



Haida Gwaii Mini-Safari

Your adventure tour to Haida Gwaii, “Islands of the People”, begins with a cruise into the deep wilderness of the Inside Passage, where you can surround yourself in flourishing rain forests, windswept sand-dunes and endless beaches.



YOUR
ADVENTURE
AWAITS

8 days/7 nights

ITINERARY

Day 1: Sandspit/Queen Charlotte City

Your travel begins at Vancouver South Terminal Airport when you board your flight to Sandspit. The two-hour flight skirts the Coastal Mountains, swings north-west over Hecate Strait and then crosses over Gwaii Haanis National Park and Reserve.

At Sandspit Airport, your Guide will load your luggage and then escort the group to Ailford Bay where you'll take the 20 minute crossing to Skidegate on Graham Island. A stop at the Queen Charlotte Visitor Centre will give you “the big picture” and you'll load up on local maps. From here you'll check into your bed and breakfast and tour the village of Queen Charlotte.

In the evening you will experience a taste of Haida culture and lifestyle by dining in a truly unforgettable way. At Keenwaiis Kitchen your Haida Chef, Roberta Olson who specializes in traditional Haida and local foods, will prepare an authentic three course dinner for the group. From her home, Roberta, whose Haida name is Keenawaii, has served dignitaries, government officials and celebrities. The seafood and venison are locally harvested as are the berries, mushrooms and other wild edibles.

Day 2: Queen Charlotte City

After an early breakfast you'll make your way down to the float dock and get ready for your full day of adventure. The floatplane flight from Queen Charlotte City will take us to Rose Bay, a former whaling station where you'll meet up with your local tour boat operator and don your survival suits for the 20 minute ride to Anthony Island.

A Haida Watchman will meet the group to provide an interpretative tour of some of the best preserved ancient villages on Haida Gwaii. Ninstints/ S'Gaang Gwaay Llinagaay was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. S'Gaang Gwaay Llinagaay embodies the rugged Pacific beauty and rich ecology of the coast and the 10,000 year Haida connection with the land and sea. You will see original totem poles, many of them toppled or tilted, and the remains of longhouses. This site evokes strong feelings of the past and spiritual life of the Haida People. At mid-afternoon you return by boat to your floatplane and the dock at Graham Island. Later you'll head down to the local watering hole and enjoy a refreshing libation and reminisce about the adventures of the day.

Day 3: Tlell

This morning you will head to the village of Skedans and the Haida Culture Centre at Kay Llinagaay. More ambitious passengers may want to walk the six k's along the coastal road to the Centre.

Here at the Centre, guests will get a guided tour of this award winning aboriginal cultural tourism attraction. The Centre sits on the ancient site of Kay Llinagaay or “Sea Lion Town,” and is designed to resemble the traditional



Oceanside Haida Village that once stood in its place. The Centre houses a museum which contains thousands of Haida artifacts including the largest argillite collection in the world. You'll also see poles, traditional and ceremonial clothing as well as everyday household objects.

At the Performance House stories, drumming and traditional dances are performed. You'll also visit the carving house/ Gyaa K'id Naay and Tluu Naay Canoe Shed / Skaajang Naay. The large open-walled building of the carving house is designed to hold monumental poles, canoes and any other work that would be too large to fit in the enclosed space of the carving shed. Guests are invited to walk around and tour artists at work in this work space. Currently, the Skidegate Pole carved by legendary Haida artist Bill Reid is housed in the Carving House until it is ready to be raised again inside the walls of the Haida Gwaii Museum.

At the canoe shed, learn about the Haida mode of travel, transportation, food/resource gathering and trade by exploring the history and importance of canoes in Haida lives.

Haidas were fierce warriors and well-known coastal travellers, having ventured to Victoria for trading purposes in earlier times during the 1800s. Critical to the sustainability of Haida culture was the canoe which the Haida depended on to trade with neighbouring coast First Nations and travel between communities.

Those guests feeling in need to get out and stretch their legs elect to take a walk around Spirit Lake. The trail is hard packed and well maintained rated easy to moderate with some steep parts at the beginning.

