

# COAST TO COAST BY TRAIN

Travel across Canada by VIA Rail from Vancouver to Halifax

May 24, 2024 – 17 Days



Via Rail near Jasper

The railway in Canada is an integral and essential foundation for the country. When the last spike of the cross-country rail line was driven at Craigellachie on November 7, 1885, something truly magnificent had been accomplished: Canada had been united. The railway was written into the agreement of Confederation on that historic day when the Dominion of Canada was formed in 1867. The project was a condition of entry into Confederation by British Columbia and it was the common thread that linked the vast spaces and diverse cultures of the grand new nation. Experience Canada's national railway on this epic journey from Vancouver on the Pacific Coast to Halifax on the Atlantic Coast. From the soaring giants of the Rocky Mountains to the sea of grass in the vast prairies; from the unique mix of cultures in Montréal to the Scottish influence in the Maritimes; from the awesome view at Niagara's Skylon Tower to the iconic Peggy's Cove — all aboard for the adventure of a lifetime!



CANADIAN  
TOUR



ACTIVITY LEVEL

## ► 26 Meals Included:

8 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 9 dinners

## ► Fares per person:

\$11,095 – Train cabin for two persons

\$12,765 – Train cabin for one person

\$13,555 – Prestige train cabin for two persons

Please add 5% GST.

## ► Early Booking Bonus:

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

## ► Experience Points: Earn 222 Experience Points

## ► Departure from: Lower Mainland





## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Friday, May 24

Meet the other Wells Gray travellers at lunch in downtown Vancouver, then ride to the top of the Vancouver Lookout Tower and ceremonially view the "Pacific Ocean" prior to our journey to the Atlantic Ocean. At 3 pm, we begin our epic adventure on **VIA Rail's *The Canadian***, touring Canada's most breathtaking expanses across eight provinces. Relax in the luxury and comfort of Sleeper Plus Class with superbly refurbished Art-Deco rail cars from the 1950s. From your arm-chair or the dome car, admire the views as we travel through the Fraser Valley and the awesome Fraser Canyon until dark. Wander over to the Sky-line Car and meet other travellers. All meals are included in the elegant dining car with freshly prepared dishes served on china with silverware and linen. We travel through Kamloops about midnight.

**Meals included:** Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** VIA Rail



### Day 2: Saturday, May 25

We follow the North Thompson Valley past soaring **Mount Robson**, highest in the Canadian Rockies. After crossing Yellowhead Pass and the Continental Divide, we stop in **Jasper** about 11 am. Savour afternoon tea while following the Athabasca River through the foothills. There is a stop in **Edmonton** during our second sumptuous dinner on board.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** VIA Rail

### Day 3: Sunday, May 26

At dawn, the train stops in Saskatoon, then we travel across eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba with the sight of the wheat swaying in the wind on the broad



prairie. Our scheduled arrival in Winnipeg is at 10 pm and we stay three nights downtown.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Delta Hotel Winnipeg



### Day 4: Monday, May 27

**Winnipeg** is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada where you can hear some 100 languages. This morning's tour of Manitoba's capital with a local guide includes St. Boniface and its cathedral, the Legislative Building, Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, and the fine homes along Wellington Crescent. This afternoon, we visit the **Manitoba Museum** to discover the fascinating landscape and history of Manitoba.

**Accommodation:** Delta Hotel Winnipeg

### Day 5: Tuesday, May 28

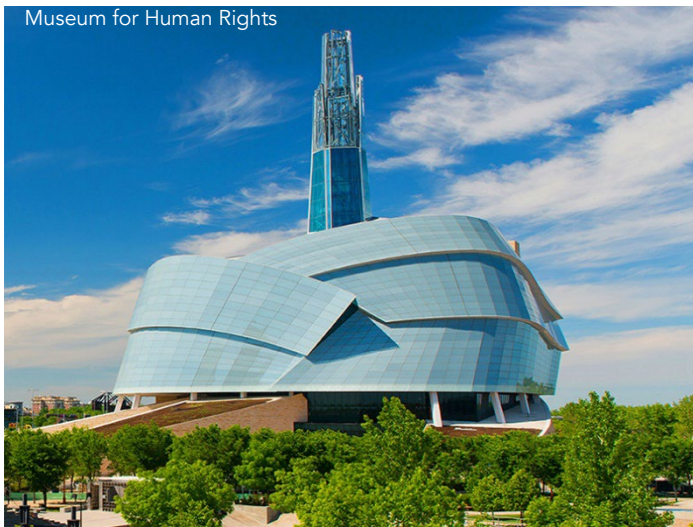
We drive to Steinbach to visit an authentic **Mennonite Heritage Village** which has 20 preserved buildings and brings to life the Mennonite way of life from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present. A lunch of traditional Russian cuisine is served in the livery barn. Later, we tour the **Royal Canadian Mint** which produces every coin used in Canada and manufactures coins for about 75 other countries. See how massive strips of metal meet 50-ton presses to produce 1,000 coins per second, or about 55 billion coins since 1976. We also make a stop at the



Centre of Canada, measured by longitude, just east of Winnipeg.

