

# TIPS AND TIDBITS

A fact sheet about your

## CANADA BY TRAIN 2008 Adventure

*Walking Adventures International plans and guides walking adventures that combine traditional motorcoach touring with walking. Our itineraries blend historic, cultural, and scenic highlights of the regions we're traveling through with walks in the area. Our trips are fast-paced; they are designed as overview tours to expose travelers to as much of the region's significant highlights as we can manage and still maintain a reasonable daily schedule. Even though most active people find it easy and natural to enjoy our style of travel, we want to ensure that we've afforded every opportunity for travelers to know what to expect — in advance! Listed below are a series of questions and answers to help you develop accurate expectations of this Adventure and make plans to maximize your enjoyment. Please feel free to call us with any additional questions you have.*

### Questions & Answers

**Q: Do you have more detailed information than is available in the brochure?**

- A: About three weeks before departure, a final packet will be mailed to each participant. This packet will include:
- \*Hotel Listing (including address and phone information of all hotels)
  - \*Traveler List
  - \*Daily Schedule
  - \*Tour t-shirt
  - \*Nametag
  - \*Adventure map
  - \*Re-usable luggage tags for first-time travelers

**Q: Do I need a passport to enter Canada?**

A: Travelers to Canada have always been required to present identification at border crossings. The current requirements state you must carry:

1. A passport
- OR -
2. A government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license **AND** one of the following:
  - Original birth certificate or certified copy of the same—must have an embossed seal
  - U.S. Naturalization Papers

**Returning** to the United States is more restrictive. If you are planning to fly home, you will be required to have a passport. If you are returning by **land**, the same identification that allowed you into Canada, will allow you back into the U.S.

**IMPORTANT:** Please make a copy of your passport and birth certificate and keep them in your luggage separate from where you keep your passport. In case your passport gets lost, having these copies really speeds up the replacement process.

**Q: Do you have any suggestions to help with connecting flights?**

A: Because travelers will be coming from all points of the compass, it is not possible to include the transportation to Seattle and from Halifax in the tour price. WAI is not a travel agent and we don't have the authority to make bookings or print airline tickets.

Travel agents are still the simplest way to plan your flight and provide you with a lifeline should you encounter problems on the day of travel. We recommend that you contact the travel agent we work closely with, Debbi Custer, at 888.276.0925, email [debbi@wtpdx.com](mailto:debbi@wtpdx.com). Debbi knows our program and would be glad to assist you in finding a competitive fare.

There are many other sources for airfare, including AAA, if you are a member, and a host of Internet web sites. To start your planning, [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) is a good site to find which flights are available on the days of travel. For the best fares, we've found it's better to go to the web site of the specific airline serving your home and destination. Often you can leave your e-mail address and they'll contact you when they have specials flying to cities that interest you most. Other sites to check out include:

**Airline sites:**

[www.continental.com](http://www.continental.com)  
[www.southwest.com](http://www.southwest.com)  
[www.united.com](http://www.united.com)  
[www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com) (American)  
[www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com)  
[www.usairways.com](http://www.usairways.com)  
[www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com)  
[www.jetblue.com](http://www.jetblue.com)

**Planning sites:**

[www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)  
[www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)  
[www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)  
[www.sidestep.com](http://www.sidestep.com)  
[www.farechase.com](http://www.farechase.com)  
[www.mobissimo.com](http://www.mobissimo.com)  
[www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)  
[www.onetravel.com](http://www.onetravel.com)  
[www.bestfares.com](http://www.bestfares.com)  
[www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com)  
[www.qix.com](http://www.qix.com)

**Q: What are the plans for rendezvousing in Seattle?**

A: The first day has been designated as a travel day; however, we will hold an orientation meeting at the hotel at 7:30 pm. Please try to schedule your arrival by then. A complimentary hotel shuttle from the airport is available. There will be more details regarding this in your final mailing.

**Q: What type of hotels will we be in?**

A: We use superior, tourist class (3-star) accommodations. When making reservations, we request non-smoking rooms and as many rooms on the ground floor as possible.

**Q: What will our rooms on the train be like?**

A: As you would expect with traveling on a train, the accommodations will be tighter than usual. As a result, travelers are advised to pack an overnight bag and check their large suitcase for the four nights we spend

aboard the train.

We'll be aboard the *Canadian* train for three nights from Vancouver to Toronto with *Silver & Blue* class. We have reserved sleeper cars. These are off limits to all passengers traveling coach class. You will have the choice of three types of sleeping accommodations on this train:

**Double Room** - sleeps two passengers. During the day, these are rooms with fold-down upholstered chairs. They do not have locking doors, which is typical on trains, apparently due to the "no place to run" circumstances. At night, the chairs are collapsed under the lower bunk. The double rooms have a small private toilet and sink in the room, with a place to hang a few clothes.

