

HAIDA GWAII #4

Our 42nd year of tours to the Queen Charlotte Islands

August 6, 2020 - 7 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$3270 double/twin

\$3660 single

\$3165 triple



tour
25
a more intimate travel experience

> Please add 5% GST.

> **BC Seniors (65 & over):** \$6 discount with BC Services Card

> **Experience Points:** Earn 78 points from this tour.

Redeem **78 points** if you book by **May 5**.

Includes

- Coach transportation from Kamloops and Okanagan to Vancouver Airport
- Air Canada flight from Vancouver to Sandspit
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- 6 days of mini-bus travel on Haida Gwaii
- 6 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Ferry from Moresby Island to Graham Island and return
- Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay'llnagaay with Haida guide
- Haida Feast with visit to a Skidegate home
- Haida Gwaii guide for 1 day
- Naikoon Provincial Park fee
- Balance Rock
- Port Clements Museum
- Zodiac tour around Louise Island to Skedans
- Skedans Village Watchman fee
- Gratuities for Haida Gwaii guides, zodiac pilots, and mini-bus drivers
- Air Canada flight from Sandspit to Kelowna or Kamloops
- Transfer from Kelowna airport to home cities
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **14 meals:** 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 3 dinners

Kamloops > 250-374-0831
Kelowna > 250-762-3435
www.wellsgraytours.com

Penticton > 250-493-1255
Vernon > 250-545-9197
Toll Free > 800-667-9552



Tour Notes

Flights are on Air Canada from Vancouver to Sandspit and return to Kelowna. Flights were booked in September 2019, but airline schedules could change prior to tour departure. All air transportation taxes and security fees in effect in October 2019 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 8:30 am and a same-day connection could be risky.


Mini-bus transportation: There are no full-size motorcoaches on Haida Gwaii. Your transportation is in a 23-passenger mini-bus, operated by Eagle Transit based on Haida Gwaii. 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 the Village of Queen Charlotte and Masset. Wells Gray Tours books rooms 1½ years in advance to ensure availability. Please do not expect deluxe lodging on Haida Gwaii. This tour stays four nights at the Sea Raven Motel in Queen Charlotte and one night at the Sandspit Inn. 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 at either hotel.

Airline luggage fees are not included as Air Canada requires these to be paid individually at the airport. Cost is about \$30 for one suitcase each way.

Identification: You must bring government-issued photo ID with you, such as a passport or BC Services Card / Driver's Licence. 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. Early booking is strongly recommended as all six Haida Gwaii tours in 2019 were sold out long before departure.

 **Activity Level 3:** Tour includes walking over uneven surfaces, some steep terrain, stairs, sandy or pebbly beaches, boardwalks, and riding in a zodiac. 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. 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.

Optional tour to Ninstints (SGang Gwaay) on August 9

Most of August 9 is free time. An optional flight and tour to Ninstints is recommended.

Ninstints, known by the Haidas as SGang Gwaay, is the best preserved of the abandoned Haida villages and 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 the Village of Queen Charlotte. The flight lasts about an hour and follows the rugged San Christoval Mountains down the spine of Moresby Island into Gwaii Haanas National Park. After landing at Rose Harbour, a former whaling station, you don protective gear 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 follows a different route along Moresby Island. The total trip time is about 6 hours. The route is weather dependent.

Two planes are scheduled, morning and afternoon, and each plane must have five people booked to operate. Please sign up for this option at the same time as the rest of your tour since there are only 10 seats available. It is not possible to add a third plane. If inclement weather occurs and the plane cannot depart, the cost of this option will be refunded.

Fare: \$720 per person plus GST. Includes flight, boat to/from Ninstints, Haida guide, and Gwaii Haanas National Park fee.

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 80 km off the northwest coast of British Columbia. The islands stretch nearly 300 km 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 residents are 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 Haidas 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 to Masset, an extension of Yellowhead Highway #16, and a paved road from Alliford Bay into Sandspit. Otherwise, roads are gravel and many are forestry roads with travel restrictions.

Wells Gray has offered tours to Haida Gwaii every year since 1978. We hope you can join us in 2020 while we celebrate our 42nd year of tours to these amazing islands!

Itinerary

Thursday, August 6:

Meals: L

We drive to Vancouver and stay overnight at the Pacific Gateway Hotel near Vancouver Airport.

