



VANCOUVER ISLAND WITH SMALL SHIPS

September 12, 2023 – 5 Days

*Includes MV Uchuck to Nootka Sound and
whale watching at Telegraph Cove*

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 narrow fjords that slice into the west coast to secluded harbours like Telegraph Cove. To explore northern Vancouver Island properly, you have to get out of your car (or coach) and head out on the water. This tour features 2 excursions on small ships – the *MV Uchuck III* to Nootka Sound and a whale-watching excursion at Telegraph Cove.

Activity Level: 2



11 Meals Included:

4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners

Fares per person:

\$2,145 double/twin; \$2,735 single; \$1,995 triple
Please add 5% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$120 discount on first 8 seats; \$60 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 51 points after this tour returns.

Departures from: Victoria, Nanaimo & Comox areas



ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, September 12

After pickups around Greater Victoria, we drive north on the Island Highway with a stop at **Coombs Market** for lunch and shopping. We stay in Campbell River for two nights.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Comfort Inn Campbell River

Day 2: Wednesday, September 13

We meet our guide and historian, Catherine Gilbert, who provides interpretive talks during the drive through Strathcona Park. This was British Columbia's first provincial park, established in 1911, and it protects the rugged peaks of central Vancouver Island. At Gold River, we board the **MV Uchuck III** for a six-hour cruise with splendid coastal scenery. Our route follows the fjord Muchalat Inlet past Bligh Island, named for the *Mutiny on the Bounty* captain who was in these waters with Captain George Vancouver in 1792. In Nootka Sound, we dock at **Friendly Cove**, site of Captain James Cook's meeting with Chief Maquinna in 1778. Lunch is included on the ship. During the three-hour stop, you can take a walk through the village and church, stroll the beach, or visit the lighthouse. Catherine is with us on the *Uchuck* to talk about the significant historical events at Nootka Sound and First Nations culture. The return cruise goes past Resolution Cove and through narrow King Passage.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Comfort Inn Campbell River

Day 3: Thursday, September 14

There is an optional trip for active walkers to the **Elk Falls Suspension Bridge** which spans the Quinsam River canyon below the falls at a height of 64 metres. The walk is 4 km round trip with several flights of stairs. In the afternoon, we continue up-Island to **Telegraph Cove**, a charming village surrounding a narrow harbour. This was the northern terminus of the telegraph line built on Vancouver Island in 1912. A sawmill and commercial fishery supported the village for many years, but 30 years ago it transitioned into tourism. Telegraph Cove Resort owns most of the village and has renovated the old buildings into lodging, restaurant, shops, and a museum. Whale-watching cruises



are the big draw with Robson Bight located nearby. Our accommodation is in two buildings, the Lodge and the Dockside. A welcome dinner is at the Whale Café on the waterfront.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Telegraph Cove Resort

Day 4: Friday, September 15

Be sure to visit the **Whale Interpretive Centre** on Telegraph Cove's boardwalk. It was founded in 2002 to increase public awareness about the biology of marine mammals and the threats facing their populations. The Centre is home to one of the best collections of marine mammal skeletons in British Columbia. The exhibits focus on orca whales, fin whales, humpback whales, and sea otters. There are also several shops to browse nearby. This afternoon, we board a 70-person semi-covered vessel for a three-hour fully-guided **whale and marine wildlife viewing** excursion. We head out into Johnstone Strait and navigate the Broughton archipelago in search of orcas and humpback whales. Marine mammal experts are on board to bring the animals' stories to life from the comfort of the cruiser.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Telegraph Cove Resort

Day 5: Saturday, September 16

We drive back to Victoria along the Island Highway.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

MV UCHUCK III

MV Uchuck III derives her name from the First Nations Nootkan word for “healing waters” and has been serving the west coast of Vancouver Island area for nearly 70 years. She was built in 1942 in Oregon as a minesweeper, then was converted to passenger and freight service in Barkley Sound. By 1961, she was operating in Nootka Sound, supplying remote logging camps and fishing villages. More recently, *Uchuck III* was fully renovated with a comfortable wood-finished lounge, coffee shop, bathrooms, and lots of seating on the open-air upper deck. She is 41 metres long and carries up to 100 passengers on cruises in Nootka Sound and nearby waterways.


WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 5 days
- 4 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Cruise on *MV Uchuck III* in Nootka Sound
- Local guide / historian on board *Uchuck* and in Strathcona Park
- Elk Falls Suspension Bridge
- Whale Interpretive Centre
- Whale-watching excursion at Telegraph Cove
- Gratuities for local guide and crew on ships
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **11 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners



TOUR NOTES

Nanaimo, Comox, Courtenay & area clients: You can easily join this tour. We will pick you up on September 12 in your home city and drop you off on September 16.

 **Activity Level 2:** Moderate activity on some days including short distances to walk and some stairs or gangways getting on and off the vessels. The ramps to the boat docks may be steep at low tide. Elk Falls Suspension Bridge is a 4-km walk round trip with some stairs. A small shuttle is available at Telegraph Cove between the Lodge rooms and the dock where the restaurant, shops, and boat are located, or you can walk (about 10 mins). Telegraph Cove is a compact village with a boardwalk that accesses businesses, and the coach cannot drive there. The coach and boats cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. **Everybody** participating in this tour is expected to be capable of handling Activity Level 2. 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.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$200 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due July 12, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$120 discount on first 8 seats and \$60 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 12, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to July 12, 2023, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From July 13 to August 11, the cancellation charge is 60% of the tour fare. After August 11, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, 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.

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 remote places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. Please do not tell us about your food preferences, as restaurants ignore these requests. 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.

Photo Credits: Telegraph Cove Resort, Tourism Vancouver Island (whales), Whale Interpretive Centre, Wikimedia (Elk Falls), Roland Neave (Uchuck)

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 51 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until July 12, 2023.

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

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
1-800-667-9552