

SCENIC RAILWAYS OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

September 2026



Scenic Rail Adventure Agawa Canyon

Agawa Canyon, VIA Rail Sudbury to White River, and Polar Bear Express to James Bay

Each year, Wells Gray Tours offers several tours with a theme of train travel and all of them are immensely popular. Some customers are retired railroaders, some want to enjoy sights that cannot be seen from highways, and some want to relive the nostalgia of train travel. This tour features three scenic railway routes – Agawa Canyon from Sault Ste. Marie, VIA Rail's Budd cars from Sudbury to White River, and the Polar Bear Express from Cochrane to Moosonee. In late September, the fall foliage on all three trains should be awesome. There are no roads to Moosonee, located just inland from gigantic James Bay, so this is a unique destination reached only by train.

Come and enjoy vibrant fall colours and wonderful train rides with Wells Gray Tours.



RAIL TOUR



GROUP SIZE



ACTIVITY LEVEL

► Departure from:

- ❶ **BC Interior:** September 22, 2026 – 9 days
- ❷ **Vancouver Island:** September 22, 2026 – 9 days
- ❸ **Lower Mainland:** September 22, 2026 – 9 days

► Fares per person

- ❶ from **\$6,320** double/twin, **\$7,255** single*
- *Pricing details for all departures provided on page 2.*

► Early Booking Bonus

- \$200** on first 8 seats; **\$100** on next 4.

► Earn 166 Experience Points



DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Your departure point will be discussed at the time of booking.

I BC Interior: We depart on Tuesday, September 22 and fly from Kelowna to Toronto. We fly from Timmins, Ontario, to Kelowna on Wednesday, September 30 and drive home. Transportation is provided from your pickup location on the day of departure and back when we return.

V Vancouver Island: We depart on Tuesday, September 22 and fly from Victoria, Nanaimo, or Comox to Toronto. We fly from Timmins, Ontario, to Victoria or Nanaimo on Wednesday, September 30.

Departure from Victoria: Depending on the number of people booked and coach size, home pickups may be offered in the Greater Victoria Area. The decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Departure from Up-island: Flights can be arranged from either Nanaimo or Comox to Toronto on our departure. However, connections can only be made back to Nanaimo from Timmins at the end of the tour. Transportation to or from Nanaimo or Comox Airport is not provided. While we always prioritize convenient connections for our clients, sometimes it is not possible given the airline schedule and availability. You will be contacted regarding your schedule after final payment. Please request departure from Nanaimo or Comox Airport at the time of booking.

L Lower Mainland: We depart on Tuesday, September 22 and fly from Vancouver to Toronto. We fly from Timmins, Ontario, to Vancouver on Wednesday, September 30.

Departure from Vancouver: Home pickup for clients in the Greater Vancouver Area may be arranged at the time of booking.

Departure from Langley, Abbotsford, or Chilliwack: No transportation is provided to or from Vancouver Airport.

FARES PER PERSON

	Departure Point	Fares per Person	Notes
I	BC Interior	\$6,320 double/twin \$7,255 single \$6,045 triple	
V	Vancouver Island	\$6,470 double/twin \$7,405 single \$6,195 triple	• Please add 5% GST.
L	Lower Mainland	\$6,370 double/twin \$7,305 single \$6,095 triple	

WHAT'S INCLUDED

▶ Meals

- **20 total:** 7 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 5 dinners

▶ Transportation

- Transfers between the Kelowna, Vancouver, or Victoria Airport & the BC Interior, Greater Vancouver, or Greater Victoria Areas
- Flights to Toronto
- Flight from Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie
- 1 checked bag per person
- Current air taxes, fees & fuel surcharges
- Coach transportation for 8 days
- Flights from Timmins via Toronto to Kelowna, Victoria, Nanaimo, or Vancouver

▶ Accommodation

- 8 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Luggage handling at most hotels

▶ Guides & Gratuities

- Gratuities to trains crew, boat crew, & Ontario guides & drivers

▶ Key Highlights

- Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre
- Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site
- Agawa Canyon train excursion
- Dynamic Earth with film & underground tour
- VIA Rail train from Sudbury to White River
- Polar Bear Express train from Cochrane to Moosonee & return
- Water taxi from Moosonee to Moose Factory & return
- Guided walking tour of Moose Factory
- Cree Cultural Interpretive Centre
- Historic Hudson's Bay Company Staff House
- Traditional Cree Culinary Experience
- Boat excursion from Moosonee to James Bay
- Tim Horton Museum
- Polar Bear Habitat

Attractions are subject to change. Please see Tour Policies for more information.

