



Aurora Borealis on Wells Gray tour November 2021



THE YUKON'S NORTHERN LIGHTS

November 10, 2023 – 6 Days

The Northern Lights, otherwise known as the Aurora Borealis, are magical, mystical, and mesmerising. This tour has four nighttime sessions of Northern Lights viewing with a local guide each evening who will share his/her Yukon experiences and knowledge. Viewing activities take place outside the city in a heated, cozy cabin. The facility is located near some trees for shelter from the wind, yet the northern exposure is over an open field for perfect viewing conditions. Other highlights include a locally-guided tour of Whitehorse, a swim in the new Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs, visits to the Yukon Museum of Transportation, Beringia Centre, MacBride Museum, and Yukon Wildlife Preserve. There is an option to experience dog sledding! We fly to and from Whitehorse on Air North.

Activity Level: 2



8 Meals Included:

5 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

\$2,610 double/twin; \$2,945 single; \$2,565 triple
Please add 5% GST.

Early Booker Bonus:

\$100 discount on first 8 seats; \$50 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 62 points on this tour.

Departure from: Lower Mainland

TOUR
25



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, November 10

A home pickup with a ride to Vancouver Airport is provided. Meet the other Wells Gray travellers from the BC Interior and Victoria at YVR. We fly on Air North to Whitehorse this afternoon and stay five nights in downtown Whitehorse.

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 2: Saturday, November 11

A local guide meets us for a drive around Whitehorse including the historic train depot of the White Pass & Yukon Railway, the log skyscraper, log church, sternwheeler SS Klondike, and fish ladder. We visit 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, the "Bard of the Yukon", wrote a famous ballad. Then we go to **Lumel Studios** for a fascinating glass-blowing demonstration. Admire the intricate art with colourful designs and perhaps buy a keepsake in the shop. A "Welcome to the Yukon" dinner is planned. At 10 pm, we drive out of Whitehorse to the Northern Lights Viewing Facility and settle in for a hopefully awesome spectacle over the next few hours.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 3: Sunday, November 12

Sleep in this morning! This afternoon, we visit the acclaimed **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. Later we have a guided tour of the **Yukon Museum of Transportation** which brings vividly to life tales of bush pilots,

captains on the Yukon River paddlewheelers, Klondike stampedeers on the Chilkoot Trail, and Alaska Highway builders. Another viewing of the Northern Lights is planned tonight.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 4: Monday, November 13

First, we relax in the soothing waters of **Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs** with temperatures up to 42° C. This afternoon, 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. Tonight is our third night of Northern Lights viewing.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 5: Tuesday, November 14

The morning is leisure time. In the afternoon, there is an option for a dog sled excursion (see description below). Tonight is our last opportunity to see the Northern Lights.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Best Western Gold Rush Inn

Day 6: Wednesday, November 15

A transfer is provided to Whitehorse Airport. Our flight on Air North leaves at 1 pm for Vancouver, then transportation is arranged to your pickup point.

Meals included: Breakfast

OPTIONS – Please choose these options by final payment.

- 1) **Husky dog-sledding excursion.** Take a ride behind these friendly huskies pulling a limo sled (on snow or bare ground). Visit a race checkpoint and learn about dog sled history and life as a musher. Includes transportation from the hotel, s'mores, bison smokies, and hot beverages served by the fire. Cost is \$219 per person plus GST.
- 2) **Winter gear rental.** If you don't want to pack your own winter clothing, you can take advantage of this convenient service. Includes winter outerwear pants with inner fleece liner, winter outerwear jacket with inner fleece liner, winter boots, insulated mitts, and insulated headgear. Cost is \$205 per person plus GST.

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS or AURORA BOREALIS

The Northern Lights, otherwise known as the Aurora Borealis, are magical, mystical, and mesmerising. The scientific explanation lies with the sun and the output of energy particles from sun spots. These energy particles, which take the form of free electrons and protons, leave the sun as plasma and create solar wind. When this wind reaches the earth's atmosphere, the contact with atmospheric gases causes the particles to become excited, and this gained energy is emitted in the form of light. The magnetic poles cause the particles to become unstable and concentrated, thereby becoming visible on earth as dancing lights.

