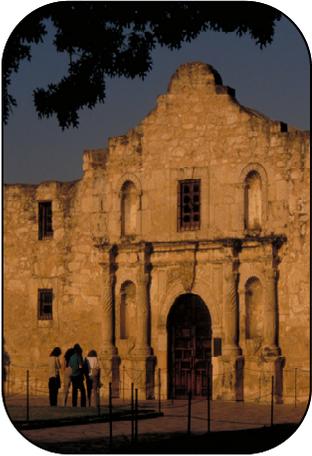


# TEXAS WINTER ESCAPE

January 26, 2015 - 32 Days



a world to experience



## Fares Per Person:

**\$5595** double/twin

**\$7395** single

**\$5115** triple

Tour is exempt from GST.

>**Early Bookers:** \$250 discount on first 15 seats; \$125 on next 10

>**TIC Travel Insurance:** Plan 3-Comprehensive  
\$532 double/twin, \$703 single, \$486 triple



**Redeem Experience Points:** Book by **November 27** and redeem up to **105 e-points**

## Includes

- Coach transportation for 31 days
- 31 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Transfer to Victoria Airport
- Flight from Victoria to Kelowna
- Oregon Trail Center
- Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsal
- Arches National Park fee
- Locally-guided tour of Santa Fe
- Palace of Governors
- New Mexico Museum of Natural History
- Roswell UFO Museum
- Carlsbad Caverns
- Locally-guided tour of San Antonio
- The Alamo
- Imax film *Alamo - The Price of Freedom*
- Locally-guided tour of Corpus Christi
- USS Lexington aircraft carrier
- Texas State Aquarium
- Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History
- King Ranch tour with Museum
- Gladys Porter Zoo
- Sea Turtle Institute
- Lyndon Johnson Ranch National Historic Site
- Big Bend National Park fee
- Locally-guided tour of Big Bend Park
- Amtrak train from Alpine TX to Tucson AZ
- Mission San Xavier del Bac
- Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
- International Wildlife Museum
- Amtrak train from Visalia CA to Sacramento
- Transfer from Seattle to Victoria
- Luggage handling
- Knowledgeable tour director
- **43 meals:** 25 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 5 dinners

**Experience Points:** Earn **105 e-points**

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## A Texas Winter Escape

Texas is a wonderful winter escape for Canadians, featuring a variety of scenery, intriguing history, exciting cities and delightful cuisine. It is the second-largest U.S. state by both area and population. The name means "friends" or "allies" in the local native language. Texas is bordered by Mexico to the south, New Mexico to the west, Oklahoma to the north, and Louisiana to the east. Texas has an area of 268,820 square miles and a population of 26.4 million residents.

Houston is the largest city in Texas and 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the U.S. while San Antonio is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the state and 7<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. Other major cities include Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso and Austin, the state capital. Texas is nicknamed the *Lone Star State* to signify Texas as an independent republic and as a reminder of the state's struggle for independence from Mexico. Traveling from east to west, one can observe terrain that ranges from coastal swamps and piney woods to rolling plains and rugged hills, and finally the desert and mountains of the Big Bend. Elevation ranges from sea level at the Gulf of Mexico to Guadalupe Peak in the west at 8,751 feet.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Wells Gray Tours offered frequent coach tours to Texas, some as long as 40 days with extended stays in destinations like Galveston Island, Corpus Christi, South Padre Island and the Rio Grande Valley. During the past 15 years, customers have favoured shorter tours with flights, but now the pendulum is swinging back. Presumably this is a response to excessive security in airports, crowded conditions on planes, and limited service with no food on planes. This tour is a month long with no flights, many leisurely travel days, and extended stays such as 4 nights in Corpus Christi and South Padre Island, and 2 or 3 nights in Albuquerque, San Antonio, Kerrville, Alpine and Tucson.

Come and join Wells Gray Tours for an old-fashioned winter escape to Texas by coach.