**Meals included:** Lunch

**Accommodation:** Delta Hotel Winnipeg

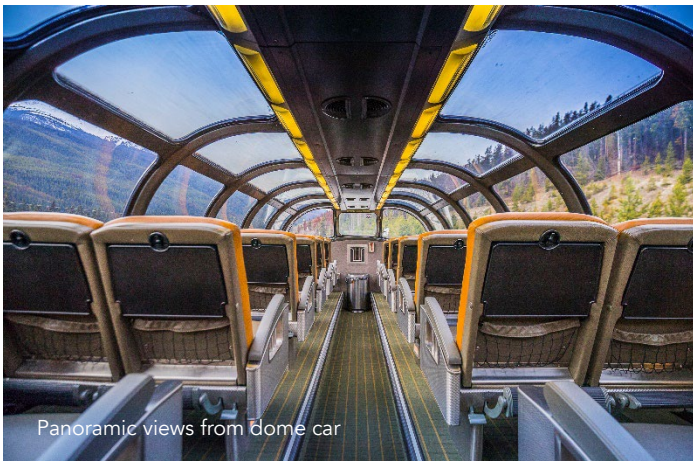


### Day 6: Wednesday, May 29

The morning is leisure time, then we visit the **Canadian Museum for Human Rights**, an imposing spectacle of architecture. Opened in 2014, it was Canada's first new national museum since 1967 and cost \$300 million to build. Then we go to The Forks National Historic Site where the Assiniboine River meets the Red River. The Forks Market consists of dozens of charming shops with unique wares. Tonight, we attend a cultural presentation by **Winnipeg Folklorama** including dinner and entertainment. Afterwards, we reboard *The Canadian* and the train leaves at 11:30 pm.

**Meals included:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** VIA Rail



### Day 7: Thursday, May 30

When you wake up, the train is travelling through northern Ontario where you can admire the rugged **Canadian Shield**, the immense forests, and many sparkling lakes for most of the day.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** VIA Rail

### Day 8: Friday, May 31

During the morning, the train travels east of **Georgian Bay** with some glimpses of this vast expanse of water, part of Lake Huron. We are headed into the urban sprawl of Toronto and *The Canadian* arrives at cavernous Union Station about 2:30 pm, the end of the second leg of our cross-Canada journey. We walk across the street to the renowned **Fairmont Royal York Hotel** and stay three nights. When the hotel opened in 1929, it was a landmark of downtown Toronto and today seems dwarfed by nearby skyscrapers.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Fairmont Royal York Hotel



### Day 9: Saturday, June 1

We spend the day at **Niagara Falls**, one of the world's mightiest cataracts, measured by its great width of nearly 1 km, its water volume of about 3 million litres per second, and its height of 50 metres. A sightseeing tour of the Niagara area is conducted by a local guide and visits several impressive viewpoints. One of the landmarks of



Niagara is the **Skylon Tower** which soars 160 metres above the falls, and lunch is in the revolving restaurant with a panoramic vista. This afternoon, we ride on a **Hornblower cruise** to the bottom of the falls for an awesome view of the Horseshoe and American Falls from the river. Dinner is at Table Rock Restaurant at the crest of Horseshoe Falls. We return to Toronto in the evening.

**Meals included:** Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Fairmont Royal York Hotel



### Day 10: Sunday, June 2

We take a city tour of **Toronto** with a local guide, seeing landmarks such as the CN Tower, Rogers Centre, Eaton Centre, Queen's Park, City Hall, Yonge Street, and the Lake Ontario waterfront. We visit **Casa Loma**, Toronto's fabulous castle built by Sir Henry Pellatt between 1911 and 1914, and today used in many movie productions. It has 98 rooms, secret passages, and two towers, and cost \$3½ million to build. There is free time afterwards. Tonight, we go to one of the Mirvish Theatres for a live stage performance (show title to be announced when 2024 theatre schedules are available).

