



Los Arcos at Cabo San Lucas



Koningsdam

MEXICO'S BAJA CRUISE & PALM SPRINGS

January 3, 2024 – 15 Days

On Holland America's Koningsdam

Cruising is proving to be more popular than ever, so here is a pleasant 7-day cruise on one of Holland America's newer ships, *Koningsdam*. We fly to San Diego for 2 days of attractions such as San Diego Zoo, Birch Aquarium, and Maritime Museum, plus a locally-guided city tour. On board *Koningsdam*, we take a week to explore the Baja Peninsula with stops at Cabo San Lucas, Pichilingue (La Paz), and Loreto. You are sure to admire the revolutionary design for *Koningsdam* with light-filled spaces, fluid curves, and architectural elements inspired by music. We finish with 3 days in Palm Springs including the Art Museum, Aerial Tram, Living Desert, and a locally-guided city tour. A day-long excursion goes to Joshua Tree National Park. This is a great way to get away from winter!

Activity Level: 2



30 Meals Included:

13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 8 dinners

Fares per person double/twin:

\$6,175 Interior Stateroom category I

\$6,405 Oceanview Stateroom category C

\$6,615 Veranda Stateroom category VD

Single & triple fares and ship suites also available.

Please add 0.5% GST.

Early Booker Bonus:

\$300 discount on first 15 seats; \$150 on next 10

Experience Points:

Earn 135 points on this tour.

Departure from: Victoria



ITINERARY

Day 1: Wednesday, January 3

Transportation is provided to Vancouver Airport and we stay overnight at the Fairmont Hotel, located conveniently above the USA departures area.

Accommodation: Fairmont Hotel YVR

Day 2: Thursday, January 4

Our Air Canada flight is non-stop from Vancouver to **San Diego**. Our coach meets us at the airport, then we go to the **San Diego Zoo**, one of the largest in the world with over 4,000 animals representing 800 species. An aerial tram, shuttle trolleys, and a narrated bus tour make it easy for you to get around. We stay two nights at the Embassy Suites Hotel near the harbour. Get acquainted with your fellow travellers at an evening reception.

Accommodation: Embassy Suites Bay-Downtown

Day 3: Friday, January 5

In La Jolla, we visit the **Birch Aquarium** which contains over 30 tanks teeming with life typical of the waters from the west coast to the tropical seas. Later, we explore the **Maritime Museum** on the San Diego waterfront which features many nautical displays and three historic ships including the *Star of India*, the world's oldest active ship.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Embassy Suites Bay-Downtown

Day 4: Saturday, January 6

A locally-guided tour shows off some of the highlights of San Diego. The tour finishes at the cruise ship terminal and we board the **Koningsdam** about noon. An embarkation lunch is served at the Lido Market. The afternoon is free time to explore all the wonderful features of this newer ship. Enjoy a festive "Farewell to San Diego" deck party as we cast off at 3 pm. Savour a sumptuous dinner in the dining room, followed by a lively stage show in the theatre.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 5: Sunday, January 7

Enjoy a relaxing day at sea while we cruise south off the Baja Peninsula. How do you want to spend your day? The ship's daily newsletter keeps you

informed about scheduled activities like stage shows, movies, bingo games, group fitness, and game times in lounges. Schedule a treatment at the spa, get some advice on a workout plan at the fitness centre, or sidle up to the wine tasting bar to sample wines from around the world. The choices are many.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 6: Monday, January 8

Our first port is **Cabo San Lucas**, situated at the southern tip of the 1,300-km long Baja Peninsula. The ship arrives at noon and departs at 6 pm. We anchor in the harbour and take a short tender ride ashore. Sightseeing tours can be purchased on the ship, at www.hollandamerica.com in advance, or on the dock with independent operators. Many people want a closer view of Los Arcos, the spectacular sea arch in the cliffs near the harbour.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 7: Tuesday, January 9

Overnight, the ship heads into the **Sea of Cortez** which separates the Baja Peninsula from the Mexican mainland. Its incredible depth of over 3,000 metres is due to complex geology, linked to plate tectonics. Some areas are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We dock at 8 am at Pichilingue, located 18 km from **La Paz**, the largest city on the Baja and capital of the Mexican state of Baja California Sur. Some of its highlights are a beautiful waterfront boardwalk with unique sculptures that symbolize the history and cultural treasures of the region; the Museum of Anthropology & History; and the Cathedral Nuestra Señora de La Paz with its splendid stained-glass windows. Several La Paz tours can be purchased.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 8: Wednesday, January 10

Overnight, we sail further up the east coast of the Baja and arrive at **Loreto** at 8 am. This is another tender port. Loreto was settled in 1697 when Juan María de Salvatierra founded Misión de



Nuestra Señora de Loreto Conchó. It ranks as one of Mexico's oldest cities and Main Street was the first paved road in the Californias. Places to visit include the Mission and the museum. Tours outside Loreto can also be purchased.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 9: Thursday, January 11

Day 10: Friday, January 12

These are two leisurely days at sea while the *Koningsdam* retraces her route along the Baja coast and north to California. Try one of the specialty restaurants for dinner and enjoy a terrific menu with attentive service.

