska cable car to top terminal
- Whittier Tunnel toll
- Lazy Otter charter excursion for wildlife viewing
- 7-day Holland America cruise from Whittier to Vancouver on board *Nieuw Amsterdam*
- Cruise gratuities
- Cruise taxes and port charges
- Entertainment and other services on ship
- Transportation from Vancouver cruise terminal to Okanagan, Kamloops, and Salmon Arm
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for Alaska guides, drivers, boat crew, helicopter pilot, and train staff
- Luggage fees at hotels and ship
- **40 meals:** 16 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 9 dinners

NOTES ABOUT YOUR ALASKA TOUR & CRUISE

- Accommodation in Alaska is excellent, but may not be the best in each city because we try to balance cost against quality. Since hotels in Alaska have a four-month tourist 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. One hotel on this tour costs \$500 per night and that's US dollars, however we take advantage of group rates everywhere and pass on the savings to you.
- This tour is scheduled for late 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 enquire about the tour fare if you wish to fly home from Anchorage and not take the cruise. The cruise fare will be deleted and the flight cost will be added. The flight takes you to Kelowna, Victoria or Vancouver and you make your own way home from there.
- You may wonder why we have not included a flight over Denali (Mount McKinley) or the bus tour into Denali National Park. The mountain is so huge that it creates its own weather and the chances of seeing it are typically about 30%. This can be disappointing if flights or tours are cancelled, or if you must wait many hours at the airport for a clear period.
- **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:** *Nieuw Amsterdam* 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 before sailing.



Activity Level 2: This tour has moderate activity including some walks of up to 1 km and stairs. There are stairs on and off the 2 trains and on the *Riverboat Discovery*, and usually a big step in and out of the helicopter. The helicopter may land on the glacier or nearby rocky terrain for the walk-around. There can be longer walks in the airports. This tour is not appropriate if you depend upon a walker. The coach 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 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. 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$600 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due May 18, 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 \$300 discount on first 12 seats and \$150 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after May 18, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to April 18, 2023, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From April 19 to May 18, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From May 19 to June 16, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From June 17 to July 18, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After July 18, 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 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.

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 \$266 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. This tour goes to some remote places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. 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.

Photo Credits: Roland Neave (helicopter, muskox), Wikimedia (grizzly bear), Alaska Railroad, Riverboat Discovery, Major Marine Cruises, Lazy Otter Charters, Holland America Line (Hubbard Glacier, Glacier Bay)

Experience Points: This tour earns 198 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 18, 2023.

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

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