



Naiad Explorer

WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience



Cathedral Grove

VANCOUVER ISLAND FROM TOE TO TIP

May 14, 2022 – 9 Days

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

Vancouver Island is the 11th 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 9-day tour that are well-known and less-known. Come and explore Vancouver Island!

Activity Level: 2



16 Meals Included:

8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

\$3,165 double/twin; \$3,810 single; \$2,965 triple
Please add 5% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$160 discount on first 10 seats; \$80 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 73 points on this tour.

Redeem 73 points if you book by March 30, 2022.

Departure from: BC Interior



Whale watching near Race Rocks

ITINERARY

Day 1: Saturday, May 14

After driving to the Coast, we take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. We stay two nights at Chateau Victoria which has a fine location downtown close to the Inner Harbour.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Day 2: Sunday, May 15

Breakfast is served today and tomorrow in Vista 18 atop the hotel with a wonderful view. We meet the Wells Gray travellers from Victoria, then 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. Our lunch is served in their modest home.



Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Day 3: Monday, May 16

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 featuring the McLean Mill National Historic Site.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Best Western Barclay Inn

Day 4: Tuesday, May 17

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 5: Wednesday, May 18

We return to the east coast of Vancouver Island, stopping at **Cathedral Grove** for a stroll among towering trees and at Little Qualicum Falls. We continue north on the Island Highway and stay two nights in **Port McNeill**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Haida Way Motor Inn

Day 6: Thursday, May 19

We board the ***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 7: Friday, May 20

Having reached the north tip of Vancouver Island, we start heading south. In Campbell River, we meet our guide and historian, Catherine Gilbert, who provides interpretive talks and walks during an afternoon tour of **Strathcona Park**. This was British Columbia's first provincial park, established in 1911, and it protects the rugged peaks of central Vancouver Island. We take a short walk in the forest to see Lupin Falls and stroll a beach on Buttle Lake. We stay a night in Campbell River.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Comfort Inn

Day 8: Saturday, May 21

We visit the Campbell River Museum which offers an interesting film about the Ripple Rock explosion in 1958. Enjoy a shopping opportunity at unique **Coombs Market**, known for its goats grazing on the roof, then take a delightful forest walk to the bridge overlooking Englishman River Falls. On arrival in Chemainus, browse the shops and admire the colourful murals. Dinner and a show are planned at **Chemainus Theatre**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Best Western Chemainus Inn



Day 9: Sunday, May 22

We take the 10:15 am ferry from Duke Point to Tsawwassen, then travel home to the Okanagan, Kamloops, and Salmon Arm.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 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
- Rathtrevor Beach
- Local guide in Port Alberni
- McLean Mill National Historic Site
- Excursion on *MV Frances Barkley* through Alberni Canal to Bamfield
- Private charter excursion on *MV Naiad Explorer* to Cape Sutil (north end of Vancouver Island)
- Locally-guided tour of Strathcona Park
- Campbell River Museum
- Ticket to Chemainus Theatre (show TBA)
- Gratuities for ships' crew and local guides
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **16 meals:** 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 2 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 upper floor at Haida Way Motor Inn. If the Haida Way restaurant is closed in 2022, there is a 10-minute walk to restaurants in Port McNeill. 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 Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you are urged to 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.

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

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$200 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due March 30, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to February 28, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From March 1 to March 30, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From March 31 to April 13, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After April 13, 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.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to some remote places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

Photo Credits: MacKay Whale Watching (*Naiad*), Wikimedia Commons (Cathedral Grove, Coombs Market), Orca Spirit Adventures (whales), Roland Neave (tea), Lady Rose Marine Services (*Frances Barkley*)

Experience Points: This tour earns 73 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 March 30, 2022.

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

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