**Accommodation:** Fairmont Royal York Hotel

### Day 11: Monday, June 3

We relax in the exclusive Panorama Lounge at Union Station while waiting for our train departure at 11:30 am. We are whisked from **Toronto to Montréal** at up to 160 kph while enjoying the luxury of Business Class with large seats, a delicious three-course lunch with wine, and many amenities. Arrival is at 5 pm, and we ride the elevator from the train station up to the lobby of the famed **Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel**, a Canadian icon. The hotel is located above Montréal's vast underground city full of interesting shops and restaurants.

**Meals included:** Lunch

**Accommodation:** Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel

### Day 12: Tuesday, June 4

The city of **Montréal** awaits! Explore this vibrant centre of French Canadian traditions with a locally-guided tour that includes Mount Royal, Île Sainte-Hélène, and downtown landmarks. The tour ends in Old Montréal, where there is free time for lunch. You may want to visit imposing Notre Dame Basilica (admission fee). Later, enjoy Montréal's landmarks from a different vantage point during a **cruise on the St. Lawrence River**.

**Accommodation:** Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel



### Day 13: Wednesday, June 5

The morning is free time. In the afternoon, we visit the **Biodome** which was built as the cycling stadium for the 1976 Olympics. You can walk through four ecosystems of the Americas: a tropical rainforest, a Laurentian maple forest, the Saint Lawrence marine ecosystem, and the Arctic and Antarctic polar habitat. The **Botanical Gardens** have 30 themed gardens, 10 exhibition greenhouses, and 22,000 species. Both are in Olympic Park and the huge Olympic Stadium and Tower dominates the site. At 7 pm, **The Ocean**, the last of our VIA Rail trains, pulls out of Montréal headed to Halifax. When Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia joined in Confederation to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867, a railway to connect Halifax with the St. Lawrence River was promised. During the night, the train follows the south shore of the St. Lawrence and crosses the neck of the Gaspé Peninsula.

**Meals included:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** VIA Rail

### Day 14: Thursday, June 6

In the morning, we travel along Chaleur Bay, then through New Brunswick to Moncton. In the afternoon, the train skirts the **Bay of Fundy** to Truro, and arrives in Halifax about 7 pm. Having crossed our great nation by rail, we celebrate the sight of the **Atlantic Ocean**. We stay three nights in the centre of Halifax.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Cambridge Suites Hotel

### Day 15: Friday, June 7

The day starts with a locally-guided tour of historic **Halifax** including the waterfront, St. Paul's church, the universities, the colourful Public Gardens, and residential areas. **Halifax Citadel National Historic Site** is a fortress perched on the hill overlooking the city. Nova Scotia's naval heritage comes alive during a visit to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and we celebrate a maritime tradition during the lively and flavourful

**Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour.** Tonight, get set for musical comedy, fun, and frivolity at Grafton Street Dinner Theatre.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Cambridge Suites Hotel

### Day 16: Saturday, June 8

We head to **Peggy's Cove**, one of the most picturesque fishing villages along the Eastern seaboard. There is time to stroll the waterfront and take pictures of its famous lighthouse. We continue along the delightful coastal drive to **Lunenburg**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic highlights the Nova Scotia ship building and fishing industries.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Cambridge Suites Hotel

### Day 17: Sunday, June 9

We fly from Halifax via Calgary to Vancouver.

**Meals included:** Breakfast





## NOTES ABOUT THE TRAINS

**VANCOUVER TO TORONTO** – You are reserved in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Canadian*. Sleeping accommodation is in private bedrooms, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include seats by day and beds at night, electrical outlet, toilet, sink, and mirror. Shower facilities are located nearby. There is access after 4 pm to the Park Car with its excellent views and the Bullet Lounge. All meals are included in the elegant dining car which offers exclusive service for first-class travellers. Wander over to one of the two Skyline Dome Cars which has books, games, lectures on local topics, and refreshments.

**Prestige Class** – Two cabins are available from Vancouver to Toronto. You will experience an unparalleled level of elegance, comfort, and privileged service. Features include a personal concierge, private wash-room with shower, flat screen TV with movie selection, gourmet meals, and complimentary beverages.

**TORONTO TO MONTRÉAL** – Enjoy the luxury of Business Class on this 5½ hour fast train with large comfortable seats, wi-fi, and a three-course gourmet lunch with wine. Travel at speeds up to 160 kph.

**MONTRÉAL TO HALIFAX** — You are booked in Sleeper Plus Class on *The Ocean* with breakfast, lunch and dinner included. Sleeping accommodation is in private cabins, either double with upper and lower berths or single with lower berth only. Amenities include toilet, handbasin, and couch(es) that convert into bed(s).

