

SOLAR ECLIPSE & MEXICAN RIVIERA CRUISE

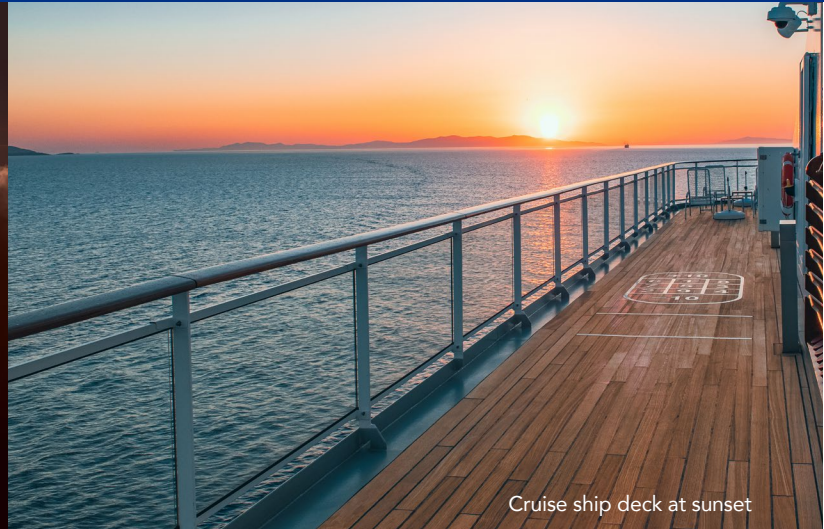
Experience a rare solar eclipse aboard the *Zaandam*

March 28, 2024 – 18 Days

WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience



Solar eclipse



Cruise ship deck at sunset

A total solar eclipse will take place on April 8, 2024, visible within a narrow band across North America. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, thereby obscuring the image of the Sun for a viewer on Earth. A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon's apparent diameter is larger than the Sun's, blocking all direct sunlight and turning daylight into darkness. Totality occurs only in a narrow path across Earth's surface, with a partial eclipse visible from a band on either side.

Solar eclipses are rare events. This eclipse will be the first total solar eclipse to be visible in Canada since February 26, 1979, and the first in Mexico since July 11, 1991. It will be the only total solar eclipse in the 21st century where totality can be experienced in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. It will also be the last total solar eclipse visible in the contiguous USA until August 12, 2045.

For ideal viewing of the solar eclipse, the *Zaandam* will position off Mazatlan on April 8 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.



INTERNATIONAL
TOUR



ACTIVITY LEVEL

► **44 Meals Included:**

16 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 14 dinners

► **Fares per person:**

from \$7,195 double/twin; \$10,060 single – Inside L
from \$7,740 double/twin; \$11,045 single – Oceanview F
Other cruise categories are also available. No GST.

► **Early Booking Bonus:**

\$280 discount on first 12 seats; \$140 on next 8

Experience Points: Earn 140 Experience Points

► **Departure from:** Victoria



Cruise ships in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Providing Quality Packaged Travel Since 1972

ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, March 28

Transfers are provided to Victoria Airport. We fly on Alaska Airlines via Seattle to San Diego. Our accommodation for two nights is the Embassy Suites Hotel, located downtown on Pacific Highway, just a block from the harbour.

Accommodation: Embassy Suites San Diego

Day 2: Friday, March 29

The morning is leisure time. During the afternoon, a local guide conducts a tour around San Diego with lots of interesting commentary about history and landmarks. Later, come and socialize with your fellow travellers at the two-hour reception with complimentary drinks and snacks.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Embassy Suites San Diego

Day 3: Saturday, March 30

The **Maritime Museum** on the waterfront features many nautical displays and three historic ships including the Star of India, the world's oldest active ship. At noon, we go to the cruise ship terminal and board the *Zaandam*. An embarkation lunch is served on the Lido Deck. The afternoon is free time to explore the 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: *Zaandam*

Day 4: Sunday, March 31

Day 5: Monday, April 1

Enjoy two relaxing days at sea while we cruise south off the Baja Peninsula and the Mexican west coast. How do you want to spend your days? 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 (each day): Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 6: Tuesday, April 2

The *Zaandam* docks at **Manzanillo**, Mexico's busiest port which handles Pacific cargo for Mexico City. It is known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World" and for 60 years has hosted international fishing competitions such as the Dorsey Tournament. A giant sculpture of a sailfish is on the waterfront. Manzanillo Bay was discovered in 1527 by navigator Alvaro de Saavedra and named for the abundant manzanilla trees which were used extensively for ship building. We depart at 6 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 7: Wednesday, April 3

Zihuatanejo is our next stop and we ride in tenders ashore. This was a sleepy fishing village until the 1970s when the government developed a modern resort city nearby called Ixtapa. This is a short stop from 7 am until 1 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 8: Thursday, April 4

We arrive at 11 am at **Huatulco**, considered Mexico's hottest new resort town. It is built along nine beautiful bays with many hotels under development. Enjoy shopping in the plaza or at Tangolunda Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 9: Friday, April 5

This is a day at sea.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 10: Saturday, April 6

