



## Delicious Vancouver Island Food Tour

With over 2,600 working farms on Vancouver Island, local fare is never far away. And, with a coastline that stretches over 3,340 km, the freshest seafood is practically on your plate! Join this escorted culinary tour to taste the many delights on offer on Vancouver Island.



7 days/6 nights

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Arrive Victoria

You may arrive into Victoria anytime today, preferably by mid- afternoon, and make your own way to the hotel for check-in. The escorted program begins with a group briefing in the lobby of our hotel and then we'll go for a short walk with the Tour Leader to our welcome dinner at the Blue Crab Sea Food Restaurant.

Overnight: Victoria / Meals: Dinner

Just about every community on the Island has at least one Farmer's Market, a place to find local produce, fresh dairy, herbs, spices, and baked goods. Some of the markets have over 100 vendors, offering a variety of edibles, crafts, and delicious treats to provide you the sustenance you need to keep shopping and exploring.

There are over forty different wineries, breweries, cideries, and meaderies in the Cowichan Valley and south Island. Artisan winemakers and brew masters have discovered that the Island's temperate climate and crystal clear waters create the perfect recipe for a diverse selection of beverages, best enjoyed with local produce.

#### Day 2: Victoria Foodie Walking Tour - Abkhazi Garden

Light breakfast in the hotel followed by a Victoria Foodie Walk with Andy of Victoria Food Tours. This 2-hour tour begins at 11.00am at the Victoria Public Market and includes stops at The Harmonious Gates of Interest, Fan Tan Alley, Market Square, Bastion Square, Trounce Alley, Government St., the Inner Harbour Causeway and Parliament Buildings. Depending on the day, there will be between 6-8 food tastings along the route, as we discuss the history and quirks of beautiful Victoria, B.C. Tastings can include bread, pierogis,



meatballs, craft beer, macarons, chocolate, and much more!

Following the food tour, we will drive to the Abkhazi Garden where our guide will give an overview of the history of the garden. In particular, our guide will explain how the events of the Princess' life affected her philosophy behind her design of the Garden and her respect for the unique character of the natural landscape. We will discover the wide variety of rare plants that are cultivated by the horticultural experts who strive to preserve the Princess' legacy. We then enjoy high tea at the Abkhazi Garden.

After our day of culinary experiences, the evening is free to discover more of the attractive city centre. Victoria's relaxed pace, urban layout, and network of side streets and alleyways encourage strolling, so it can be easily explored.

Overnight: Victoria / Meals: Breakfast, Foodie Walking Tour, High Tea

### **Day 3: Merridale Farm - Venturi Schulze Vineyard - Westholme Tea Company - Nanaimo**

Our first stop today is at Merridale Farm that produces farm-crafted cider, spirits, and fortified ciders. Made from 100% undiluted apple juice that is grown and produced at this Cobble Hill farm, in the heart of Cowichan on Vancouver Island. The farm is home to a cidery, distillery, eatery and a tasting bar. We will have a farm tour followed by tastings and then lunch.

We then drive a short distance to the Venturi - Schulze Vineyard where you will find purists at work with a commitment to producing wines uniquely expressive of the site and of their personalities. The original farmhouse, the family home, was built around 1893, and extensively expanded and renovated in 1993 to accommodate the large family and small tasting room. Their cozy new tasting room in a renovated outbuilding featuring the work of Cowichan Valley artisans using local woods opened in the summer of 2011. Discover the products that have been creating since 1987 in this pure, natural estate grown wines, ancient method balsamic vinegar & verjus.

Our next stop is at the Westholme Tea Company. The Westholme Valley is also located in the Cowichan region on Vancouver Island, nicknamed "the warm land" by the Coast Salish people. This fertile landscape creates a unique micro-climate that fosters the growth of Camellia Sinensis- tea plants, a first of its kind in Canada. The teas and hand-crafted ceramics unite taste and tactility in the simple ceremony of drinking tea and the owners have added some unique Westholme influences to inspire delight in every brewed cup.

Overnight: Nanaimo / Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

### **Day 4: Morningstar Farm & Cheese Factory - Fanny Bay Oysters - Coombs - Tofino**

We start the day with a drive to the Morningstar Farm and Cheese Factory. A guided tour will feature the whole milk production process from meeting the calves to a close-up demonstration of the robotic milker in action. We will learn about cheese making while watching the cheesemakers working before enjoying guided cheese and fruit and berry wine tasting session.

In the late 1990's, Clarke and Nancy Gourlay returned from years of living overseas to French Creek, the scenic region between Parksville and Qualicum. The location was ideal to raise their 3 sons near family and to explore their dream of making Swiss-style artisan cheese on their own farm. That dream became a reality when, in 2001, founded Little Qualicum Cheeseworks on a leased dairy farm, milking a handful of cows, and making cheese in a renovated school portable. In 2004 the Gourlays were able to purchase their own 90-acre dairy farm in the same area - Morningstar Farm. Over the years of change and growth, the Gourlays have remained committed to their passion for quality local food, sustainable agriculture, animal welfare, and providing a fun and empowering experience to all visitors of the farm and to customers of their cheese across British Columbia.

