

THE WILD PACIFIC COAST

Vancouver Island, the Inside Passage & Haida Gwaii

11 days

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Day 1 Arrive in Campbell River, Vancouver Island

Welcome to Campbell River!*

Our journey begins in the southern end of the Discovery Passage. With the sea on our doorstep and the Coastal Mountains visible in the backdrop, we will begin our journey in a magnificent setting along the 50th parallel. This land is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Coast Salish peoples.

Vancouver Island is the world's 43rd largest island, Canada's 11th largest island, and Canada's second most populous island after the Island of Montreal. The island is 456 km (283 mi) in length, 100 km (62 mi) in width at its widest point and is the largest by area and the most populous along the west coasts of the Americas.

Check into your downtown hotel and have the afternoon on your own to explore this fine city before meeting your Tour Leader and fellow passengers for an evening meal.

* Campbell River is accessible by air (airport code YBL, connections likely through Vancouver) or by road/ferry from the mainland or elsewhere on the island.

Overnight in Campbell River.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Campbell River - Telegraph Cove

Today we briefly leave the coast behind and head northward and inland to the island's rugged interior.

Vast forests spread across Vancouver Island, BC's largest, stretching 460km in length and covering over 3400km of coastline. Our route takes us via the village of Woss in the centre of the Nimpkish Valley, situated along a trade route between the east and west coasts used for hundreds of years by Indigenous peoples. In modern times, the Nimpkish Valley has been an important source of timber and home to the longest working logging railway in North America (76 miles/122 km). We will pause amongst some scenic spots to get a better look at the forests for which the island is reknown.

Our route then veers eastward and to the coast once again to our hotel at Telegraph Cove. A former fishing and forestry village, now home to 20 people, Telegraph Cove oozes the charm of what many of BC's coastal towns used to be.

Later this afternoon you'll have the chance to wander the boardwalk with interpretive signs explaining the residents of the past before exploring the Whale Museum, or perhaps you'll take the longer walk along the old telegraph line to Blinkhorn Peninsula at the entrance to the northern tip of Johnstone Strait. Visiting the Telegraph Cove Art Gallery is truly a West Coast experience with a marine flair! Renowned carver and wood artist Don Bastian offers stunning sculptures, carvings, furniture and pottery, all hand-made on site.

Overnight in Telegraph Cove (spotty wifi).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Grizzly Adventure in the Great Bear Rainforest & Broughton Archipelago

Located on the northern entrance to the Johnstone Strait, dubbed a 'whale superhighway,' we embark on a boat cruise into the Broughton Archipelago, a stunning cluster of inlets and islands within a marine park.

With our local guides, we will search for grizzly bears along the salmon running rivers with an immersive experience that may have us walking amongst the forest and streams. A full-day adventure, our guides will introduce us to historic and culturally significant areas within the

region.

Marine life is abundant here, as we try to spot white-sided dolphins, seals, steller sea lions and dolls porpoises. Bring your binoculars and wear sturdy shoes.

Overnight in Telegraph Cove.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Telegraph Cove - U'Mista Cultural Centre - Overnight Ferry to Prince Rupert

Today we check-out of our hotel and make our way the short distance up the coast to Port McNeill from where we'll hop on a ferry to Alert Bay located on Cormorant Island.

Our main destination will be U'Mista Cultural Centre to view the Potlatch Collection. The word "potlatch" means "to give" and comes from a trade jargon, Chinook, formerly used along the Pacific coast of Canada. At the core of the tradition is the belief that a rich and powerful person is someone who gives the most away. Guests witnessing the event are given gifts; the more gifts given, the higher the status achieved by the potlatch host. The ceremony also marks important occasions in the lives of the Kwakwaka'wakw: the naming of children, marriage, transferring rights and privileges, and mourning the dead. U'Mista has an unparalleled collection of Kwakwaka'wakw art, all originally confiscated from a Potlatch ceremony in the early 20th century.

During our time here, we'll also have a chance to walk around the park, where we can view some totem poles. We'll also have a chance to explore Alert Bay, with it's charming shops featuring Indigenous art, plus a chance to get some lunch before heading back to Vancouver Island.