After lunch at the local bistro you'll head north on the Yellowhead Highway. Along the way, nestled behind a stand of tall cedars, a narrow trail leads to the ocean and one of the most mysterious and uniquely photographed sites in all of Haida Gwaii: Balance Rock. Here you'll stop and explore the area known to the Haida as a spiritual site. Enroute to Tlell you'll stop at the Jungle Beach and St Mary's Spring where those who take a sip are destined to come back to Haida Gwaii. You will check into your local B&B and enjoy dinner at the local restaurant.

Day 4: Tlell

Enjoy a quiet morning, take a walk on the beach, watch the sun rise. After a leisurely breakfast you will head out to the village of Port Clements, and the protected lands of Yaaguun Gandlaay. Here you'll visit the site of Kiidk'yaas, also known as the Golden Spruce. An easy hard packed trail takes you to the banks of the Yakoun River where this mighty tree once stood. The Golden Spruce was a Sitka spruce tree that had a rare genetic mutation that caused its needles to be golden in colour. This tree was considered sacred by the Haida people. On the trail you will learn about the tragic end of this tree and the efforts today to save and create a new Golden Spruce, as well as visit the new Golden Spruce growing in Port Clements.

After lunch you'll head out to the Crystal Cabin, a small gift shop founded by the Dutheil family of jewelers 25 years ago. This shop is home to the Tlell Stone Circle, an outdoor exhibit of Haida Gwaii's Geological Past. These stones, which are arranged in a medicine wheel, mark the intersection of two harmonic leylines and an entryway for light into the universe. You can stand in the middle of the circle to become more spiritually connected to Haida Gwaii.

Inside guests can discover local and international selection of crystals, and gemstone jewelry. Be sure to pick up the Dutheil Family local signature specimens, including the Serenity Stone, Star Spirit Thunder Eggs, or Island Mist Agates. At the end of the day, guests have the option to return to their relax at their accommodation or take a hike to near Misty Meadows in Naikoon National Park. This hike leads to the Pesuta Shipwreck and takes three to four hours, there and back..

Day 5: Masset/Tow Hill

After breakfast you will continue with another big adventure day. You'll head to the village of Masset where you'll meet your local guide for a marine tour to the village of Yan or Kung (depending on weather conditions).

Unlike Ninstints/ S'Gaang Gwaay Llinagaay, in the south, there is not much left of these villages but the giant most covered poles of the long houses. Yan was once one of the larger villages of the north in Haida Gwaii and had up to seventeen long houses but was abandoned in the late 1800s. Kung was also once a thriving village of fifteen long houses with a rich history. You'll have time to visit one of these places with your local guide and enjoy the stories, surroundings and atmosphere. Later you will check into your local bed and breakfast and enjoy a delicious dinner.

Day 6: Masset/Tow Hill

Everyone needs a chill day and today is it. After a relaxing morning you'll check the tides and head out to explore Tow Hill and Naikoon National Park. You'll walk along the boardwalk trail up Tow Hill with panoramic views of the sandy beaches and Masset Inlet. Naikoon National Park encompasses 72,640 hectares along the Northeast tip of Graham Island with 97 kilometres of sandy beaches, making it a beachcomber's delight. The park is mostly lowland forest with stunted lodge pole pine, red and yellow cedar, sitka spruce and helmlock.



After your visit to Tow Hill you'll walk along North Beach and sink your toes into the soft sand and do some beachcombing. You will take refreshment at a funky local bakery set in the forest. In the afternoon passengers can visit the Dixon Maritime Museum and Delkatla Nature Sanctuary.

Day 7: Masset/Tow Hill

Your last full day on Haida Gwaii is spent touring the village of Old Masset. You visit the local chiefs' Big House are guided by a local through the canoe shed. For a first hand and personal understanding of the Haida People you visit local carvers of argillite, cedar and painters in their homes.

You'll tour the more recent poles put up in the village and enjoy lunch with the locals at their favourite eating place. Other stops will include Sarahs 'Gift House and the Raven Gallery. You'll stop for pictures of the local sites whenever and wherever possible, watch the eagles ride the wind along the shoreline or enjoy the treats thrown out to them by local fishermen.

