

WHALES + WILDERNESS EXPEDITION

GUEST HANDBOOK



SPIRIT
OF THE WEST
ADVENTURES

TOUR OVERVIEW



PADDLE ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING KAYAK ROUTES IN CANADA

This tour explores the best of the Broughton Archipelago & Johnstone Strait, renowned destinations for scenic paddling and wildlife. Journey across the Johnstone Strait and Blackfish Sound, keeping your eye out for whales and other wildlife. Weave through the tiny islets of the Broughton Archipelago, exploring shorelines and passageways.

Every day, you'll paddle in new areas, setting up camp in a different location each night. One night will be spent at Paddlers Inn, a remote rustic floating lodge in Simoom Sound. Water taxi transport on one end means we are able to explore farther without backtracking.

Although there is a start and end point, there is no set route for this expedition. Your experienced guides will plan a winding route through the area, stopping at their favourite campsites and revealing all the secret spots and passageways that make this area so special. No two expeditions are the same.



The area we share with you on this tour is the traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw people of the 'Namgis, Mamamlilikala, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis, Ławitsis, and Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw nations. Learn more about the Kwakwaka'wakw people, land, and language on the [U'mista Cultural Centre's website](#) and the [First Peoples' Map of BC](#).

KEY DETAILS

OVERVIEW

TRIP TYPE: Expedition *(with one-way water taxi shuttle)*

GROUP SIZE: 10 guests, 2 guides

TRIP DURATION: 6 days / 5 nights

WHEN WE GO: late June - early September

[Click here for dates, prices, and more information](#)

MEETING DETAILS

MEETING LOCATION: [Alder Bay RV & Marina](#), Alder Bay, BC

DAY 1 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am

DAY 6 RETURN TIME: 12 pm - 1 pm

PARKING DIRECTIONS: Please park near the boat ramp and look for the Spirit of the West meeting sign at the covered shelter on the pier leading to the dock. You are welcome to unload your luggage here. At your designated meeting time (11:30 am) your guides will meet you with a parking pass and further instructions.

**Due to the unpredictable nature of wilderness travel, return times cannot be guaranteed. Please plan transport and accommodation accordingly. If you do choose to book flights or ferries for your final day, we highly recommend covering those within your travel insurance policy.*

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

INCLUDED: Expert guides, paddling & camping equipment (except for sleeping bag), all meals and snacks from lunch day 1 to a lunch on the final day, one-way water taxi journey, one night stay at Paddlers Inn, park permits & land use permissions

NOT INCLUDED: Personal clothing, sleeping bag & rain gear (rentals available), transport to/from departure point, accommodation before & after the trip, travel insurance, guide team gratuity *(cash preferred)*



WHAT TO EXPECT



KAYAKING

This is a one-way expedition travelling either north or south between Paddlers Inn (Simoom Sound) and Alder Bay. Each day on the water, you can expect to be paddling for 4-6 hours and cover 6-8 nautical miles per day (arrival & departure days will be shorter paddling days). You may encounter wind, currents, and crossings.

A fleet of good quality fibreglass kayaks will join your expedition. Typically, your group will have at least two double kayaks and the rest singles. Please be prepared to paddle different boats throughout your trip. Your group will be carrying everything you need in your kayaks, there is no support crew or resupply. For this reason, it is important to pack well and pack light. We will help you with this!

Our expeditions require everyone to work together as a team. Your assistance will be needed with loading, carrying and unloading kayaks as well as setting up and taking down camp. If you need help at anytime, please let us know.



CAMPING

There are many camping areas along your route. Most sites around the Johnstone Strait are well established with pit toilets and tent platforms. These sites can be popular in the peak of summer, but your guides will use their insider knowledge to find the best spots. Camping areas at the north end of the Broughton Archipelago are wilderness sites with few or no facilities.

Your guides will carry a portable toilet that will be placed in a private area at each of these backcountry sites. We practice **Leave no Trace** camping and encourage you to refresh yourself on the seven principles before arrival.



There is limited access to fresh water on this route. Handwashing stations will be set up at each lunch spot and campsite. Saltwater ocean dips can be used for bathing (be prepared for cold water!) You can also bring a face cloth to use with a bit of fresh water or wipes (must be packed out).

Cell service is patchy and you will not have access to electricity or charging stations throughout your trip. Please bring extra batteries or battery packs for phones and cameras.

