



Naiad Explorer

**WELLS GRAY TOURS**  
a world to experience



Cathedral Grove

## VANCOUVER ISLAND FROM TOE TO TIP

September 12, 2021 – 8 Days

*Explore one of the world's great islands  
from end to end.*

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 *MV Frances Barkley* on its scheduled sailing 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 8-day tour that are well-known and less-known. Come and explore Vancouver Island!

Activity Level: 2



17 Meals Included:

7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 1 tea, 3 dinners

Fares per person:

\$2,995 double/twin; \$3,535 single; \$2,845 triple  
Please add 5% GST.

Experience Points:

Earn 74 points on this tour.

Redeem 74 points if you book by July 28, 2021.

Departures from: Victoria



Whale watching near Race Rocks

## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Sunday, September 12

We meet the Wells Gray travellers from the BC Interior at Chateau Victoria. This 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 Garden**. 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.



**Meals included:** Tea

**Accommodation:** Chateau Victoria

### Day 2: Monday, September 13

Breakfast is served in Vista 18 atop the hotel with a wonderful view. 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 **Rathrevor Beach** at Parksville. In **Port Alberni**, a local guide leads a driving and walking tour, and we stay two nights.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Best Western Barclay Inn

### Day 3: Tuesday, September 14

On board the **MV Frances Barkley**, we cruise 40-km long Alberni Inlet, 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. *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.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Best Western Barclay Inn

### Day 4: Wednesday, September 15

We return to the east coast of Vancouver Island, stopping at **Cathedral Grove** for a stroll among towering trees and at Englishman River Falls for a delightful forest walk to the bridge overlooking the falls. We continue north on the Island Highway and stay two nights in **Port McNeill**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Haida Way Motor Inn

### Day 5: Thursday, September 16

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 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.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Haida Way Motor Inn

### Day 6: Friday, September 17

Having reached the north tip of Vancouver Island, we start heading south. We visit the Campbell River Museum which offers an interesting film about the Ripple Rock explosion in 1958. We stay overnight at **Painter's Lodge** in Campbell River. In the 1920s, salmon fishing in the area had become so popular that tent colonies had sprung up at the mouth of the Campbell River. E.P. Painter, a boat builder by trade, arrived in 1922 and, seeing the need for better accommodation for sport fishermen, opened his Painter's Lodge in 1929. It attracted clientele from Hollywood and regular patrons included Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, John Wayne, and Susan Hayward. The lodge burned down in 1985 and was soon rebuilt.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Painter's Lodge



### Day 7: Saturday, September 18

We stop at Little Qualicum Falls, followed by time for shopping at unique Coombs Market, known for its goats grazing on the roof. On arrival in Chemainus, browse the shops and admire the colourful murals. Dinner and a show are planned at **Chemainus Theatre**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Chemainus Festival Inn



### Day 8: Sunday, September 19

A transfer is provided from Chemainus to your pickup point in Victoria.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 7 days
- 7 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Whale watching excursion with Orca Spirit to Race Rocks (south end of Vancouver Island)
- Abkhazi Garden
- Traditional Victoria afternoon tea
- Local guide in Port Alberni
- Excursion on *MV Frances Barkley* through Alberni Inlet to Bamfield
- Private charter excursion on *MV Naiad Explorer* to Cape Sutil (north end of Vancouver Island)
- Campbell River Museum
- Ticket to Chemainus Theatre (show TBA)
- Transfer from Chemainus to Victoria
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Gratuities for ships' crew and Alberni guide
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **17 meals:** 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 1 tea, 3 dinners

## TOUR NOTES



**Activity Level 2:** 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. There is no elevator to the second floor at Haida Way Motor Inn. 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 or motorized wheelchair. 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 tour days. 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.

**Maximum 32:** This tour is limited to 32 travellers due to the capacity of the Cape Sutil vessel.

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## TOUR POLICIES

**Payments:** A deposit of \$200 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 28, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to June 28, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From June 29 to July 28, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From July 29 to August 10, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After August 10, 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 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.

**Home pickups** may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

**Photo Credits:** MacKay Whale Watching (*Naiad*), Wikimedia Commons (Cathedral Grove, Little Qualicum Falls), Orca Spirit Adventures (whales), Roland Neave (tea), Lady Rose Marine Services (*Frances Barkley*), Painter's Lodge

**Experience 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 July 28, 2021.

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

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