



Cruising the Yukon River



White Pass Railway

THE KLONDIKE WITH GLACIER BAY CRUISE

August 18, 2023 - 13 Days

On Holland America's Volendam

*There's a land where the mountains are nameless,
And the rivers all run God knows where...
There's a land – oh, it beckons and beckons,
And I want to go back – and I will.*

So wrote Robert Service in "The Spell of the Yukon" in 1907. Today, 125 years after the Klondike Gold Rush started, the Yukon still extends a spell to its visitors. Wells Gray has offered tours to the Yukon for over 40 years, and Whitehorse and Dawson City are always memorable stops. This tour flies to Whitehorse, then to Dawson City, and back to Whitehorse to eliminate road travel time. There is a great variety of exciting things to do: see native animals at Yukon Wildlife Preserve, soak in Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs, cruise the Yukon River on a paddlewheeler, and drive the Dempster Highway to the Tombstone Mountains. Board the White Pass Railway at Fraser and ride the train through the St. Elias Mountains and down the thrilling grade to Skagway. This tour combines the fascinating history of the Klondike with a unique one-way cruise from Skagway to Vancouver with Glacier Bay.

Activity Level: 2



20 Meals Included:

8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 6 dinners

Fares per person double/twin:

\$4,885 – Oceanview Stateroom category C

\$5,520 – Veranda (Vista) Stateroom category A

\$6,685 – Neptune Suite category SA

Single & triple fares are also available.

Please add 1.7% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$200 discount on first 12 seats; \$100 on next 8

Experience Points:

Earn 88 points from this tour.

Redeem 88 points if you book by May 12, 2023.

Departures from: Lower Mainland



Volendam in Glacier Bay

ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, August 18

Our flight on Air North leaves Vancouver Airport about noon and arrives in Whitehorse in mid-afternoon. We stay two nights in the downtown area.

Accommodation: Sternwheeler Hotel

Day 2: Saturday, August 19

We relax in the soothing waters of **Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs** with temperatures up to 42° Celsius. This beautiful new facility with three pools was re-opened in 2021 after being totally rebuilt. Next, we learn about the native animals at the **Yukon Wildlife Preserve**, a unique 350-acre viewing facility featuring 12 major species of northern mammals such as moose, muskox, mountain goat, wood bison, woodland caribou, elk, lynx, and Dall's sheep, presented in their natural environments. In the afternoon, we explore the amazing **MacBride Museum** which has a large collection of relics and photos from gold-rush days, including the log cabin belonging to Sam McGee about whom Robert Service, "Bard of the Yukon", wrote a famous ballad. A "Welcome to the Yukon" dinner is planned.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Sternwheeler Hotel

Day 3: Sunday, August 20

First, we go to the wonderful **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. Next is the Yukon Museum of Transportation which brings to life tales of bush pilots, Chilkoot Trail travellers, Klondike stampeders, and Alaska Highway builders. In mid-afternoon, we board an Air North flight to **Dawson City**, the partly-restored town where the fabulous Klondike Gold Rush started in 1898. At one time, Dawson had a population of 30,000 people, but now it is home to a mere 800. We stay four nights at the Westmark Hotel. Like most Dawson buildings, the hotel is themed around the Gold Rush, but has all modern amenities. Tonight, we go to **Diamond Tooth Gerties** for casino gambling and a show.

Accommodation: Westmark Hotel Dawson

Day 4: Monday, August 21

Many buildings in Dawson have been faithfully reconstructed with the same appearance as a century ago. Other structures seem ready to fall down after years of neglect in the harsh Yukon weather. A local guide accompanies us on a historical drive around Dawson City and up **Bonanza Creek** to the gold diggings. The gigantic Dredge #4, now a National Historic Site, is included.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Westmark Hotel Dawson

Day 5: Tuesday, August 22

In the morning, we visit the **Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre** to discover the history and culture of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. They were the first people of the Klondike, long before the influx of Gold Rush stampeders. This afternoon, we take a cruise on the Yukon River on board the **Klondike Spirit paddlewheeler**. 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.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Westmark Hotel Dawson

Day 6: Wednesday, August 23

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. A local guide is with us today and we drive to the rugged **Tombstone Mountains**, following the Klondike and Ogilvie Rivers through stunning scenery of barren mountains and tundra. We turn around at the Tombstone Interpretive Centre, about 110 km up the Dempster.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Westmark Hotel Dawson

Day 7: Thursday, August 24

Parks Canada operates several attractions that help the visitor better understand what life in the goldfields was like. The **S.S. Keno** represents the fleet of sternwheelers that transported people



and supplies in the Yukon for over half a century. Built in 1922 to transport silver, lead, and zinc ore from the mines on the Stewart River, the S.S. Keno was designed for travel to isolated places. We take a tour of this National Historic Site. Next is the **Palace Grand Theatre** which was originally built by Arizona Charlie in 1899 and fully restored in 1962. The theatre boasts a beautiful lobby with a bar, a large dance floor, and two levels of private box seating. The afternoon is free time and you may want to visit some of the other heritage attractions of Dawson City. At 6 pm, we are back on Air North for the short flight to Whitehorse.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Sternwheeler Hotel

Day 8: Friday, August 25

Leaving Whitehorse, we take a walk across the Yukon Suspension Bridge high above the wild rapids of the Tutshi River. Continuing to Fraser, we board the **White Pass & Yukon Railway** for a thrilling two-hour journey through the soaring St. Elias Mountains. This narrow-gauge railway was built in 1898 to serve stampeders to the Klondike Gold Rush. Today it ranks among the world's most scenic rail journeys and has been designated an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. Beyond White Pass, the train descends 850 metres through tunnels and across high trestles on a cliff-hanging route to reach the ocean at **Skagway**. The Klondike Gold Rush was in full swing 125 years ago and Skagway was the major gateway to the Yukon. Today, that heritage is kept alive with old boardwalks and quaint false-fronted buildings.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Westmark Skagway Inn