## Highlights

**Mormon Tabernacle Choir**

**Arches National Park**

**Santa Fe**

**Carlsbad Caverns**

**San Antonio Riverwalk**

**The Alamo**

**Historic Menger Hotel**

**Corpus Christi (4 nights)**

**Texas State Aquarium**

**King Ranch**

**South Padre Island (4 nights)**

**President Lyndon Johnson Ranch**

**Fredericksburg**

**Texas Hill Country**

**Big Bend National Park**

**Amtrak from West Texas to Tucson**

**Tucson**

**Laughlin**

## Itinerary

### Monday, January 26:

An afternoon transfer is provided to Victoria airport. We fly to Kelowna and stay overnight at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

### Tuesday, January 27:

*Meals: D*

We meet the Interior passengers during pickups through the Okanagan Valley. We cross the border at Osoyoos, drive south through the Columbia Basin to **Pasco**, and stay overnight at the Red Lion Hotel.

### Wednesday, January 28:

*Meals: B,L*

Our route follows I-84 southeast across Oregon and into Idaho with a stop at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. We stay in **Boise**, capital of Idaho, at the Red Lion Hotel.

### Thursday, January 29:

*Meals: B,L*

We enjoy an impressive view of the Snake River Canyon from lofty Perrine Bridge. Tonight's hotel in **Salt Lake City** is the Salt Lake Plaza, located directly across the street from historic Temple Square. On Thursday evenings, the world-famous **Mormon Tabernacle Choir** rehearses for their Sunday broadcast and we have seats in the Tabernacle for this program of song and music. The choir has 360 members and is accompanied by the Tabernacle organ with 11,600 pipes.

### Friday, January 30:

*Meals: L*

We journey through the fertile Provo Valley and the Wasatch Mountains to the colourful canyonlands region of southeast Utah. In **Arches National Park**, we marvel at the world's finest collection of natural rock arches including wonders such as Double Arch, "Parade of Elephants" and Balancing Rock. Our overnight stay is in **Moab** at the Best Western Canyonlands Inn.

### Saturday, January 31:

*Meals: B,L*

After travelling across the southwest corner of Colorado, we enter **New Mexico**, and skirt the soaring monolith of Ship Rock. In **Albuquerque**, we stay two nights at the Best Western Rio Grande Inn.

### Sunday, February 1:

*Meals: B*

We take a day trip to nearby **Santa Fe**, the historic capital of New Mexico. Since the downtown streets are very narrow, a local guide conducts a walking and driving tour, pointing out Santa Fe's unique pueblo style architecture. Sights include the **Palace of Governors** and San Miguel Chapel, both 400 years old; Loretto Chapel which houses a mysterious staircase; the historic plaza and the capitol.

### Monday, February 2:

*Meals: B,D*

The morning is free time and a walk through Albuquerque's **Old Town** is suggested. Admission is included at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History. In the afternoon, we drive to Roswell, made famous by the **1947 UFO incident**, and visit the UFO Museum. We stay overnight at the Hampton Inn.

### Tuesday, February 3:

*Meals: B,L*

Our first stop is **Carlsbad Caverns** where we walk through several of its enormous rooms and admire the underground formations. Afterwards, it's less than an hour's drive to reach **Texas!** During the next two weeks, we join the swelling ranks of "Winter Texans", thousands of Canadians and Americans who seek relief from cold weather. Although we only see a small part of the Lone Star State during our visit, we experience some of its great diversity ranging from the rolling hills of Kerrville to the sandy beaches of South Padre Island, from the vast King Ranch to the historic Alamo, from the immense USS Lexington aircraft carrier to the Big Bend canyons of the Rio Grande. We stay overnight in Fort Stockton at Comfort Suites.

### Wednesday, February 4:

*Meals: B,L*

We join I-10 for the journey across the Texas plains and through the hill country to San Antonio, and settle into the delightful **Menger Hotel** for a three-night stay. In 1859, the Menger ushered in a new era of sophistication on the Texas frontier and, 156 years later, it still exudes an atmosphere of elegance and tradition. It boasts a superb downtown location beside the historic Alamo and San Antonio's renowned Riverwalk.