The *Zaandam* arrives at **Puerto Vallarta**, Mexico, at noon and stays docked overnight. Be sure to be on deck as the ship maneuvers inside the narrow entrance to this harbour. A bazaar is next to the dock and numerous other boutiques are in the historic downtown area, about 3 km distant. The city became famous and attracted many celebrities after *Night of the Iguana* was filmed here in 1964, starring Marilyn Monroe.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 11: Sunday, April 7

We stay docked in Puerto Vallarta all day, giving you plenty of opportunities to book a sightseeing tour, stroll the beach, or browse the shops.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 12: Monday, April 8

Solar Eclipse Day. This is the special day we have been waiting for. Overnight, the *Zaandam* sails north and takes up position west of Mazatlan. The spectacle lasts from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm while the sun moves behind the moon and is totally obscured for about 4½ minutes. Darkness reigns in the daytime! Afterwards, we dock in **Mazatlan** for four hours until 6 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 13: Tuesday, April 9

Overnight and during the morning, 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 sail up the east coast of the Baja Peninsula and arrive at Loreto at 2 pm. 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: *Zaandam*

Day 14: Wednesday, April 10

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: *Zaandam*

Day 15: Thursday, April 11

Our last port is **Cabo San Lucas**, situated at the southern tip of the 1,300-km long Baja Peninsula. The ship arrives at 7 am and departs at 2 pm. We anchor in the harbour and take a short tender ride ashore. Sightseeing tours can be purchased on the ship 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: *Zaandam*

Day 16: Friday, April 12

This is a final leisurely day at sea while the *Zaandam* 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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: *Zaandam*

Day 17: Saturday, April 13

The *Zaandam* arrives in San Diego and we disembark about 9 am. Our coach is waiting and we drive to **Balboa Park** which is the largest urban park in the USA at 1,100 acres. Many of San Diego's most popular museums are located here. Admission is included for you to explore your choice of up to four museums such as the Reuben Fleet Science Center, Aerospace Historical Center, Museum of Man, Model Railroad Museum, Natural History Museum, Museum of Art, or Automotive Museum. Enjoy a social get-together at the Embassy Suites' reception.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Embassy Suites San Diego

Day 18: Sunday, April 14

We fly with Alaska Airlines from San Diego to Victoria with a connection in Seattle. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

MS ZAANDAM

The *MS Zaandam* made her inaugural cruise in 2000 and she is a sister ship to the *Volendam*. The *Zaandam* 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 feature a 700-seat live entertainment theatre, seven lounges or bars, casino, duty-free shops, movie theatre, beauty shop, library, games room, internet centre, spa, fitness centre, and two swimming pools (one with sliding dome cover).

Dining is one of the highlights of a cruise. The elegant two-floor main 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 11 pm snack. The intimate Pinnacle Grill and Italian-themed Canaletto Restaurant 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 and you will not go hungry on board!

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 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 movie theatre presents films frequently and, every evening, there is live entertainment in the Mainstage Theatre, plus musicians playing in most lounges.

TOUR & CRUISE NOTES

Please book early: Cruises are incredibly popular nowadays. Because of the uniqueness of viewing the Solar Eclipse from a ship, this cruise is already sold out to the general public. Wells Gray Tours has 10 staterooms available, but they can be taken away from us at any time. Therefore, please don't delay booking this tour.

Dinner reservations: The *Zaandam* 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 two specialty restaurants take reservations on board and you should do this early in the voyage.

Included lunches: The above itinerary shows an included lunch on every cruise day. These lunches are on the ship, so if you book a shore excursion, you may miss an included lunch if you are not back on board at lunchtime. There is no compensation for missed lunches.

Flight seating: We are unable to take requests for window or aisle seating on the plane. 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 \$945 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices and availability for first class seating on the flights between Victoria and San Diego.



Activity Level 1: The cruise days are Activity Level 1 with possible light activity including short distances to walk and some steps. Other days can have more activity. There are longer walks at Balboa Park and in the airports. Choose shore excursions at the cruise ports based on your abilities. The coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. **Everybody** participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 1. 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 to/from Victoria Airport
 - Flight from Victoria to San Diego and return
 - Current air transportation taxes and fees
 - Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
 - Transfer from San Diego airport to hotel and return
 - 3 days of coach transportation in California
 - 3 nights of hotel accommodation & taxes
 - Locally-guided tour of San Diego
 - San Diego Maritime Museum
 - Stateroom for 14 nights on board *Zaandam*
 - Cruise gratuities
 - Port charges & cruise taxes
 - Balboa Park with 4-museum pass
 - Knowledgeable tour director
 - Luggage handling at hotels and ship
 - Gratuities for California guides and drivers
 - **44 meals:** 16 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 14 dinners
-

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at time of booking and balance is due December 20, 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 \$280 discount on first 12 seats and \$140 on next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after December 20, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to November 20, 2023, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From November 21 to December 20, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From December 21, 2023 to January 19, 2024, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. After January 19, 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. Restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies (an allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not).

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.

Home Pickup: 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: Adobe Stock (solar eclipse & ship) and Puerta Vallarta Tourism (Cruise ships in Puerto Vallarta).

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 140 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 December 20, 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

WE PLAN. YOU PACK. NO WORRIES!

www.wellsgraytours.com

1-800-667-9552