Friday, August 7:

Meals: B,L,D

Our Air Canada flight takes two hours to **Sandspit**. Our mini-bus meets us at the airport, then we take the 12:30 ferry to Graham Island. The afternoon is devoted to the impressive **Haida Heritage Centre** at Kaay'llnagaay. 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 four nights in **Queen Charlotte** at the Sea Raven Motel.

Saturday, August 8:

Meals: B,L

A local guide joins us for the day. We drive to Massett 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. 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 Alaska), admire the ocean's power at the Blowhole, or search for treasures along Agate Beach.

Sunday, August 9:

Meals: B

Today is the optional, highly-recommended flight to **Ninstints**, known in Haida as SGang Gwaay (see page 2 for details). Otherwise, the day is at leisure. You may want to go to the Visitor Centre and

watch some films there, browse the town's shops, book a fishing excursion, or rent a kayak or bicycle.

Monday, August 10:

Meals: B,L,D

In the arts community of **Tlell**, we visit two interesting craft shops. Other stops are made at extraordinary **Balance Rock**, St. Mary's Spring, and the Port Clements Museum. Two walks are featured today: Masset Inlet Shoreline Trail and the remains of the famous **Golden Spruce**, felled by a vandal in 1997. Some trees seen today are over 500 years old. Tonight, we go to the Keenawii's Kitchen in Skidegate where a Haida member, Roberta Olson, serves a fabulous **Haida Feast** in her home. Savour traditional foods, possibly consisting of smoked salmon, halibut, venison, herring roe on kelp, salad, and a berry dessert (the menu may change).

Tuesday, August 11:

Meals: B,L,D

We take 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. Here we board large Zodiacs 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 **Skedans**, a village 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 stay overnight at the Sandspit Inn next to the airport.

Wednesday, August 12:

Meals: B

Our Air Canada flight leaves Sandspit at 11 am to return to Vancouver, then we fly on to Kelowna or Kamloops. Transfers are provided to home cities.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due May 5, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: BC seniors (65 & over) receive \$6 discount extended by BC Ferries, so you must bring your BC Services Card.

Cancellation Policy: Up to April 3, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From April 4 to May 5, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From May 6 to June 5, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From June 6 to July 3, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After July 3, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from the airline 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.

Photo Credit: Marion Wienhold (Ninstints totem poles)

e-points: This tour earns 78 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 May 5.

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



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This tour is rated “Activity Level 3” by the tour planners at Wells Gray Tours. This rating is the highest activity level assigned to a tour, meaning that there is a lot of activity which could include one or more of (but is not limited to) the following:

- **You can walk 3 kilometres in 1 hour.**
- **You can climb into and out of a small boat or zodiac.**
- **You can walk on beaches with sand or rock, and on boardwalks that may be wet or slippery.**
- **You can climb one flight of stairs to your motel rooms on Haida Gwaii.**
- **You can carry your own luggage in airports.**

Since a few people who are not capable of doing the above activities can hold up the entire group, Wells Gray Tours expects everybody booking a tour with “Activity Level 3” to be reasonably fit. You must be able to participate in activities without the assistance of the tour director, driver or other travellers.

Please read the following and sign acknowledging that these statements are true. The tour deposit will be due after you have signed this statement.

- **I want to travel on a Wells Gray tour with a rating of “Activity Level 3”.**
- **I have read the brochure with the full itinerary and description of the activities that are typical on this tour.**
- **I understand that this is the highest activity level that a Wells Gray tour can be rated.**
- **I am confident that I can participate in tour activities at this level and I will not hold up or delay the other members of the tour.**
- **I do not require the use of a wheelchair or a walker.**
- **If my physical condition changes between booking and departure date such that I can no longer do this level of activity, I will notify the Wells Gray office or agent. The specified penalties will apply for cancelling and travel insurance may cover this.**
- **If I am not capable of keeping up with the group or I require frequent assistance, I understand that the Wells Gray tour director has the right to not allow me to participate in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, I acknowledge that I may be required to leave the tour and travel home at my own expense, and that travel insurance will probably not cover me.**

This statement has been implemented by Wells Gray Tours to maintain high quality itineraries, accurate timing, and the enjoyment of all tour participants. Each person booking this tour must sign this statement. Thank you for your understanding.

Signature _____ Name _____ Date _____