From Morningstar, we head north to Fanny Bay Oyster facility. Started by three local farmers, Fanny Bay Oysters got its name in the 1980s from the beautiful landscape in the Baynes Sound. 30 years later they are a part of the Taylor Shellfish Family of Farms and continue to grow incredible shellfish in the same waters. Visiting their original Seafood Shop in Fanny Bay is the best way to get the freshest shellfish in British Columbia. As the largest producer of shellfish in Canada, Fanny Bay pride themselves on providing the best, sustainable products grown in the cold, clear waters of the British Columbia coastline. We will tour the facility before driving a short distance to the Fanny Bay Inn, built in 1938 and serving great food, drinks and local oysters for the past 80 years. With a beautiful location overlooking Baynes Sound, on the scenic old coastal highway, this is a perfect stop for lunch (own expense).

Time permitting, we may stop for a break in the village of Coombs and a visit to the Old Country Market which started as a roadside fruit stand in the 1950's providing fresh produce to travellers heading to the west coast of Vancouver Island. Over the years it has evolved into a Vancouver Island landmark with a mixture of shops and eateries for locals



and visitors alike and it also has those famous goats on the roof!

After lunch, a scenic drive across the breadth of Vancouver Island to Tofino on the west coast. Dinner will be at the well-known Schooner Restaurant in Tofino.

Overnight: Tofino / Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### **Day 5: Whale Watching - Walking Tour, Tofino**

Breakfast followed by an exciting whale watching tour. Tofino's waters, known as the Clayoquot Sound, is the best whale watching location in the world as the waters are rich with food. In fact, the whales gain over 30 percent of their body weight while feeding in these waters! During the 3 hour long tour, on one of our whale watching safaris, the Captain and crew will take you to view various other wildlife including Stellar Sea Lions, California Sea Lions, Harbour Porpoise, Seals, Sea Otters, Bald Eagles and Tufted Puffins.

Following the whale watching tour, we embark on a 3 hours long walking tour, combining food with local stories and fascinating history. Included will be 7 delicious tastings from some of Tofino's best restaurants and food vendors featuring ingredients from Tofino and Vancouver Island. We will learn all about Tofino from a knowledgeable local guide. We'll have this evening to relax in these beautiful surroundings.

Overnight: Tofino / Meals: Breakfast, Foodie Tour

#### **Day 6: Pacific rim National Park Reserve - Port Alberni - Blue Grouse Estate Winery - Victoria**

First we visit Kwisitit, or the "other end of the beach" in the Nuu-chah-nulth language, a fitting name for this iconic west coast building perched at the south end of Wickaninnish Beach in beautiful Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. The outside deck is the perfect year-round spot to view whales, storms and surfers alike. Inside the centre, new exhibits about the land, sea, sky and people of the area await you.

From this spectacular location, we head back east stopping at the Starboard Grill in Port Alberni, the only on-the-water restaurant with a patio overlooking the harbour with views down the canal. We will enjoy a fresh, west coast style lunch with a water view from every table. Located in the heart of the Harbour Quay, The Starboard Grill is the place to relax with amazing food, service and views.

We continue the Blue Grouse Estate Winery comprised of 65 acres tucked away on a sunny Vancouver Island slope in the Cowichan Valley, named from a Salish First Nations word meaning "the warm land". At Blue Grouse, their winemaker has been active in the farm-to-table movement for 20 years and they strongly support the efforts of local food producers. We will combine locally made cheese and charcuterie boards daily with snacks and gather in their licensed outdoor picnic area with some perfectly matched Blue Grouse wines for a picnic.

An evening drive brings us back to Victoria. A farewell dinner this evening will be a good time to compare notes and reflect on a week of outstanding culinary experiences on Vancouver Island.

Overnight: Victoria / Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### **Day 7: Depart Victoria**

Our exploration of Vancouver Island's culinary scene ends with breakfast this morning. You are free to depart the hotel at your leisure, on to your next adventure or to return home.

Our aim on this tour is to give you a taste of the incredible diversity of cuisines, cultures and landscapes on Vancouver Island and to inspire you to return for a longer in-depth travel experience next time.

Meals: Breakfast

## Details

#### **Trip Code:**

004030- R11

#### **INCLUDED**

- Transportation by deluxe motorcoach
- 4 nights of accommodation
- Meals as specified in itinerary, per day
- Listed tours, admissions and activities
- Professional Tour Leader throughout



### NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to/from Victoria
- Taxes, fees and surcharges on airfare
- Meals not specified
- Gratuities to Driver, Tour Leader and local guides
- Optional activities
- Credit card fees, if applicable
- Passport and visa fees, vaccinations as required
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature

### TOUR NOTES

*Disclaimer: We do our utmost to ensure that information posted on our website is correct at the time of publication, however trip details are subject to change without notice by the suppliers and operators involved. We update the information as soon as possible when changes are advised to us, however, we cannot assume responsibility for such changes made by the suppliers and operators.*

### ROUTE MAP



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