HAIDA GWAI'I
The Queen Charlotte Islands
August 21, 2016 - 7 Days

Fares Per Person:
$2520 double/twin
$2840 single
$2435 triple

> Please add 5% GST.
> Experience Points: Earn 62 points from this tour.
  Redeem 62 points if you book by June 16.

Includes
- Transportation from Victoria to Vancouver Airport
- Air Canada flight from Vancouver to Sandspit
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- Mini-bus or school bus transportation for 6 days on Haida Gwaii
- 6 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Ferry between Moresby Island and Graham Island four times
- Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay’lNnagaay with guide
- Haida Gwaii naturalist for 2 days
- Naikoon Provincial Park fee
- Port Clements Museum
- Studio and artisan tour
- Zodiac tour around Louise Island to Skedans
- Gwaii Haanas National Park fee
- Skedans Village Watchman fee
- Air Canada flight from Sandspit to Victoria
- Transfer from airport to your pickup point
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- 13 meals: 6 breakfasts, 1 brunch, 3 lunches, 3 dinners
**Tour Notes**

**Flights**: are on Air Canada from Vancouver to Sandspit and return to Victoria. Flights were booked in October 2015, but airline schedules could change prior to tour departure. All air transportation taxes and security fees in effect in October 2015 are included in the tour price, but these could change even after final tour payment, in which case a fare adjustment will be made. We will be pleased to quote a fare for departure or return at another airport. The tour drives to Vancouver on the first day because the flight to Sandspit leaves Vancouver at 7:30 am and a same-day connection is too risky.

**Mini-bus transportation**: There are no full-size motorcoaches on Haida Gwaii. Your transportation is in a 23-passenger mini-bus on most days and one day in a school bus because of gravel roads. Both are operated by Eagle Transit based in Queen Charlotte City. There is no on-board restroom, but facilities are available at frequent intervals and there are no long driving distances.

**Accommodation** on Haida Gwaii is very limited with a few small motels in Queen Charlotte City and Masset. Wells Gray Tours books a year in advance to ensure rooms are available. Please do not expect deluxe lodging on Haida Gwaii. This tour stays five nights at the Sea Raven Motel in Queen Charlotte City. A restaurant is on the property, and breakfasts and two dinners are served there. Rooms are clean and comfortable, but certainly not up to the standard that Wells Gray uses in the rest of British Columbia. There is no elevator. It is somewhat ironic that you are staying at two “bests” — the first night is at the Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel which is one of the most luxurious hotels in Vancouver, then you stay at the finest motel on Graham Island with a lot less luxury. Travel is an experience!

**Early booking** is strongly recommended because this tour is limited to only 20 people.

**Identification**: You must bring government-issued photo ID with you, otherwise you will not be allowed to board the Air Canada flights.

**Tour 25**: This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 25 participants or less, a more intimate travel experience. For this tour, capacity is actually 20 due to the size of the mini-coach and the visitor limit imposed at Skedans.

**Activity Level 3**: Tour includes walking over uneven surfaces, some steep terrain, steps, sandy or pebbly beaches, boardwalks, and getting into a zodiac on Aug 26. The optional walk up Tow Hill is strenuous. Seeing everything requires active participation. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. Prior to Wells Gray accepting your booking, you will be required to sign a declaration that you are capable of travelling on an Activity Level 3 tour.

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**Optional tour to Ninstints on August 23**

Most of August 23 is free time. An optional flight and tour to Ninstints is strongly recommended.

The best preserved of the abandoned Haida villages on Haida Gwaii, Ninstints was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1981. The Haidas deserted Ninstints about 1885 and today the dignified poles along the beach seem like phantoms of the past. Your flight is in a six-passenger Beaver floatplane and takes off from the marina in Queen Charlotte City. The flight lasts about an hour and follows the rugged San Christoval Mountains down the spine of Moresby Island. After landing at a former whaling station at Rose Harbour, you don protective rainwear for the boat ride through Stewart Channel to Anthony Island. During the guided walk among the ruins of old longhouses and tilted totem poles, you should feel the presence of Haida history and culture. Then the boat returns to Rose Harbour and the hour-long flight back to Queen Charlotte City follows a different route along Moresby Island. The total trip time is about 6 hours.

**Fare**: $650 per person plus GST. Includes flight, boat to Ninstints, Haida guide, and Gwaii Haanas National Park fee.

This option must have six people booked to operate. Please book at the same time as the rest of your tour since seats are very limited. It may be possible to add a second plane. If inclement weather occurs and the plane cannot depart, the cost of this option will be refunded.
Haida Gwaii – The Queen Charlotte Islands

Officially renamed from the Queen Charlotte Islands in 2009, Haida Gwaii is an archipelago of more than 150 islands located about 50 miles off the northwest coast of British Columbia. The islands stretch 175 miles from Langara Island at the northwest tip to Kerouard Islands, strung out like a sentinel off the south end. Haida Gwaii is the westernmost point of Canada and is known for its rugged coastlines, majestic mountains, stunning array of marine life, giant cedars and the vibrant Haida culture. About 5,000 people live scattered between several communities on the two largest islands, Graham and Moresby, in an eclectic mix of cultures and lifestyles. The islands enjoy a mild climate with no great extremes in temperature and more sunshine than given credit for.

The Haida have lived there for thousands of years. Their culture is seemingly marked on every tree and rock. Their stories, language and history entwine with Xuya (raven), Taan (bear), Guud (eagle), and Chiina (salmon).

The Islands were discovered by Europeans in 1774. Juan Perez sailed up the west coast looking for new lands to claim for Spain and especially to try to cut off the southern advance of the Russians. The land he spotted was Langara Island and was named Cape Santa Margarita. In 1787, Captain George Dixon realized that these really were a group of islands and not a part of the mainland as earlier believed. In true seafaring tradition, Dixon named them for his ship “Queen Charlotte” which was named for the Queen of England.

Haida Gwaii is nicknamed the Canadian Galapagos, a reference to the diverse natural history of the Galapagos as noted by Charles Darwin in 1859. The isolation of Haida Gwaii and the fact it was not glaciated during the Ice Age has made the islands a showcase of evolution with species found here that are non-existent elsewhere. Several areas have been set aside in their natural condition. Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve is the largest, covering much of the South Moresby area, and was the result of a hard-won battle with forest companies. Naikoon Provincial Park protects the northeast of Graham Island including volcanic Tow Hill, Rose Spit and miles of wilderness beaches.

Flights from Vancouver land at either Masset on Graham Island or Sandspit on Moresby Island and tend to be expensive — it is often cheaper to fly to Toronto than to Haida Gwaii! The ferry Northern Adventure sails from Prince Rupert to Skidegate on Graham Island five days a week in summer and it is usually a six-hour crossing of Hecate Strait. A small ferry connects Skidegate with Alliford Bay on Moresby Island and it is a 20-minute crossing. There is one paved road from Queen Charlotte City to Masset, an extension of Yellowhead Highway #16, and a paved road from Alliford Bay into Sandspit. Otherwise, roads are gravel and many are forest roads with travel restrictions.

Wells Gray has offered tours to Haida Gwaii since 1978. Come and join us in 2016!
Itinerary

Sunday, August 21: Meals: None. We take the 3 pm ferry to Tsawwassen and stay tonight at the Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver Airport.

Monday, August 22: Meals: B, Brunch, D. Our Air Canada flight takes about two hours to Sandspit. Our driver and mini-bus meet us at the airport. Brunch is included in Sandspit, then we take the 12:30 ferry to Graham Island. The afternoon is devoted to the impressive Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay’Inagaay. The original Queen Charlotte Islands Museum was opened on this site in 1976 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Six monumental poles were raised in 2001 to signal the beginning of construction of this world-class cultural centre and, after seven years of construction costing several million dollars, this huge new complex opened to great acclaim in 2008. It tells the story of the Haida Nation and features a large collection of Haida cultural materials and native art. We stay five nights in Queen Charlotte City at Sea Raven Motel while we explore Haida Gwaii.

Tuesday, August 23: Meals: B. Today is the optional, highly-recommended flight to Ninstints (see page 2 for details). Otherwise, the day is free. You may want to go to the Visitor Centre and watch some films there, browse the town’s shops, or book a fishing excursion.

Wednesday, August 24: Meals: B, L. We drive to Masset on the north coast of Graham Island and visit the Haida village of Old Massett including the church and Sarah Davidson’s craft shop selling silver, wood and argillite carvings. Naturalist Andrew Merilees joins us and talks about native culture, natural history, ecology and geology. We drive along the scenic North Beach to Naikoon Provincial Park. You can walk to the top of volcanic Tow Hill for a magnificent view of the coast (and sometimes even Alaska), admire the ocean’s power at The Blowhole, or beachcomb.

Thursday, August 25: Meals: B, L, D. In the arts community of Tlell, we visit several craft shops such as Sitka Studio and Crystal Cabin. A picnic lunch is provided at Tlell Beach where you can enjoy strolling the sand and looking for agates. Stops are made at the extraordinary Balance Rock, St. Mary’s Spring, and the Port Clements Museum. Andrew accompanies us again today while we explore the ecological, cultural and historical aspects of Masset Inlet. A walk on the shoreline is featured, as well as a stroll to the remains of the famous Golden Spruce, felled by a vandal in 1997. Some of the trees seen today are over 500 years old. Tonight, we go to the Keenawil̓iits Kitchen in Skidegate where a Haida member, Roberta Olson, serves a fabulous Haida Feast of dried traditional foods, chowder, smoked salmon, halibut, venison, herring roe on kelp, salad and a berry dessert.

Friday, August 26: Meals: B, L, D. We walk onto the ferry to Moresby Island, then ride in vans on back roads to Moresby Camp at the head of Cumshewa Inlet. This is the farthest point that a road penetrates the South Moresby wilderness and Gwaii Haanas National Park. Here we board large Zodias for an all-day excursion around Louise Island, exploring secluded coves and narrow passages, and watching for wildlife such as seals, sea lions, peregrine falcons and eagles. A stop is made at the native village of Skedans, abandoned over a century ago, where we walk amid standing Haida totem poles. Weather and tides permitting, the return trip goes through Louise Narrows. We ride the ferry back to Graham Island. A farewell dinner is planned tonight.

Saturday, August 27: Meals: B. Our Air Canada flight leaves Sandspit about 10 am to return to Vancouver, then we fly on to Victoria. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of $300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due June 16, 2016.

Cancellation Policy: Up to May 16, your payments are refunded less an administrative charge of $50 per person. From May 17 to June 16, the cancellation charge is $200 per person. From June 17 to July 7, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From July 8 to August 5, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After August 5, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from airlines and other 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 until departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Experience Points: This tour earns 62 points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points. One point equals $1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until June 16.

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