

THE AMERICAN QUEEN *a Mississippi River voyage*



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ACTIVITIES

Posted by: [Jan Ross](#)

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The first time we hopped on and off was in New York City, but it would not be the last. We were in New York spending a couple of days before we embarked on a cruise to Bermuda and we wanted to see as much as possible in the little time we had. A tour was

what we needed but a tour of the most important tourist destinations in the short time we had?

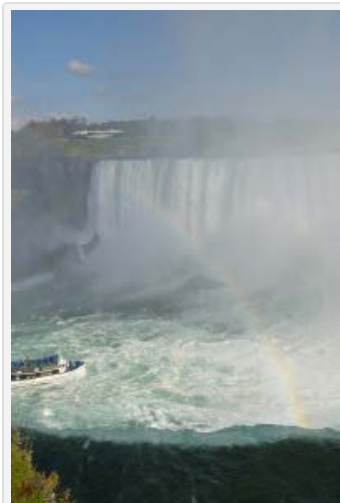
How was that possible?

Then we discovered the joy that is the "hop on hop off" tour. We booked a three-day pass with [Grayline](#) and packed the next three days with all the many attractions to which we could drag our weary bodies. We hopped on the ubiquitous double-Decker buses and hopped off whenever we saw something interesting. There were always more buses coming by and it was an easy, fun and fairly cheap way to see the city.

We loved every minute of it.



Ground Zero in New York.



Maid of the Mist at Niagara Falls.

So, when we set out across the [Rainbow Bridge](#) to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls with our long list of attractions we wanted to see, the first thing we did was buy tickets for the [Peoplemover](#) buses. These comfortable buses come by about every 20 minutes and stop at all the major attractions in the area. The buses also drive up and down the Niagara Parkway to access the attractions, which is a beautiful attraction by itself. Spend some time just riding up and down this road and enjoying the incredible view of the falls. You should be aware that the buses only run through the middle of October, when many of the attractions in Niagara Falls shut down for the fall and winter. Be sure to hop off at the [Maid of the Mist](#) for a cruise up to the incredible view of the thundering falls and the [Whirlpool Aero](#) car, a tram that takes you right across the river hundreds of feet in the air – we loved both!

We again went international with the "hop on, hop off"

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concept when we stopped in Victoria, British Columbia on one of our cruises. [Big Bus Victoria](#) takes you all over town to all of the major attractions. Have lunch at [Barb's Fish and Chips](#) and afternoon tea at the gorgeous and historical [Empress Hotel](#), and then tour [Craigdarroch Castle](#) – it's an incredible place! From Victoria, we sailed on to Vancouver and hopped on our favorite mode of transportation once again. The [Vancouver Big Bus](#) took us all over town as we hopped on and off. We especially loved the [Vancouver Aquarium](#),

where you should be sure to see the 4D movie in the theater, and a [harbor cruise](#) where we watched the incredible sunset and dined on delicious food.

All of these experiences were wonderful in every way and we loved the ease and convenience of hopping of wherever we wanted to spend more time, then hopping back on for an effortless trip to the next stop but the ultimate “hop on, hop off” experience had to be in Amsterdam.

Visiting the “Venice of the North” for a few days before we embarked on a river cruise in Europe, we mulled over the best way to see the city in the least amount of time. There were no “hop on, hop off” bus tours but we quickly realized we could utilize the many

canal tours in the same way. We bought a two-day pass with [City Discovery](#) and spent the entire time traversing the canals of Amsterdam. Luckily for us, the canal boats stopped right at the Ij river in front of the [Movenpick Hotel](#) where we were staying so we just hopped on every morning and spent the entire day seeing the city.

The sheer number of bikes in Amsterdam is also amazing and it was fun to see people of every age biking everywhere. We peeked at the [Red Light District](#) (during the day – we were not brave enough to venture there at night), tasted cheese and the scrumptious local pancakes in [Dam Square](#), and saw a windmill in the heart of the city.

We just hopped on every morning and spent the entire day seeing the city. I think we went over every single canal in the city and particularly enjoyed seeing all the houseboats berthed in the canals and the people who lived in them just going about their business.

It was the perfect way to see Amsterdam.

In fact, it was the perfect way to see New York, Niagara Falls, Victoria, B.C. and Vancouver.

And it's probably the perfect way to see many other places.

What about you? Are you a fan of the hop on, hop off concept?



The Empress Hotel in Victoria.



Canal Tour Boat in Amsterdam.



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Tags: , Amsterdam, Hop On Hop Off Tours, New York City, Niagara Falls, Vancouver, Victoria B.C.



For twenty years, I worked as a librarian in an elementary school but finally decided to get serious about travel writing and devote all my time to it. Now, I travel the world and write all about it. I can't imagine a more fabulous or fulfilling job. I write a regular travel column for two regional, Central Kentucky magazines and contribute regularly to other magazines and online travel sites, such as The SavvyGal, A Luxury Travel Blog and

The Vacation Gals. I'm an avid reader and stay active with Yoga, Pilates and Zumba classes. My favorite place in the whole world is a beach - any beach. I have been married for 34 years and my husband is my favorite travel companion. I also rely on him for his excellent photography skills. We have two grown children and the best grandson in the world. Slowly but surely, we are visiting all the places we have dreamed about. Hopefully, the next one will be the one you want to read about!

<http://www.wanderlustwonder.com/>

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