### Thursday, February 5:

A sightseeing tour of **San Antonio** is conducted by a local guide and includes the **Alamo**, the famous mission where Texans and Mexicans fought in 1836. We also enjoy Brackenridge Park and the dramatic Imax film about the Alamo battle, *Alamo - The Price of Freedom*. The afternoon is free time.

### Friday, February 6:

This is a free day to enjoy the many attractions of San Antonio. The **Riverwalk** loops through downtown along the San Antonio River and offers numerous boutiques plus Rivercenter Mall with 135 stores. Don't miss a boat tour along the Riverwalk either!

### Saturday, February 7:

Leaving San Antonio, it is only 2½ hours drive south to **Corpus Christi**, located on the coast of the Gulf

of Mexico. We stay four nights at the Embassy Suites Hotel. Amenities include a large atrium, indoor pool, restaurant, and fitness centre. A two-hour reception with complimentary beer, wine and cocktails is offered every evening. Shopping and alternate restaurants are nearby.

**Sunday, February 8:** *Meals: B*

A sightseeing tour of Corpus Christi is conducted by a local resident and features scenic and historic attractions. Then, we go to the **Museum of Science & History** which contains a Spanish shipwreck and treasures from 1554, as well as floating replicas of Christopher Columbus' three ships.

**Monday, February 9:** *Meals: B*

The day starts with a visit to the wonderful **Texas State Aquarium** which exhibits sharks, sea turtles, river otters and many maritime creatures of the Texas coast. In the afternoon, we explore the decommissioned **U.S.S. Lexington**, a huge aircraft carrier which has been permanently berthed in the harbour since 1993.

**Tuesday, February 10:** *Meals: B*

This is a free day to do as you wish.

**Wednesday, February 11:** *Meals: B,L*

We head inland from Corpus Christi to Kingsville, home of the gigantic **King Ranch**. Established in 1853, it sprawls across 825,000 acres of south Texas and raises 60,000 cattle. The ranch was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1961. Our tour includes the home ranch buildings, saddle shop, Ranch Museum and lunch cooked over a mesquite wood fire. We continue to the south end of Texas and, near Harlingen, we cross the four-mile long Queen Isabella bridge which connects the mainland with **South Padre Island**. We stay four nights at The Pearl beside the sandy beach of the Gulf of Mexico.

**Thursday, February 12:** *Meals: B*

This is a day of leisure to relax on the beach or explore more of South Padre Island. A discount coupon book is provided by the Visitor Bureau.

**Friday, February 13:** *Meals: B,D*

We return to the mainland, driving past the Port Isabel Lighthouse, built in 1853 and oldest in Texas. In Brownsville, the southernmost city in the state, we visit the renowned **Gladys Porter Zoo**, home to over 1,500 creatures in natural settings. Back on the Island, we stop at **Sea Turtle Institute**, a refuge founded by Ila Loetscher who cared for these giant endangered turtles until she was in her 90s.

**Saturday, February 14:** *Meals: B*

Enjoy another free day on South Padre Island.

**Sunday, February 15:** *Meals: B*

Today, we must start our journey north, but there are still lots of interesting experiences ahead. After driving through San Antonio, we enter the scenic hill country and stay two nights in **Kerrville** at the Y.O. Ranch Hotel.

**Monday, February 16:** *Meals: B*

**Fredericksburg** is considered Texas' most attractive small town with unique homes and churches dating from the 1840s. Next we explore the **Lyndon Johnson Ranch**, now a National Historic Park preserving his birthplace, school, ranchhouse and grave. Johnson died in 1973, but Ladybird Johnson continued to live at the ranch until her death in 2007. The ranch and the Johnson home, called the Texas White House while he was President in the 1960s, is now open for touring.

**Tuesday, February 17:** *Meals: B,L*

We follow I-10 across western Texas and stay two nights at Holiday Inn Express in Alpine.