Folklore has always surrounded the aurora phenomenon. In Scandinavia, the lights were called 'herring flash', caused by the reflections cast by large swarms of herring onto the sky. Norse legend refers to "the fires that surround the North and South edges of the world", and this has been put forward as evidence that the Norse ventured as far as Antarctica. In Inuit folklore, Northern Lights were the spirits of the dead demonstrating that they don't feel pain anymore, appropriately named Pathway to Heaven. Many prospectors during the Klondike Gold Rush believed that the Northern Lights were the reflection of the mother lode of all gold. Since we are heading to the Yukon, maybe this is the folklore we will adopt as our own!

Whatever the explanation, the sight of the Northern Lights fills one with awe and childlike wonder, like we are witnessing a magical event as curtains of ever-changing light dance across the sky. The best time of year to view the northern lights is in mid-winter when the nights are longest and darkest. Although it is not possible to predict auroral activity very far in advance, chances of viewing increase dramatically when you go out four nights in a row, as on this tour. The most active region of the auroral oval typically becomes visible around local midnight, and the Yukon is also the widest part of the oval in the north-south direction. Our evenings of viewing begin at 10 pm and last 3-4 hours to catch the darkest hours of the night. However, please be aware that the Northern Lights are unpredictable. We have increased odds in every way possible, but there is no guarantee that we will actually witness a spectacular show.

Northern Lights Viewing Facility — Local tour operator Northern Tales is our host during our time in Whitehorse. Northern Lights viewing activities take place outside the city in a heated, cozy cabin. The facility is located near some trees for shelter from the wind, yet the northern exposure is over an open field for perfect viewing conditions. An outhouse is adjacent. A local guide is with us each evening who shares his/her Yukon experiences and knowledge. Hot drinks and snacks are provided.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfers to/from Vancouver Airport
- Flight from Vancouver to Whitehorse & return
- Current air transport taxes and fees
- Transfer from airport to hotel and return
- 5 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- 5 days of bus transportation in Yukon
- 4 sessions of Northern Lights viewing
- Locally-guided tour of Whitehorse
- MacBride Museum
- Glass-blowing demonstration at Lumel Studios
- Beringia Centre
- Yukon Museum of Transportation
- Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs swim & towel rental
- Yukon Wildlife Preserve
- Gratuities for local guides
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotel
- **8 meals:** 5 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

TOUR NOTES

Flexible Itinerary: Much of this itinerary is dependent on the weather for the most enjoyment of activities. Therefore, treat this tour as an adventure in travel and allow maximum flexibility for changing conditions. If an activity is cancelled one day due to inclement weather, we will try to reschedule during our stay. We plan to be at the Northern Lights Viewing Facility for four evenings, starting at 10 pm, but cloudy skies could interfere with one or more of these viewings. There is no guarantee that the Northern Lights will be active any night or every night. You can opt out of any of the planned viewings.

Clothing: Dress warmly, no matter what weather forecast you see for Whitehorse. You will be outside at night watching the Northern Lights and it is easy to get chilled, even if there is a warm cabin to retreat to. Bring a winter coat, winter pants, warm sweatshirt or heavy sweater, warm underwear, snow boots or hiking boots, toque, and warm gloves. You can also rent your winter gear (see page 2).

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 \$315 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.



Activity Level 2: Moderate activity including short distances to walk and some stairs. Be prepared for standing in cool night temperatures while viewing the Northern Lights. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to and from Whitehorse. The buses 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, local guides, and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due September 8, 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.

Cancellation Policy: Up to August 8, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From August 9 to September 8, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From September 9 to October 6, the cancellation charge is 70% of the tour fare. After October 6, 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.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to a remote destination where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. Please do not tell us about your food preferences, as restaurants ignore these requests. 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 for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups are offered complimentary in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Surrey, and Richmond. Transfer is to and from YVR.

Photo Credits: Northern Tales (page 1 top), Pixabay.com (dog sledding, page 1 bottom)

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 62 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 8, 2023.

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

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