After ferrying back to Port McNeill, we'll enjoy an evening meal at a local pub before heading north to the Bear Cove ferry terminal (Port Hardy) in time for our 10pm/18-hour overnight sailing to Prince Rupert on board a comfortable BC Ferries vessel (the MV Northern Expedition or MV Northern Adventure):

<https://www.bcferries.com/on-the-ferry/our-fleet/northern-adventure/NADV>

Our BC Ferries vessel is spacious and well-appointed with plenty of seating indoors and on deck, as well as a café and lounge. Our cabins are air-conditioned and feature en-suite bathrooms and 2 lower beds (twins). The ferry company provides bed linens, towels, and toiletries.

Overnight Ferry (no wifi).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Inside Passage to Prince Rupert

The first section of our voyage takes us over a stretch of open water and up the coast (possibly with a stop or two en route, depending on scheduling); we'll arrive at the village of Klemtu, the unofficial start point of the "Inside Passage" at around 06:30 (dawn/sunrise at this latitude in late spring/summer is around 04:30-05:30).

The daylight section of our navigation route follows a series of passages cut by glaciers millions of years ago to create spectacular fjords covered with dense rainforests, waterfalls, and mountains. During our cruise today, we will pass through an area known as the Great Bear Rainforest, the home of the blonde coloured Kermode or 'Spirit Bear,' which belongs to the black bear family and are few in number. Only approximately 120 reside in this part of the world so the likelihood of seeing one is slim, though but we may see many other types of wildlife so have your binoculars ready.

Highlights today include the 70km long Grenville Channel, framed by mountains of 450-1100m/1,500-3,500 ft. The narrowest portion is a mere 430m (1,400 ft) wide, but depths up to 500m/1,620 ft allow vessels to travel close to shore.

We arrive in Prince Rupert in the late afternoon (+/- 16:00) and transfer directly to our hotel for check-in and our evening meal nearby.

Overnight in Prince Rupert.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Great Bear Rainforest Zodiac Excursion & North Pacific Cannery - Ferry to Haida Gwaii

This morning we experience the northern Great Bear Rainforest by water on a 3-hour zodiac-style boat tour from Cow Bay. The outfitter will provide the following: Survival float suit, binoculars, gloves, sunglasses, hand warmers.

We start by venturing into Metlakatla Pass to learn about the Indigenous history of the area that you can only see by boat. Then we'll embark 7km offshore to the Lucy Islands Conservancy to see one of the region's oldest lighthouses and protected Rhinoceros Auklet seabird population before travelling south to the Kinahan Islands. Capture the beauty of the Great Bear Rainforest by snapping up-close shots of local wildlife such as bald eagles, seals and sea lions. From our unique vantage points on the water, we'll learn about the region's history and ecology from an informative guide.

Finally on the way back into the Prince Rupert harbour, we witness the working waterfront of Prince Rupert's industrial terminals which make up Canada's third largest port complex.

Back in Prince Rupert, we'll break for lunch (included today) before visiting the North Pacific Cannery, the longest running cannery in British Columbia's history (now a museum) for an in-depth guided tour. The cannery was founded in 1889 and operated as a premier salmon production and canning facility for almost 90 years until the late 1970's.

Later today, we will board an overnight ferry to cross the Hecate Strait to Haida Gwaii. Often regarded as the 'Galapagos of the North', we will spend the next four days learning about the history, heritage, and wilderness of this isolated part of the world.

Haida Gwaii, meaning 'Islands of the People', is an archipelago of over 150 islands with an incredible history surrounding the culture of the Haida People who first inhabited these islands over 10,000 years ago. We sail through the scenic Hecate Strait, named for the HMS Hecate used for surveying these waters in the 1860's. Thousands of years before being named the Hecate Strait, the strait was both a transport route to the mainland land, with its shallow waterways providing a navigational challenge to outsiders, and a source of protection for the Haida people.

Our BC Ferries vessel (the MV Northern Expedition or MV Northern Adventure) is spacious and well-appointed with plenty of seating indoors and on deck, as well as a café and lounge. Our cabins are air-conditioned and feature en-suite bathrooms and 2 lower beds (twins). The ferry company provides bed linens, towels, and toiletries. Today we include breakfast and lunch, leaving dinner to your own schedule and account -- there are plenty of dining options onboard including the choice of table service or a quick informal cafeteria setting.