**TRAIN SCHEDULE** – Rail travel in Canada is subject to unexpected delays, and Wells Gray Tours cannot be held responsible for missed attractions due to a late train. Listed times are from VIA Rail's published schedule. Sometimes the train has been many hours late into Toronto as freight trains have priority, but other times it arrives early! The off-train break is in Winnipeg in 2024 as that fits best into the schedule and there are many activities offered during these three days between trains.

**LUGGAGE** – While on the train, your suitcase is stored in the baggage car. Large suitcases are not permitted in private rooms for overnight stays, so bring a smaller carry-on case with the things you need for the train journey.

**GRATUITIES** – The customary gratuities for train room attendants are not included in your tour fare due to the challenges of distribution on board, so please budget \$5 per person per day. Gratuities are included for the dining car train staff, and for all included meals off the train, local guides, museum docents, boat crew, and coach drivers (outside of BC). Gratuities to the Wells Gray tour director and BC coach driver are not included and are left to your discretion.

**EARLY BOOKING** is recommended as this tour is limited to 40 travellers and it goes full every year.





Moderate activity including walking on uneven surfaces and steps. You must be able to walk 500 metres (sometimes uphill or downhill) such as to The Forks in Winnipeg, Hornblower vessel in Niagara, and Grafton Theatre in Halifax. You may have to walk through up to 5 cars on a moving train to access the dining car. If booking a single bedroom, be

aware that at night the toilet is under your Murphy bed or if you choose, you can go down the hall into the next car. Double bedrooms have upper and lower berths, so one person must be able to get into the upper berth. Steps on and off the train may be awkward for those with mobility challenges. There can be longer walks in airports while flying home. The coaches and trains cannot carry a scooter. **Everybody** participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 2. The tour director and drivers 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.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation to Vancouver train station
- Coach transportation for 9 days in Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal, and Halifax
- 12 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
- 5 nights bedroom accommodation on VIA Rail
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Vancouver to Winnipeg in Sleeper Plus Class
- Transfer from Winnipeg train station to hotel
- Locally-guided tour of Winnipeg
- Manitoba Museum
- Mennonite Heritage Village
- Royal Canadian Mint
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- The Forks National Historic Site
- Cultural evening of Folklorama
- VIA Rail's *The Canadian* from Winnipeg to Toronto in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Niagara Falls
- Skylon Tower & lunch in revolving restaurant
- Hornblower cruise to bottom of Niagara Falls
- Niagara Parks fee
- Locally-guided tour of Toronto
- Casa Loma
- Theatre production in Toronto (show TBA)
- Business Class VIA Rail train from Toronto to Montréal with lounge access in Toronto
- Locally-guided tour of Montréal
- St. Lawrence River cruise in Montréal
- Montréal Biodôme
- Botanical Gardens
- VIA Rail's *The Ocean* from Montréal to Halifax in Sleeper Plus Class
- Locally-guided tour of Halifax
- Halifax Citadel National Historic Site
- Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
- Alexander Keith's Brewery Tour
- Grafton Street Dinner Theatre
- Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic
- Transfer from Halifax hotel to airport
- Flight from Halifax to Vancouver
- Current air transport tax & security fees
- Airline fee for one suitcase per person
- Transfer from Vancouver airport to pickup point
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for local guides, docents, boat crew, and coach drivers outside BC
- Gratuities for dining car staff on trains
- Luggage handling fees at hotels
- Luggage handling gratuities on and off trains
- Luggage handling gratuities between trains and hotels in Toronto and Montréal
- **26 meals:** 8 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 9 dinners

## TOUR POLICIES

**Payments:** A deposit of \$900 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due February 13, 2024. 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).

**Early booking bonus:** Receive \$300 discount on first 12 seats and \$150 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after February 13, 2024.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to January 12, 2024, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From January 13 to February 13, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From February 14 to March 13, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From March 14 to April 12, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After April 12, 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.

**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 \$480 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

**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. The train 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.

**Home pickups:** Home pickups are included within Greater Vancouver. Please request no later than at final payment.

**Photo Credits:** VIA Rail (train near Jasper, Bullet Lounge, Moose Lake, train near Jasper, dome car, business class, Fraser Valley, dining car), Tourism Winnipeg (Museum for Human Rights), Fairmont Hotels (Royal York), Wikimedia Commons (Niagara Falls, Park car)

**Experience Points or E-points:** This tour earns 222 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 February 13, 2024.

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

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