Day 9: Saturday, August 26

A transfer is provided from the hotel to the dock and we board Holland America's **Volendam**. An embarkation lunch is served and you may want to wander the ship and discover its many amenities. You can also get off to explore more of Skagway. After dinner, there is a lively stage show and the ship sails at 8 pm.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Volendam*

Day 10: Sunday, August 27

Nothing quite prepares you for waking up this morning amidst the grandeur of **Glacier Bay**. The *Volendam* sails close to the Margerie Glacier and the Grand Pacific Glacier where chunks of ice periodically break away and crash into the sea. A National Park Ranger on board explains the natural phenomenon in detail. We spend most of today exploring an unforgettable world of floating ice castles and tidewater glaciers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Volendam*

Day 11: Monday, August 28

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

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holland America's *Volendam*

Day 12: Tuesday, August 29

We admire the magnificent scenery of B.C.'s famed **Inside Passage**. We pass hundreds of islands and waterfalls, and 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 *Volendam*

Day 13: Wednesday, August 30

We dock at Canada Place in Vancouver this morning.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Air North flight from Vancouver to Whitehorse
 - Current air taxes and fuel surcharges
 - Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
 - Transfer from Whitehorse Airport to hotel
 - 8 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
 - 7 days of coach transportation in Yukon
 - Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs
 - Yukon Wildlife Preserve
 - MacBride Museum
 - Beringia Centre
 - Yukon Museum of Transportation
 - Air North flight from Whitehorse to Dawson City
 - Transfer from airport to hotel and return
 - Diamond Tooth Gerties with show
 - Locally-guided tour of Dawson City
 - Dredge #4 National Historic Site
 - Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre
 - Paddlewheeler cruise on Yukon River
 - Locally-guided tour on Dempster to Tombstone
 - Tour of SS Keno National Historic Site
 - Tour of Palace Grand Theatre
 - Flight from Dawson City to Whitehorse
 - Yukon Suspension Bridge
 - White Pass Railway from Fraser to Skagway
 - 2 transfers in Skagway
 - 4-day Holland America cruise from Skagway to Vancouver on board *Volendam*
 - Cruise gratuities
 - Port charges & cruise taxes
 - Knowledgeable tour director
 - Luggage handling at hotels and ship
 - **20 meals:** 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 6 dinners
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MS *VOLENDAM*

The *MS Volendam* made her inaugural cruise in 1999 and she is a sister ship to the *Zaandam*. The *Volendam* carries only 1,440 passengers which is far more intimate than some of the mammoth cruise ships nowadays. Her gross tonnage is 65,000 and she is 236 metres long. Her 10 decks offer a 700-seat live entertainment theatre, five lounges, casino, shopping arcade, movie theatre, beauty shop, library, games room, 12 elevators, whirlpool spa, and two swimming pools (one with a sliding dome cover). A \$2 million collection of art and artifacts is showcased throughout the ship. Although the *Volendam* is now 24 years old, she had a major refurbishment in 2019.

The *Volendam* offers 6 restaurants or cafés. 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 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 room service menu. All meals are culinary delights!

A crew of over 600 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. The Wajang Theatre shows recent movies several times a day. Every evening, there is live entertainment on the main stage, plus musicians are playing in most lounges.



Activity Level 2: Moderate activity including walking and stairs. The guided tours of the S.S. Keno, Palace Grand Theatre, and Dredge #4 have many stairs to see everything. There can be longer walks on the ship between your stateroom, dining rooms, and theatre. The coaches and train cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. **Everybody** participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 2. 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 able to keep 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.

CRUISE NOTES

Importance of early booking: Cruises are incredibly popular post-Covid. Ships are filling up fast and earlier than they once did, so waiting too long to book usually means "Sorry, wait till next year." Holland America has confirmed a block of staterooms for this unique one-way cruise and they are normally held until 90 days before sailing (late May). However, any unsold staterooms can be taken away from us at any time if the ship or even a category fills. This occurs on most of our group cruises, then we must turn away disappointed customers, even though seats are available on the connecting motorcoach. Therefore, please don't delay booking this tour.

Staterooms: When you book this tour, your selected stateroom category on the *Volendam* is guaranteed and the stateroom number is usually confirmed a few weeks before sailing. Fares are quoted for categories Oceanview C, Verandah A, and Neptune Suite SA, but other categories may also be available.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$600 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due May 12, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person on credit cards).

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 12 seats and \$100 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after May 12, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to April 12, 2023, your tour payments are refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From April 13 to May 12, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From May 13 to June 12, the cancellation charge is 50% of tour fare. From June 13 to July 12, the cancellation charge is 80% of tour fare. After July 12, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and foreign currency exchange rates, and surcharges from airline, cruise ship and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes 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. Please do not tell us about your food preferences, as restaurants ignore these requests. An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.

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 \$650 and book your own flights which allows seat selection.

Home pickups are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of \$75 per person round trip. Transfer is to YVR and home from Canada Place cruise terminal. Please request no later than at final payment.

Photo Credits: Wikimedia (Yukon River cruise, Dawson City, Palace Grand Theatre), Holland America Line, White Pass Railway

Experience Points: This tour earns 88 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 12, 2023.

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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www.wellsgraytours.com

1-800-667-9552