**Wednesday, February 18:** *Meals: B*

The day is devoted to **Big Bend National Park**. One of the most remote of America's parks, Big Bend protects the Chisos Mountains and the incredible canyons of the Rio Grande. With the benefit of a local naturalist, our tour includes the visitor centre, colourful Chisos Basin and the majesty of Santa Elena Canyon where red cliffs soar 1,500 feet above the Rio Grande.

**Thursday, February 19:** *Meals: B,L,D*

For a change of scene from our motorcoach, we board the **Amtrak train** in mid-morning at Alpine. The Sunset Limited train travels west through El Paso, southern New Mexico, and southern Arizona, arriving in Tucson in early evening. The route crosses deserts and mountain ranges, and follows the agricultural Rio Grande Valley in western Texas. Our coach travels empty with all the luggage and meets us in **Tucson**. We stay two nights at the Radisson Suites Hotel.

**Friday, February 20:** *Meals: B*

We visit Mission San Xavier del Bac, a fine example of Spanish mission architecture completed in 1797. Then we spend a couple of hours at the fascinating **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum** which features many live animals and plants of the region. On our way back into Tucson, we stop at the International Wildlife Museum which has dioramas depicting some 300 animals in typical habitats.

**Saturday, February 21:***Meals: B,L*

We journey through Phoenix, then northwest across Arizona to the Colorado River. We stay overnight in Laughlin at Aquarius Resort & Casino on the river.

**Sunday, February 22:***Meals: L*

Entering California, we head west across the **Mojave Desert** through Barstow, then over Tehachapi Pass to the Great Central Valley. It stretches 400 miles from Redding to Bakersfield, and a cornucopia of crops is grown in this fertile region, giving it the nickname "America's Food Basket." Our night stop is in Visalia at the downtown Comfort Inn.

**Monday, February 23:***Meals: B*

We board Amtrak's **San Joaquin train** at 8:30 am for the four-hour journey north through Fresno and Stockton, disembarking in Sacramento. There is free time to enjoy the historic buildings and shopping mecca of **Old Sacramento**. Continuing on our coach, we stop at the Olive Pit and stay overnight in **Redding** at the Red Lion Hotel.

**Tuesday, February 24:***Meals: B,L*

The drive continues with views of Shasta Lake and 14,000-foot tall Mount Shasta. We enter Oregon at Siskiyou Summit. A stop is made in Medford at the Harry and David Country Store. Our overnight stay is in Canyonville at **Seven Feathers Hotel & Casino**.

**Wednesday, February 25:***Meals: B,L,D*

We continue north on I-5 through Portland and Seattle to Lynnwood and stay our last night at the **Embassy Suites**. After complimentary cocktails, a farewell dinner is planned, so you can reminisce with fellow travellers about our month-long winter getaway in Texas.

**Thursday, February 26:***Meals: B*

There are shopping stops at **Bellis Fair Mall** in Bellingham and the Duty-Free Store, then we cross the border and take an afternoon ferry back to Victoria.

**Tour Policies**

**Payments:** A deposit of \$500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due November 27, 2014.

**Discounts:** Early bookers receive \$250 discount on first 15 seats and \$125 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after November 27.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to October 28, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From October 29 to November 27, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From November 28 to December 18, the cancellation charge is 30% of the tour fare. From December 19 to January 6, 2015, the cancellation charge is 70% of the tour fare. After January 6, there is no refund.

**Fare Changes:** Changes to taxes and exchange rates, and surcharges from tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until departure.

**TIC Insurance:** In addition to Plan 3-Comprehensive, plans are available for Trip Cancellation & Interruption only and Extended Medical Coverage only. Policies can be purchased no later than at final payment.



**PHOTO CREDIT** Al Rendon - San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Activity Level:** Light activity including short distances to walk and some steps.

**E-points:** This tour earns 105 E-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or E-points. 1 E-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until Nov. 27.

**Travel Wholesaler License: #65842**