**Upper/Lower Berth** - sleeps two passengers. This berth is a cubicle with facing seats during the day which opens into the public aisle. The seats are then folded down and a mattress is placed on them for a lower bunk at night, and the upper is folded down. You will be separated from the public aisle during the night by a heavy curtain that can be zipped closed for security. Each bunk has its own curtain, so you have independent ability to exit your bed without disturbing your bunk mate. The upper bunk ladder is outside the curtain, into the public aisle. Therefore, if the upper bunk mate needs to exit the bunk to use the restroom, he or she should have a "wrap or robe." There is little traffic in the aisle during the night. Also, there is a public bathroom down the hall where you can get dressed as you may require Houdini-like skills to dress in your bunk.

**Single Room** - This is a small cubicle with a single seat and a private toilet. There is also a small sink in the unit. During the day, the cubicle is open to the public aisle. At night, the car attendant folds down the seat and places a mattress across the seat and toilet, filling the cubicle with the bed. There is a heavy curtain that can be zipped closed for privacy.

On the one night from Montreal to Halifax, all passengers traveling two per room will be in deluxe double rooms. These are bunk-style beds but all rooms include their own bathroom and shower facilities.

**Q: What activities are available on the train?**

A: During the day if you wish to leave your rooms, you may visit the Park car at the rear of the train. It is reserved for the exclusive use of *Silver & Blue* class passengers. There are three separate salons. You may want to sit back and relax, curl up with a good book, work on your knitting or other project, or perhaps chat with other travelers who have come from all over the world to enjoy this one-of-a-kind experience. In the dome (the upper observation deck), you'll be able to take advantage of 360-degree views. Below, there is a curved 1950's style bar and the Bullet Lounge, with its huge wrap-around windows. This is a good place to settle back in stylish armchairs with a cup of tea and a good book.

**Q: What kind of walks will we be doing?**

A: The walks on this trip are varied. We will meet nature head on as we walk among the mountains and lakes of some of Canada's most beautiful national parks. We will also enjoy walking through some of the country's most historic cities and towns. Most of the walks will be year-round events sponsored by local clubs.

The local clubs that host our walks are part of an international walking network known as "volkssporting" or "volkswalking." They use a difficulty rating system

ranging from 1 to 5. A walk rated 1 is flat and level throughout. A walk rated 5 is a pretty serious hike with lots of steep ups and downs and rough spots on the trail. We try to stay away from walks with a difficulty rating higher than 2, but occasionally end up doing a 3 or 3+. Following is a description of the rating system:

1. An easy walk on pavement or well-maintained trail with no significant hills. Probably suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
2. A moderately easy walk, may be on pavement or on trails. No significant difficulty with hills. May not be suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
3. A moderate walk in any setting with some difficult terrain, one or two substantial hills and/or steps. Strollers and wheelchairs questionable.
4. A more difficult walk. Most likely in a natural setting with poorly maintained paths and steeper or hilly inclines. Not likely to be wheelchair or stroller accessible. Participants with certain health problems should take caution.
5. A very difficult walk. All in rough fields or woods. Many steep hills or high altitude trails, or very rough uneven terrain, steep or unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good health

We normally allow between 3 and 3¼ hours for each walk, depending upon our itinerary for the day and the sightseeing opportunities along the route. Of course, none of the walks are mandatory and we encourage travelers to pace themselves. Take a day off or do a partial walk as necessary. Just let the guide know your needs, and we'll help you make adjustments. If you typically take a water bottle when you walk, plan to do so on this tour as well.

Our itinerary is aggressive and designed to offer the traveler as much exposure to the areas we visit as possible. In order to maximize enjoyment of these rigorous and rewarding adventures, we recommend that travelers be in good physical condition. If you have doubts about your ability to participate, please contact us for a more detailed description of what to expect from this experience.

**Q: What is a volkswalk?**

A: Volkssport is a club activity that began in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1968. There are four primary activities: walking, biking, swimming, and cross country skiing. Walking is, by far, the most popular and well developed. A volkswalk is a steady walk through a scenic and/or historic area over a pre-marked route (usually 10 km, which is 6.2 miles). It is noncompetitive and aims to involve people of all ages. Everyone who participates is declared a WINNER! Presently, there are walks in all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

**Q: What type of footwear should I bring?**

A: Two pairs of walking shoes or boots are recommended. The first pair may get wet or muddy and need a day off. Plan to pack an extra pair of socks with your extra shoes in a plastic bag (good for wet gear), and have a spot for them right on the bus with you. The increase in the number of light-weight hiking boots is making them a more practical and attractive option.