Meals included (each day): Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Koningsdam*

Day 11: Saturday, January 13

The *Koningsdam* arrives in San Diego and we disembark about 9 am. Our coach is waiting and we drive to the popular desert resort of **Palm Springs**. During the afternoon, a local expert conducts an entertaining drive around Palm Springs and the Palm Desert Valley past some celebrity homes and historic attractions. We stay four nights at Palm Mountain Resort which has an excellent location, a block off Palm Canyon Drive where many shops and restaurants are found.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Palm Mountain Resort

Day 12: Sunday, January 14

Breakfast is included each day at nearby Sam's Place. It's a leisurely day with a visit to the **Palm**

Springs Art Museum this morning, and a free afternoon to lounge by the pool or do other activities of your choosing.

Meals included: Breakfast

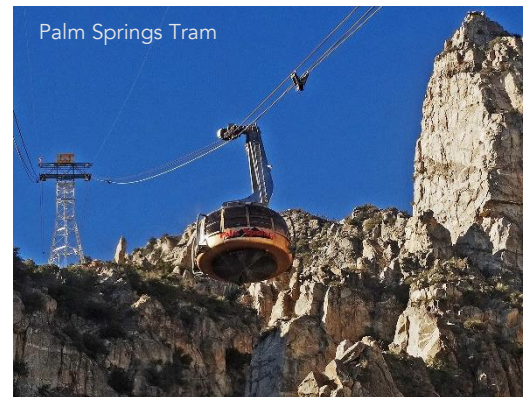
Accommodation: Palm Mountain Resort

Day 13: Monday, January 15

This morning, we have a thrilling ride on the spectacular **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** which ascends nearly 2,000 metres into the San Jacinto Mountains. Each car rotates slowly during the climb, affording an incredible 360-degree view of the desert and craggy cliffs. At the top, visit the interpretive centre and have lunch at the Pines Café. During the afternoon, we stroll through the **Living Desert**, a 1200-acre preserve featuring exotic birds and animals, botanical gardens, nature trails and the Wildlife Wonders show.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Palm Mountain Resort



Day 14: Tuesday, January 16

A local guide is with us all day as we explore **Joshua Tree National Park**, created in 1994. It protects 800,000 acres of Mojave Desert wilderness and features curious rock formations and a great array of desert plants such as the imposing Joshua Tree, ocotillo, yucca, and cactus.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Palm Mountain Resort

Day 15: Wednesday, January 17

A transfer is arranged to Palm Springs Airport, then we fly on Air Canada to Vancouver. Transportation is provided to your Victoria area pickup point.

Meals included: Breakfast

MS KONINGS DAM

Holland America Line's third newest ship, *MS Koningsdam*, made her grand entrance into the cruising world in 2016. To bring this new ship to life, Holland America commissioned two legendary partners, Adam Tihany, regarded as one of the world's pre-eminent hospitality designers, and architect Bjørn Storbraaten. Their revolutionary designs for *Koningsdam* featured light-filled spaces, fluid curves, and beautiful architectural elements inspired by music. All were woven together to create an interior that blends a fresh, contemporary styling in perfect harmony with Holland America's classic elegance.



The *Koningsdam* carries 2,650 passengers, the largest ever built by the company. Her 12 decks feature four performance venues including the 1,000-seat live entertainment theatre, five lounges, casino, shopping arcade, movie theatre, beauty shop, library, games room, 12 elevators, internet centre, spa, fitness centre, and two swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover). The *Koningsdam* offers 12 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, Canaletto Restaurant with Italian cuisine, Tamarind Restaurant with Asian cuisine, and Sel de Mer with a seafood menu all 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. All meals are culinary delights!

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 1,000 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 in the World Stage Theatre, and several other venues each offer a performance schedule.

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TOUR & CRUISE NOTES

Please book early: Cruises are incredibly popular nowadays. Ships are filling up faster 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 cruise and they are normally held until 90 days before sailing (early October). 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.

Dinner reservations: The *Koningsdam* offers both open dining and fixed dining. Open dining is standard, so you can go to a restaurant when you are ready with your friends or make a reservation earlier in the day. If you prefer to dine at the same time with the same people each day, we can request this. The four specialty restaurants take reservations on board and you should do this early in the voyage.



Activity Level 2: The cruise days are Activity Level 1 and other days can have more activity. There are longer walks at San Diego Zoo, Palm Springs Tram, and Joshua Tree Park, and from hotel to the Palm Springs Art Museum (3 blocks or 300 metres). Choose shore excursions at the cruise ports based on your abilities. There can be longer walks in the airports. The coaches 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 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. 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

- Transportation from Victoria to YVR & return
- Flight from Vancouver to San Diego
- Current air transportation taxes and fees
- 6 days of coach transportation in California
- 7 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
- San Diego Zoo
- Birch Aquarium
- San Diego Maritime Museum
- Locally-guided tour of San Diego
- Stateroom for 7 nights on board *Koningsdam*
- Cruise gratuities, port charges & cruise taxes
- Palm Springs Art Museum
- Locally-guided tour of Palm Springs and Valley
- Palm Springs Aerial Tramway
- Living Desert
- Guided tour of Joshua Tree National Park
- Transfer from hotel to Palm Springs Airport
- Flight from Palm Springs to Vancouver
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- Gratuities for California guides and drivers
- **30 meals:** 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 8 dinners

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at time of booking and balance is due September 28, 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 \$300 discount on first 15 seats and \$150 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after September 28, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to August 28, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From August 29 to September 28, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From September 29 to October 27, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From October 28 to November 28, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After November 28, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, 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.

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.

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 \$850 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

Home pickups may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credits: Wikimedia (Los Arcos, Loreto, tram), Palm Mountain Resort, Holland America Line (dining room, ship)

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 135 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until September 28, 2023.

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

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