



## HAIDA GWAI

August 1, 2023 – 6 Days

*Our 45<sup>th</sup> year of tours to these amazing islands off B.C.'s northwest coast!*

Formerly called the Queen Charlotte Islands until 2010, Haida Gwaii is an archipelago of more than 150 islands located about 80 km off the northwest coast of British Columbia. Haida Gwaii is the westernmost point of Canada and is known for its vibrant Haida culture, rugged coastlines, majestic mountains, stunning array of marine life, and giant old-growth cedars. One of the outstanding experiences is a Zodiac tour around Louise Island stopping at the abandoned Haida village of Skedans. Other highlights include: the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay'lnagaay, Tow Hill with its Blowhole, Balance Rock, Port Clements Museum, a studio and artisan tour, and a fabulous traditional Haida Feast.

Activity Level: 3



TOUR  
25

11 Meals Included:

5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

Standard room: \$3,645 double/twin; \$3,920 single

Oceanview room: \$3,750 double/twin; \$4,125 single

Please add 5% GST.

Experience Points:

Earn 73 points on this tour.

Redeem 73 points if you book by April 25, 2023.

Departure from: Victoria, Nanaimo, Comox & area



## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Tuesday, August 1

A transfer is provided to Victoria Airport. We fly on Pacific Coastal Airlines direct to **Sandspit** on Moresby Island. A mini-bus meets us at the airport, then we ride the ferry to Graham Island. We stay five nights in **Daajing Giids**, formerly Village of Queen Charlotte. Check out the Visitor Centre, browse the shops, or rent a kayak or bicycle. Tonight, we go to Keenawaii'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).

**Meals included:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Sea Raven Motel

### Day 2: Wednesday, August 2

The day is devoted to the **Haida Heritage Centre** at Kaay'llnagaay, an impressive structure at Skidegate. 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 this multi-million dollar 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. Two programs are offered, conducted by Haida guides, the Outdoor Pole tour and Indoor tour.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Sea Raven Motel

### Day 3: Thursday, August 3

A local guide joins us for the day. We drive to Masset on the north coast of Graham Island and visit the **Haida village of Old Massett**. The tour visits several totem poles including the 16-metre tall pole raised by carver Kihlyahda Christian White in 2022. Nearby is Sarah Davidson's craft shop selling silver, wood, and argillite carvings. This afternoon, we drive along the scenic North Beach to **Naikoon Provincial Park**. You can hike to the top of volcanic Tow Hill for a magnificent view of the coast (and sometimes Alaska), admire the ocean's power if the **Blowhole** erupts, and search for agates along the beach.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Sea Raven Motel



### Day 4: Friday, August 4

We take the ferry to Moresby Island, then ride in vans on back roads to Cumshewa Inlet. This is the farthest point that a road penetrates the South Moresby wilderness which is mostly protected by Gwaii Haanas National Park. Here we board large Zodiacs for an 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.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Sea Raven Motel

### Day 5: Saturday, August 5

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. We see some trees that are over 500 years old.

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

**Accommodation:** Sea Raven Motel

### Day 6: Sunday, August 6

We fly from Sandspit to Victoria non-stop on Pacific Coastal Airlines. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to/from Victoria Airport
  - Pacific Coastal flight from Victoria to Sandspit
  - Current air transport taxes and security fees
  - 5 days of mini-bus travel on Haida Gwaii
  - 5 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
  - Ferry between Moresby and Graham Islands four times
  - Haida Feast with visit to a Skidegate home
  - Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay'llnagaay with Haida guide and 2 interpretive programs
  - Haida Gwaii local guide for a day
  - Naikoon Provincial Park fee
  - Zodiac tour around Louise Island to Skedans
  - Skedans Village Watchman fee
  - Gwaii Haanas National Park fee
  - Balance Rock
  - Port Clements Museum
  - Pacific Coastal flight from Sandspit to Victoria
  - Knowledgeable tour director
  - Gratuities for Haida Gwaii guide, Zodiac pilot, and drivers
  - Luggage handling at motel
  - **11 meals:** 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners
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## HAIDA GWAI

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 the Kerouard Islands, strung out like a sentinel off the south end. Haida Gwaii is the westernmost point of Canada and is known for its vibrant Haida culture, rugged coastlines, majestic mountains, stunning array of marine life, and giant cedars. 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 islands form the heartland of the Haida Nation, upon which people have lived for 13,000 years, and who currently make up about half of the population. The Haida exercise their sovereignty over the islands through their acting government, the Council of the Haida Nation. 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 Haida have been reclaiming their culture for the last 30 years and have many achievements such as the Heritage Centre, a national park to replace the logging industry, new monumental poles being raised, and repatriation of artifacts removed by early explorers.

