



BEACHES AND GLACIERS HIKING AND KAYAK ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

TOUR V7

Vancouver Island offers incredible variety of day hikes. Among the rewards awaiting hikers are ancient rainforests, wildflower meadows, blue alpine lakes, glaciers and cascading waterfalls. During this guided camping tour trails range from easy walks on the beach to full-day alpine treks. Another highlight is a kayak excursion to Vargas Island with a night of wilderness camping on the beach. You have the benefit of hiking with an expert who knows the terrain in all kinds of weather and trail conditions and has information on the local history, flora and fauna. Camping under giant cedars, the sound of the waves, a crackling camp fire – Life is good.

Demands: camping, moderate hikes with light day pack. The kayak trip is suitable for inexperienced paddlers and alternate transport to the island is possible.

Included:

- ✓ ferry passages as mentioned
- ✓ spacious tents (2 pers./ tent)
- ✓ welcome gift
- ✓ cooking- and eating utensils
- ✓ camping gear (except sleeping bag)
- ✓ hard-foam mattress
- ✓ 2 days with ocean kayak and guide
- ✓ admission to the National Park
- ✓ camping fees
- ✓ services of a knowledgeable guide, who accompanies the group on all hikes.

Not included: personal equipment, meals (calculate \$100.00 for the food kitty), light day pack, sleeping bag.

Whale- or bear watching in Tofino \$180.00, hotel near the Vancouver airport on demand.

Group size: maximum 12 persons

For dates and prices, please see price list or website.



FIVE MODERATE DAY HIKES WITH LIGHT DAYPACK

WILD LANDSCAPES AND BEACHES OF THE PACIFIC

ASTONISHING ABUNDANCE AND VARIETY OF MARINE LIFE

DAY HIKE INTO THE FORBIDDEN PLATEAU

TOFINO AND PACIFIC RIM NATIONAL PARK

KAYAK EXCURSION WITH OVERNIGHT CAMPING ON A REMOTE ISLAND

BUILDING BLOCK WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

EXPERIENCED AND ENTHUSIASTIC GUIDE

Length of tour: 7 days

All departures are guaranteed

Start at 8:00 am at the hotel near the Vancouver airport,

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Day 1: VANCOUVER ISLAND / SOOKE - This morning you meet your guide in a hotel near the Vancouver airport. You board the mini bus for the drive to the ferry terminal and the 90-minute crossing to Vancouver Island. In Victoria a stroll by the lively and picturesque Inner Harbour in Victoria, lunch on own in one of the many restaurants, and now it is off to your first campground (showers) by a river under giant trees. Here you have a choice of easy to demanding hikes or pick nicks by the beach. Suggested for the first outing is a short drive to a small preserve. For thousands of years the crashing waters of the Sooke River have carved deep pools and caves out of the rock. Nothing, not even the river runs anything close to straight. So many amazing vantage points and so many unbelievable swimming spots. Here is also the trail head for a somewhat demanding hike (13 km with 420 m gain, 8 mi, 1378 ft) to two remote mountain lakes. Hiking time up to 4 hours.

Day 2: SOOKE - The attraction of another park in the area is the variety of trails and loops through forests and along coast lines. For example, on today's 12 km hike you walk high above the weather blasted rocky cliffs, small bays and deep fjords and every few minutes another startlingly desolate ocean vantage point with views of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Olympic Peninsula. You have good chances to see whales. Sea lions and eagles. Then the trail winds up into the forested hills and back to the starting point. Dinner by the campfire and hopefully another spectacular sunset. Hiking time 3 – 4 hours.

Day 3: PARKSVILLE - A stop and descend to Botanical Beach, the most unique and richest tidal area for plant and animal life along Canada's west coast. The shore is guarded by fantastic geological formations of shale and quartz. Lunch break during the drive to the eastern side of Vancouver Island is by a beautiful lake. The campground (showers) features majestic old growth forest of Douglas firs and a wide sandy beach near the city of Parksville. Hiking time 2 to 4 hours.

Day 4: PARKSVILLE / STRATHCONA PARK - Some of the best wilderness hiking on Vancouver Island is among the glaciated peaks of the Central Island. Strathcona Park was created in 1911 for those who seek adventure in remote alpine surroundings. You can reach the "Forbidden Plateau" via several routes. A 15 km (9.3 mi) loop trail near Mt. Washington starts already at the 1100 m (3665 ft) level and offers panoramic views over southern British Columbia. Hiking time 5 hours.

Day 5: TOFINO / VARGAS ISLAND - For your next adventure you explore the quiet inlet waters and ancient coastal rainforest of Clayoquot Sound in 2-person ocean kayaks. No previous kayaking experience is necessary. Route planning is chosen with both the novice and advanced paddlers in mind and with 1 kayak guide for every 6 participants. Starting in Tofino early afternoon you make your way to the shores of Meares Island for a break to go on a short hike under the giant cedars while the guide introduces you to the natural and cultural history of the island. Then you paddle across an inlet and past a Native village and by late afternoon arrive at your overnight camp on Vargas Island. A zodiac delivers your equipment and camping gear and takes the kayak guide back to Tofino. Your tour guide stays with your group to set up the overnight camp on one of the beautiful wild beaches. (Instead of paddling you can take the zodiac to get to the island).

Day 6: TOFINO / UCLUELET - The kayak guide returns this morning to paddle with you a different route past Stubbs Island back to Tofino. Planned for the afternoon is a side trip to Pacific Rim National Park where you hike mysterious trails with boardwalks and stairs in a fairy tale forest of ferns, lichens, mosses and thousand-year-old trees. There is more: boutiques and small stores in the charming villages of Ucluelet and Tofino offer crafts and souvenirs made by local artists. You also can join optional whale and bear watching excursions and even surfing lessons. Campground in Ucluelet (showers). Hiking time 1.5 to 4 hours.

Day 7: VANCOUVER - On the return trip you pass through Cathedral Grove with some over 800-year-old cedars and Douglas fir trees, one of them is 9 meters (30 ft) in circumference. You walk on a network of short rainforest wilderness trails which weave amongst moss and fern blanketed fallen trees.

BUILDING BLOCK:

Tour P7, The Best of Banff and Jasper (7 days) with hiking and camping in the Rockies. Some dates fit with the dates of this Vancouver Island Tour.

After you book the flight between Calgary and Vancouver, we gladly arrange hotels and transfers between tours.