▶ Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director



Activity Level 3

High Activity: You are an active traveller who wants to explore wherever you go. You don't mind a mix of full days, early morning starts, and some late nights. You can walk longer distances, up to 4 km without difficulty which may be over

uneven ground or beaches; climb in and out of small boats without any assistance; climb several steep stairs onto the trains; walk on docks which may have steep ramps; and stand for prolonged periods. You can climb three flights of stairs easily and unassisted and can handle your own luggage in airports and at hotels/motels where luggage handling is not available. There is lots of walking during the guided tours in Moosonee and Moose Factory where there is no coach transportation available.

This tour is not appropriate for people with canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or other mobility assistance devices. Walking poles are recommended. Additionally, this tour is not appropriate for those who have cognitive impairments such as memory loss or confusion, difficulty expressing thoughts, repeating questions, or getting lost. 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 days of the tour.

Please note: Prior to accepting your booking, you will be required to [sign a declaration](#) that you are capable of travelling on an Activity Level 3 tour.



Tour Size 25

This tour is limited to 25 participants, making it a more intimate travel experience.

ITINERARY

Tuesday, September 22

We fly to Toronto and stay overnight at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel, conveniently located in Terminal 3.

Accommodation: Sheraton Gateway Hotel

Wednesday, September 23

It's a short flight from Toronto to **Sault Ste. Marie**. This afternoon, we visit the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre which is dedicated to preserving the history of bush flying and forest protection. The huge hangar contains about 30 float planes, bush planes, and waterbombers, plus wildfire fighting equipment. Across the street is the Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site. The Old Stone House was built by fur trader Charles Ermatinger about 1814 and may be the oldest house northwest of Toronto.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express

Thursday, September 24

Our first train excursion is renowned **Agawa Canyon**. This all-day trip into the wilderness of the Canadian Shield is sometimes called the most scenic rail journey in eastern Canada. From the "Soo", we wind north past numerous clear lakes, rushing rivers, and narrow gorges. The trestle at Montreal River is a highlight. At Agawa Canyon, there's a two-hour stop to explore the area and view several waterfalls. The brilliant reds and yellows of Ontario's fall foliage season should be underway by now (but cannot be guaranteed), and this makes the train tour especially memorable. A box lunch is provided on board.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express

Friday, September 25

We travel along the north shore of Lake Huron to **Sudbury**, the nickel capital of Canada. Two mining companies have dominated Sudbury's

economy for over a century – Inco and Falconbridge. The landmark smokestacks which carried pollution away from Sudbury are now being dismantled. Thanks to cleaner technology and planting of 12 million trees, Sudbury's reputation has changed from moonscape to green city. We explore the mining legacy at **Dynamic Earth** with a film, exhibits, and underground tour.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hilton Garden Inn Sudbury

Saturday, September 26

Our second **train journey from Sudbury to White River** is one of VIA Rail's lesser-known routes and consists of several Budd cars which are self-propelled units dating from the 1950s. These cars were previously used on the BC Railway which shut down passenger service in 2002. Our route crosses the Canadian Shield, past hundreds of lakes, all adorned with brilliant fall foliage. Stops are made at remote fishing lodges or even pristine lakes with no human development where you may see a few people disembark with canoes and camping gear. The trip to White River with seldom a road in sight takes about eight hours.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: White River Motel

Sunday, September 27

A statue of **Winnie the Pooh** is across the street from the motel because this was the original home of the real bear cub that lived in the London Zoo starting about 1914. After author A.A. Milne and his son Christopher Robin saw the bear, the first book about Winnie the Pooh was published in 1924. Our first stop is at Wawa to see the giant metal statue of a Canada Goose. Later, we pass through Timmins and stay overnight in Cochrane.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Best Western Swan Castle Inn