By the end of this week you will have slowed down and become tuned to the unique rhythm of this place, of the peace and quiet that is Haida Gwaii. Your spirit will be renewed and love of nature awakened once again.

Day 8. Fly Out to Vancouver, B.C.

After breakfast you'll get an early morning start and load your luggage and checkout of your accommodation. Your driver/guide will drive you to meet up with the airport shuttle back to Sandspit. Check in at the Sandspit Airport and fly back to Vancouver, B.C.

Details

Group Size: Min. 2 / Max. 5

Trip Code:

002611 - W20

INCLUDED

- Return airfare from Vancouver to Sandspit
- Fully escorted with knowledgeable driver/guides
- Tours of local villages escorted walks and hikes
- Transportation by van, ferry and float plane
- 7 nights' accommodation in hotels, motels and inns
- 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 4 dinners
- All entrance fees to provincial, national parks and protected areas
- Floatplane to Rose Bay and boat tour to Ninstantins / S'Gaang Gwaay Llinagaay or boat tour to Skedans and Tanu (depending on weather)
- Visit with Haida Watchmen
- BC Ferry transportation from Skidegate to Alliford Bay
- Tour of local Haida Chiefs' carving studios, canoe sheds and Big House
- Entrance to Haida Cultural Centre at Kay Llinagaay
- Entrance fees to Port Clements and Dixon Maritime Museums
- Boat tour to either the northern village of Yan or Kung on Graham Island with local Haida Guide

NOT INCLUDED

- Transportation to and from Vancouver
- Meals where not indicated
- Gratuities for activities and driver/guide (we recommend \$5.00 per day for the driver/guide)
- Optional activities
- Travel, cancellation and baggage insurance
- Items of a personal nature

TOUR NOTES

Rating: While the walking in this tour is rated as "easy", participants should be prepared for uneven walking surfaces and bouncy ocean conditions while on the zodiac trip. Walks/hikes vary from 20 minutes to an hour.

Optional Activities: Deep Sea Fishing (about CA\$100 per hour with a 4-hour minimum); full-day kayaking tour with lunch

Accommodation: The properties you will stay at include inns, cabins and small hotels. You will always have a private bathroom. The properties chosen underscore the philosophy of utilizing small-scale accommodation that offers

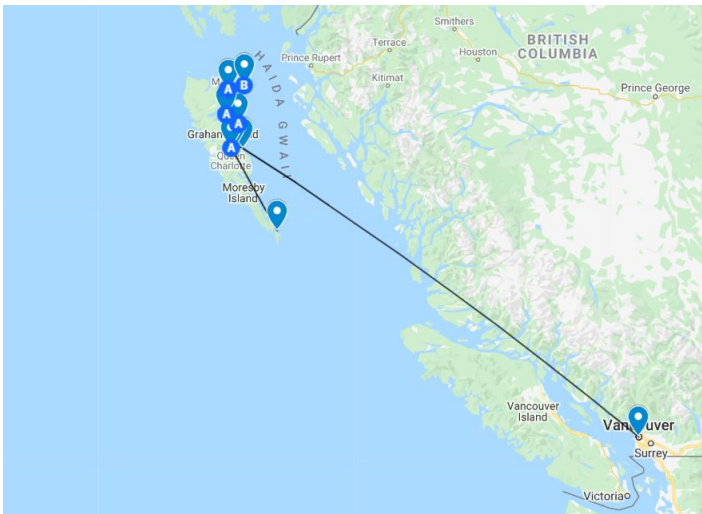


character, cleanliness, pursue sound environmental practices and support other local operators. Accommodation lists will be provided at the time of confirmation of your reservation and accommodation is subject to availability. We cannot guarantee specific properties.

The order of the included activities may be altered without advance notice by the tour operator due to scheduling changes, adverse weather conditions and other unforeseen events.

Disclaimer: We do our utmost to ensure that information posted on our website is current 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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