**Q: Are there any health precautions I should take?**

A: One of the realities of group travel is that we share a lot of things — including germs. As a result, cold nasties can quickly travel through the train or motorcoach look-

ing for weak immune systems to attack. There are several supplements and behaviors that can make a significant difference in your ability to resist these bugs and preserve a healthy Adventure, including the following:

- \* Use Vitamin C and Echinacea beginning a week before the trip and during the trip to boost your immune system (check with your doctor for possible allergies to Echinacea).
- \* Maintain the use of a good multi-vitamin both before and during the tour.
- \* Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently (carrying a waterless hand cleaner is highly recommended).
- \* If/when you cough, cover your mouth as completely as possible to avoid the spread of germs in consideration of fellow travelers.
- \* Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.
- \* Be sensitive to your health and particularly your need for rest. Guard against fatigue by monitoring your participation in tour activities and allowing yourself necessary "down time."

**Q: How many people do you accept on a trip?**

A: Generally, we close the Adventure at no more than 30 people. Lately, our groups have been averaging 25 to 30 travelers.

**Q: What is the average age of your groups?**

A: Most of our travelers fall between 50 and 70 years of age. This seems to be the age bracket that has the time and means to travel. However, we always have travelers that fall outside that range, from the 20's up into the 80's. Walkers are characteristically great traveling companions — positive, cheerful, and appreciative of the opportunity to see the world.

**Q: What is the split between men and women?**

A: One of the realities of life is that there are more women on the planet than men. Another is that they tend to outlive their spouses. As a result, we do have more women on the trips than men. The percentage of women on the trip can run anywhere from 60 to 80%. We have quite a few couples, a lot of women traveling together or singly, and the occasional single male traveler. We like to see this ratio as even as possible and are always looking for a few more good men!

**Q: What if I don't have a roommate?**

A: It's always best to register for the trip with your own roommate, but we do offer to help match travelers up with others needing roommates. We provide contact information for potential roommates and allow travelers to contact each other and make their own decisions.

**Q: How much money should I take along?**

A: This depends entirely upon your own preferences. However, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Lunch and dinner are generally not included, except when we are aboard the train.
- Gratuities for meals, and tips for the coach driver and local guides, if any, are included in the trip price.
- Gratuities for attendants or waiters on the train are not included and are strictly optional.
- While it is difficult to know your spending habits, we recommend that you bring \$150 in Canadian currency and \$100 USD to start. Most vendors in Canada will accept US currency at lower than market rates so you

won't be stranded if you run out. Also, there will be opportunities to restock your wallet at ATM's and banks along the walk routes and at lunch stops.

- It is always a good idea to make photocopies of credit cards you're using while traveling. These photocopies should be kept separate from the cards themselves.

**Q: What arrangements are made for meals other than breakfast?**

A: Because we spend a great deal of time on the train, many of the meals are included (please see Adventure brochure for specifics). Also, when we are not on the train, we want to focus on as many fun and interesting activities as possible; therefore, we usually don't schedule a "hot-served-meal" lunch stop. When our travel time spans the lunch hour, we normally have a quick 30 to 45-minute stop someplace where travelers can get a bite of "fast food" or visit a grocery store deli. Dinners are usually available at any number of restaurants within walking distance of our hotel. Occasionally, the tour guide may decide to make a special dinner run with the bus to a location where more choices for dinner are available.

**Q: What type of clothing is appropriate?**

A: As usual, it is best to arrange your wardrobe so that you can layer clothing as needed. Always be prepared for rain! Two pairs of walking shoes are always a good idea. Walking attire is the standard for the entire trip. Most of the time, shorts and a t-shirt will be the "in-vogue" way to dress. Long pants are recommended aboard the train and you may wish to bring along a set of casual pants and blouse or shirt for an occasional activity or more formal dinner (e.g. farewell dinner).

**Weather:**

*As you can imagine, a trip that spans an entire continent could encounter a variety of weather conditions. Since this Adventure is occurring in the fall, we expect stable weather and good walking temperatures. Have your rain gear handy, but we're hoping for calm weather with highs in the 60's and 50's and lows down into the 30's in the Rockies at night, warmer everywhere else. Layering your clothing is always the best approach when on a walking adventure.*

**Q: Do you have a suggested reading list for this trip?**

A: Yes, below we have compiled a list of suggested reading for this trip. Having historical background information on the areas you will visit will greatly enhance your experience.

- \* The Canadian Rockies Superguide by Graeme Pole
- \* The Great Adventure: How the Mounties Conquered the West by David Cruise and Alison Griffiths (*historical chronicle based on memoirs, diaries, and newspaper accounts*)
- \* All Aboard the Canadian Rockies by Train by David J. Mitchell (*epic story of the construction and operation of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern Railways*)
- \* The Illustrated History of Canada by Craig Brown (*general history of this huge, diverse nation with its rich heritage*)
- \* Canada: A People's History, Volumes 1 & 2 by Don Gillmor (*a lighter history*)
- \* Evangeline by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