The Islands were first visited by Europeans in 1774. Juan Perez sailed up the west coast looking for new lands to claim for Spain and trying to cut off the southern advance of the Russians. The land he spotted was Langara Island but named Cape Santa Margarita. In 1787, Captain George Dixon realized that these were islands and not part of the mainland as earlier believed. In true seafaring tradition, Dixon named the islands for his ship *Queen Charlotte* which honoured the wife of King George III. In 2010, the Queen Charlotte Islands were officially renamed Haida Gwaii, meaning "Islands of the Haida people".

Haida Gwaii has fascinated biologists for over a century. The islands were not glaciated during the Ice Age and are very isolated, so they have become 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 is the largest, covering half of Moresby Island, and resulted from 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.

Wells Gray has offered tours to Haida Gwaii every year since 1978. We hope you can join us in 2023 which will be our 45<sup>th</sup> year of arranging tours to these amazing islands!

## TOUR NOTES

**Flights** are on Pacific Coastal Airlines from Victoria to Sandspit and return. Wells Gray has arranged a charter, so this is a non-stop flight in a 19-passenger Beechcraft. All current air transportation taxes and security fees are included in the tour price, but these could change even after final tour payment, in which case a fare adjustment will be made.

**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 Daajing Giids and Masset. Wells Gray Tours books rooms two years in advance to ensure availability during the summer season. This tour stays five nights at the Sea Raven Motel in Daajing Giids. The motel offers standard rooms which are very basic or oceanview rooms for a surcharge. There is no elevator to the second floor. If you expect deluxe lodging while travelling, this tour may not be appropriate for your needs. Rooms are certainly not up to the standard that Wells Gray uses in the rest of British Columbia, but they are the only rooms available for a group tour.

**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 Pacific Coastal flights.



This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of the tour is limited to 25 participants or less, a more intimate travel experience. For this tour, capacity is actually 19 due to the size of the aircraft and the visitor limit imposed at Skedans. Early booking is strongly recommended as five tours each year pre-Covid were typically sold out long before departure.



**Activity Level 3:** Tour includes walking over uneven surfaces, some steep terrain, stairs, sandy or pebbly beaches, and boardwalks that may be slippery. The optional hike up Tow Hill is strenuous. The Zodiac trip to Skedans may experience rough water, but most of the route is through sheltered waterways. Getting in and out of the Zodiac may be challenging for some. 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 able to keep 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.

**Nanaimo, Comox, Courtenay & area clients:** You can easily join this tour. We will pick you up on July 31 in your home city and drive you to Victoria. You can book your own hotel room or we can arrange a room at Chateau Victoria at your expense. We will drive you back to your home city on the afternoon of August 6. Fares are the same as shown on the first page.

## TOUR POLICIES

**Payments:** A deposit of \$400 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due April 25, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking, cheque, Visa or Mastercard.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to March 24, 2023, your payments will be refunded less a fee of \$100 per person. From March 25 to April 25, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From April 26 to May 25, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From May 26 to June 23, the cancellation charge is 80% of tour fare. After June 23, there is no refund.

**Itinerary and Fare Changes:** As the world emerges from the pandemic, many of our suppliers such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers are struggling with shortage of staff, inflated costs, and supply line challenges. Sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a tour component due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

**Food Allergies:** You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Restaurants on Haida Gwaii may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. As restaurants recover from two years of pandemic restrictions, many facing severe labour shortages, we have been informed that food allergies should be honoured, but it is impossible to handle everybody's requests for food preferences. (An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.) For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

**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 Credits:** Adobe Stock (longhouse, boardwalk, canoe), Roland Neave (Tow Hill, Balance Rock), Haida Gwaii Tourism (zodiac), Moresby Explorers (Skedans)

**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 April 25, 2023.

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

### VICTORIA

102-736 Broughton St.  
Victoria, BC V8W 1E1  
250-590-7889

### KAMLOOPS

(Head Office)  
250 Lansdowne St.  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1X7  
250-374-0831

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[www.wellsgraytours.com](http://www.wellsgraytours.com)

1-800-667-9552



# HAIDA GWAI — August 1, 2023

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 Zodiac with assistance from crew.
- 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 room 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 \_\_\_\_\_