Overnight Ferry (no wifi).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 7 Arrival in Haida Gwaii - Excursion to K'uuna Llnagaay (Skedans)

This morning we arrive in Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands) and embark on our sightseeing program. We'll board zodiac vessels and travel the coastal waters to the edge of Gwaii Haanas National Park to the Skedans, known locally as K'uuna Llnagaay.*

Our journey today is filled with storytelling of the Haida People while exploring the coastlines filled with sea lion rookeries. At the village site of K'uuna Llnagaay, a National Historic Site of Canada, an interpretive tour allows us to fully immerse ourselves in the incredible history, culture and way of life of the Haida people who once inhabited the village.

K'uuna Llnagaay is located on the northeast corner of Louise Island. At its height, the village had between 26 to 30 longhouses. In the late 1800s, more than 50 pieces of monumental sculpture were recorded at K'uuna Llnagaay, including 22 frontal poles, 18 single mortuary poles, 3 double mortuary poles, 5 memorial poles, and 5 mortuary figures. Today, a few carved memorial and mortuary poles remain standing and the depressions of several longhouses give a sense of their former scale.

After an incredible day, we arrive back in Queen Charlotte City** this evening.

* Some adjustments may be required depending on the area's highly-changeable weather.

** As of 2022, the Village of Queen Charlotte initiated the restoration of the ancestral Haida name for the area, Daajing Giids, pronounced "daw-jean geeds."

Overnight in Daajing Giids.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Graham Island Sightseeing

Today we will have a local Haida guide tour us around Graham Island, the most populated island in the archipelago. We will venture to the Golden Spruce Trail in Port Clements. The Golden Spruce trail, named for the Golden Sitka Spruce that once grew at the end of the trail. The Golden Sitka Spruce, a spruce tree that grew for nearly 300 years had a mutation causing the spruce to grow needles of a golden yellow colour.

Another stop will be in the important Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llangaay in Skidegate, an award winning museum. Through language, art and stories, this centre is a wonderful introduction to the Haida relationship with the land and sea that has shaped, nourished and sustained this culture for centuries.

We return to Daajing Giids before for dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight in Daajing Giids.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island) & Hlk'yah GawGa (Windy Bay)

This day trip includes a Zodiac tour to Hlk'yah GawGa (Windy Bay) and to Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island).* This area is symbolic to Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage site because it was here, in 1985, that the Haida people took a stand against clear cut logging practices in South Moresby. This stand resulted in the creation of Gwaii Haanas, and the erection of the Legacy Pole.

We will also make a stop at Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotsprings Island) which commonly provided food to the Haida people, as well as warm waters to comfort, nourish and heal the body and soul. You will have the opportunity to bathe in the springs, which recently returned after a 7.7 magnitude earthquake stop their flow in 2012. If bathing does not appeal to you, the waters of Gandll K'in have created a unique intertidal environment for you to explore.

Along the way, our guides will incorporate storytelling, songs, and local history, giving guests a glimpse into our heritage, and how we protect our land and waters.

* Some adjustments may be required depending on the area's highly-changeable weather.

Overnight back in Daajing Giids (dinner on your own this evening).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 10 Tsa'ahl Village Tour & Ancient Totems

On today's boat-based* excursion we travel west from Queen Charlotte through the Skidegate Narrows, scanning the shorelines for "taan" (black bear). With options to disembark from the boat at Jiina.nga Gandlaay (Government Creek) to explore old growth, check for Tufted Puffins at Marble Island, and visit the village of Ts'aahl. Home of K'aa Gwaay (Five Fin Sea Monster), at Ts'aahl we experience the beauty of ancient totems. On the wild west coast, guests may be greeted by all kinds of marine and terrestrial life who call this place home. Along the way our guides will incorporate storytelling, songs and local history, giving guests a glimpse into their heritage.

A traditional lunch and snacks are provided: BBQ wild salmon, salad, rice and more.

* 30ft aluminum landing craft tour vessel with closed cabin and outdoor deck. Heated cabin, washroom with toilet & sink, bench seating, ramp to disembark and side loading capabilities. Provided: Helly Hansen integrated floater jackets, rain pants and rubber boots. Balaclavas and toques are also provided for extra comfort.

Return to Daajing Giids for dinner and overnight.

Overnight in Daajing Giids.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Departure Day

Today after breakfast we say goodbye to each other as a group.

As we will be based in Daajing Giids, it makes most sense for travellers to depart from Sandspit Airport (YZP); an alternative but with fewer flights and farther to travel, is Masset.

Land & Air passengers will be transferred to YZP as part of their tour; if you book your own air, we can provide transport information once we have a clearer sense of all travellers' departure times, which may dictate a group transfer - TBA.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast