

# VANCOUVER ISLAND FROM TOE TO TIP

Explore Vancouver Island from end to end

May 22, 2020 - 9 Days



## a world to experience



### Fares Per Person:

**\$3165** double/twin

**\$3800** single

**\$2985** triple



> Please add 5% GST.

> **Early Bookers:** \$160 discount on first 10 seats; \$80 on next 6

> **Experience Points:** Earn 74 points from this tour.

Redeem **74 points** if you book by **April 2**.

### Includes

- Coach transportation for 9 days
- 8 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- 2 Strait of Georgia ferry crossings
- Whale watching excursion with Orca Spirit to Race Rocks (south end of Vancouver Island)
- Abkhazi Garden
- Traditional Victoria afternoon tea
- Rath Trevor Beach
- Private charter excursion on MV *Naiad Explorer* to Cape Sutil (north end of Vancouver Island)
- Campbell River Museum
- Local guide in Port Alberni
- Excursion on MV *Frances Barkley* through Alberni Canal to Bamfield
- Ticket to Chemainus Theatre (show TBA)
- Gratuities for ships' crew and Alberni guide
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **19 meals:** 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 1 tea, 4 dinners

### Exploring one of the world's great islands

Vancouver Island is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest island in Canada, stretching 460 km from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Queen Charlotte Sound. Named for Captain George Vancouver who explored B.C.'s coast in 1792, the island has great diversity ranging from the capital city of Victoria to remote mountain peaks in Strathcona Park, and from the wild wind-lashed beaches of the west coast to the sandy expanse of Rath Trevor Beach. Only a handful of people have travelled from toe to tip and experienced both ends of Vancouver Island: Race Rocks off Victoria and Cape Sutil (not Cape Scott) north of Port Hardy. There are no roads to either place, so we have chartered vessels to get you there. A third boat excursion is on the MV *Frances Barkley* on its scheduled sailing through Alberni Canal to the village of Bamfield in Barkley Sound. In between the toe and tip, there is so much to see and do on the Island that a month would not be long enough, but we have picked some highlights for this nine-day tour that are well-known and less-known. Come and explore Vancouver Island!

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## Highlights

### Victoria

**Whale watching excursion to Race Rocks  
(south toe of Vancouver Island)**

**Abkhazi Garden with afternoon tea**

**Rath Trevor Beach**

**Coombs Market & Cathedral Grove**

**Kingfisher Oceanside Resort**

### Campbell River Museum

**Cruise from Port McNeill to Cape Sutil  
(north tip of Vancouver Island)**

**Little Qualicum Falls**

**Englishman River Falls**

**Excursion on *Frances Barkley* to Bamfield**

**Chemainus Theatre**

## Itinerary

### Friday, May 22:

*Meals: D*

We take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. Enjoy the extensive Pacific Dinner Buffet during the crossing. (Note: Most ferries on this route offer the buffet, but an alternative will be arranged if there is a ship change.) We stay two nights at downtown **Chateau Victoria** which has a great location near the Inner Harbour.

### Saturday, May 23:

*Meals: B, Tea*

During the morning, we take a boat excursion with Orca Spirit Adventures looking for whales off the coast of Victoria. Another reason is to cruise past the southernmost point of Vancouver Island (the toe) at **Race Rocks**. This protected area is home to plenty of marine wildlife and birds, and is dominated by a lighthouse built in 1860. Later, we visit one of Victoria's lesser-known beauty-spots, **Abkhazi Gardens**. This was the home of Prince Nicholas Abkhazi and his wife Peggy who came to Canada from Georgia (Russia) in 1946 and created these gardens with majestic trees and a dramatic location. A traditional **Afternoon Tea** is served in their modest home.

### Sunday, May 24:

*Meals: B,L,D*

We start our journey up Vancouver Island and, during the next week, enjoy unique experiences along the entire 460-kilometre length of one of the world's great islands. We follow the scenic Malahat Drive north, passing through **Nanaimo**. Take a stroll on the broad sandy Rath Trevor Beach at Parksville. We stay overnight at the **Kingfisher Oceanside Resort**, nestled in a coastal forest on the east shore of Vancouver Island near Courtenay. All our rooms offer wonderful ocean views. Savour the luxury of the Pacific Mist Spa where therapies focus on the rich ingredients of the sea, leaving you feeling completely relaxed and renewed.

### Monday, May 25:

*Meals: B,L*

We stop at the Campbell River Museum which offers an interesting film about the Ripple Rock explosion in 1958. We drive north to **Port McNeill** and stay two nights at the Haida Way Motor Inn.

### Tuesday, May 26:

*Meals: B,L*

We board the 17-metre **Naiad Explorer** at Port McNeill for a five-hour private charter looking for orca and minke whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins, Dall's porpoises, Steller sea lions, and a great variety of sea birds. The vessel is equipped with a hydrophone (an underwater microphone), so we can listen to the whales' vocalizations. The trip is hosted by the Mackay family who are pioneers in the whale watching industry. With a cruising speed of 30 knots, the *Naiad* is a very fast vessel and is capable of travelling great distances in a day. The voyage goes past Port Hardy at the end of the Island Highway, then through Goletas Channel to **Cape Sutil**. This is the northernmost tip of Vancouver Island where the Pacific Ocean meets Queen Charlotte Strait. Although less known than Cape Scott (the northwest point of the island), Cape Sutil is the appropriate destination of a tour like this that travels Vancouver Island from toe to tip. Cape Sutil was first mapped in 1792 by the Spanish captains Galiano and Valdes, and named for their ship. The *Naiad* also explores the shores of Hope Island and Nigel Island before returning to Port McNeill.

### Wednesday, May 27:

*Meals: B,L*

Having reached the north tip of Vancouver Island, we start heading south with some different experiences included. There is a shopping opportunity at unique **Coombs Market**, known for its goats grazing on the roof, and we take a walk to see Little Qualicum Falls. In **Port Alberni**, a local guide leads a driving and walking tour. We stay two nights at the Best Western Barclay Inn.

**Thursday, May 28:***Meals: B,L,D*

On board the **MV Frances Barkley**, we cruise 40-km long **Alberni Canal**, the longest fjord on Vancouver Island. After it widens into Barkley Sound, the ship weaves through a maze of little islands, some protected by Pacific Rim National Park. We dock at **Bamfield** for an hour, giving time to explore the historic buildings. The cable station, designed by Francis Rattenbury, opened in 1902 when Bamfield became the terminus for the trans-Pacific telegraph cable. The *Frances Barkley* is a heritage vessel, built in Norway in 1958, then she sailed through the Panama Canal in 1990 to her new home. There she joined the famous *Lady Rose* (now retired) providing service to Bamfield, Ucluelet, and Barkley Sound. Today's cruise leaves Port Alberni at 8 am and returns at 5 pm.

**Friday, May 29:***Meals: B,L,D*

We return to the east coast of Vancouver Island, stopping at **Cathedral Grove** for a stroll among towering trees and at Englishman River Falls. On arrival in Chemainus, browse the shops and admire the colourful murals. Enjoy the sumptuous buffet dinner at **Chemainus Theatre**, followed by the evening show. The 2020 season will be announced in November.

**Saturday, May 30:***Meals: B*

We take the 10:15 am ferry from Duke Point to Tsawwassen.



**Activity Level:** Moderate activity on some days including short distances to walk and some stairs or gangways getting on and off the three vessels. There are optional walks at Little Qualicum Falls, Cathedral Grove, and Englishman River Falls, all fairly level. The ramps to the boat docks may be steep at low tide. Seeing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires participation at Activity Level 2. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coach cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

**Tour Policies**

**Payments:** A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due April 2, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Discounts:** Early bookers receive \$160 discount on first 10 seats and \$80 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after April 2.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to March 2, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From March 3 to April 2, the cancellation charge is \$200 per person. From April 3 to April 21, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After April 21, there is no refund.

**Fare Changes:** Changes to taxes 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 the time of 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.

**Home pickups** are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of \$40 per person round trip. This provides transportation to a point where you meet the coach from the BC Interior. Please request no later than at final payment.

**Photo Credit:** Lady Rose Marine Services (*MV Frances Barkley*)

**e-points:** This tour earns 74 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until April 2.

**Consumer Protection BC Licences:** Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842