Monday, September 28

There are no roads that penetrate the wilderness between Cochrane and James Bay, but there is a train. It's called the **Polar Bear Express**, operated by Ontario Northland. The five-hour trip carries us north to Moosonee, passing boreal forest, rushing rivers, and isolated communities, plus lots of fall colours. Onboard, enjoy wide windows, comfortable seating, a dining car, and outdoor viewing platforms, turning the journey toward James Bay into part of the adventure. On arrival in Moosonee at 2 pm, we are met by a local guide. Near the tidal waters of James Bay, the neighbouring communities of **Moosonee and Moose Factory**, separated by the Moose River, offer a fascinating glimpse into northern life, Cree First Nation culture, and history. Moose Factory dates to 1673 as a Hudson's Bay Company fur trading post and Moosonee developed later as the terminus of the railway. We take a water taxi across the river for a guided island tour including the Cree Cultural Interpretive Centre and the historic HBC Staff House, followed by a traditional **Cree Culinary Experience**. We stay overnight at the only motel in Moosonee.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Super 8 Motel, Moosonee

Tuesday, September 29

Weather and winds permitting, we take boats down the Moose River about 10 km to see **James Bay**. This vast inland sea measures 400 km by 200 km and is a southern extension of Hudson Bay. Hundreds of rivers flow into James Bay, so its salinity is a lot less than the ocean. Our guide shares stories about the Cree First Nation and lunch is planned on the shore. There is free time to browse the few shops in Moosonee. We board the Polar Bear Express at 5 pm for the return rail journey to Cochrane.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Best Western Swan Castle Inn

Wednesday, September 30

Tim Horton was born in Cochrane in 1930 and played 24 seasons with the Toronto Maple Leafs and other NHL teams. He opened his first doughnut shop in 1964 in Hamilton. We visit the Tim Horton Museum which is full of his awards and memorabilia. Next is the **Polar Bear Habitat** which functions as a sanctuary for polar bears in need. In the afternoon, we drive to Timmins and fly via Toronto to home.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



VIA Rail near White River

TOUR NOTES

Please book early! This tour has three train excursions and they are extremely popular during fall foliage season. Sault Ste. Marie hotels are heavily booked during the three weeks of peak colours on the Agawa Canyon train. Train seats and rooms will be recalled if Wells Gray cannot guarantee that they will be used. If this happens, we have to consider the tour full, even though seats are available on the motorcoach. Therefore, waiting too long to book usually means "Sorry, wait until another year."

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 \$750 and book your own flight which allows seat selection. Please refer to our [Terms & Conditions](#) for more information on taking the "No Flight" option.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on the flights to and from Toronto. Premium economy and business class may be available. Premium is probably not available on the smaller planes to Sault Ste. Marie and from Timmins.

Flight delays or cancellations: In the event flights are delayed or cancelled by airlines due to weather or other reasons, there may be additional costs to you. Wells Gray Tours will not pay for hotel rooms and meals during the delay. Most travel insurance policies cover expenses incurred for flight delays.

Accommodation: White River has two small motels and Moosonee has only one motel. If you expect deluxe lodging while travelling, this tour may not be appropriate for your needs. Rooms in White River and Moosonee are not up to the standard that Wells Gray uses elsewhere, but they are the only rooms available.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to some remote places where restaurants probably cannot satisfy all food allergies. The trains have limited on-board meal service for some allergies. 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$500 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due July 9, 2026. By paying the deposit, you agree to the [Terms & Conditions](#), Activity Level 3 [Declaration](#), and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (3% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard.

Early Booking Bonus: Receive a \$200 discount on the first 8 seats and \$100 on the next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 9, 2026.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 9, 2026, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From June 10 to July 9, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 10 to July 21, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From July 22 to August 21, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After August 21, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Our many suppliers may notify us 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 tour component 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 for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. This tour stays in Canada, but medical costs can vary wildly from one province to another. While your BC Services Card may partly cover you for a medical issue that arises during the tour, you will probably benefit from trip cancellation and trip interruption coverage in case of illness or a mishap before or during the tour. Many other benefits such as luggage insurance are included. Medical questionnaire is not needed. Please contact us for details. If you have your own travel insurance, please read the policy carefully to be sure that you are adequately covered for medical, cancellation, interruption, and luggage.

Photo Credits: Agawa Canyon Tour Train (Scenic Rail Adventure Agawa Canyon), Pixabay (Agawa Canyon), and Roland Neave (VIA Rail near White River).

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 166 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 July 9, 2026.

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

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