Pacific coastal air is cool and moist. While some days are warm, once the sun goes down, the air temperature drops. Please pack clothing accordingly.



FOOD

All meals and snacks are included, from lunch day one to a lunch on your final day. We aim to serve healthy, hearty and delicious food. We are happy to accommodate many dietary restrictions with advance notice (please let us know 60 days in advance of tour start date; some dietary needs are subject to an additional fee). Learn more on our **Food Page**.



EXAMPLE ITINERARY

This example itinerary is flexible and may be adapted based on weather and group ability.

DAY 1

Once you have arrived at Alder Bay Resort & Marina, park near the boat ramp and look for the Spirit of the West meeting sign. Unload your gear near the sign and wait for a Spirit of the West team member who will meet you at the 11:30 am meeting time with further instructions.

At 11:30, your guides will pass out your drybags and demonstrate how to pack your gear for the expedition.

If you're on a northbound expedition, we'll take a short van shuttle to our launch point to begin paddling.

If you're on a southbound expedition, you'll jump aboard the Paddlers Inn water taxi and enjoy a scenic 2 hour journey up to Simoom Sound.

Upon arrival, your guides will lead a kayak orientation and if there's enough time, get you out on the water for an intro paddle.

Regardless of which direction you're heading, your guides will serve up some delicious appetizers and a hearty dinner to make sure you're fed and ready for a big day on the water the next day. Spend the evening relaxing, reading or chatting with new friends as you watch the sun dip below the horizon.

DAYS 2-5

Start the day with some hot coffee or tea and a tasty breakfast. After taking down camp, carry the boats down to the water, pack your kayak and push off for the day's adventure.

Throughout the day, your guides will share information about the region and the wildlife you may see. Along the way, we'll take a snack break and find a beach for a picnic lunch. Upon arrival, set up your tent before a delicious dinner cooked by your guides.

DAY 6

Northbound paddlers will wake up in a comfy bed at the Paddlers Inn, having already completed your journey. You'll have the morning to take in the delights of Simoom Sound, before loading your gear onto the water taxi around 10 am and heading back to Alder Bay for noon.

Southbound paddlers have one last push to make. Wake up early to enjoy the final few hours of in the Johnstone Strait. Gently paddle back to your end point, where you will be shuttled to Alder Bay for noon.

After unpacking your kayaks, eating a quick lunch and saying some fond farewells, most guests leave Alder Bay around 1 pm.





PACKING FOR YOUR ADVENTURE

Upon arrival in Alder Bay, your guides will provide you with waterproof dry bags to pack your clothing and personal items into. We typically provide three dry bags per person. Two of these dry bags (typically a 20L and 10L bag) will be for your personal items, like your clothes. Your sleeping bag and shoes will be packed separately. An additional 10L bag will be your lap bag, which you'll keep in your cockpit with you for anything you want easy access to when you are on the water. Your guides will help you pack when you arrive.

Spirit of the West provides the following: sleeping pad, inflatable pillow and pillowcase, tents, paddling equipment, lightweight camp chair, drybags, mini deckchair, and travel mug.

Spirit of the West does **not** provide a sleeping bag or raingear (rentals are available if ordered in advance, please contact us at least 30 days before your tour to rent).

THE GOLDEN RULES OF WILDERNESS CLOTHING

- Synthetic, wool & fleece are preferred for kayaking as they stay warm, even when wet.
- Dress in layers! Plan to have options to adjust for warmer or cooler weather.
- Be sure to check that your raingear is waterproof before arriving.
- Athletic gear you already own is often very suitable for kayaking. Ski base layers, yoga pants, hiking pants & running shirts are great options.
- Please note that in our coastal environment, wet clothing is unlikely to dry. Assume that once something is wet, it will stay wet or at least damp for the remainder of the trip, please plan accordingly.

WEATHER

The cool, nutrient dense waters of the northeast coast of Vancouver Island attract salmon, orcas, eagles, humpbacks, and other wildlife. These colder waters and ocean breezes make the region cool, even during the summer months. Typical daytime temperatures in June to September sit at around 19°C. Overnight temperatures can drop as low as 10°C. The shoulder season is cooler (June and September) and fleece and/or puffy jackets are recommended throughout the season, even in August. Early morning fog is common, and if winds are forecasted, they typically build throughout the day. Rainfall can occur anytime, even in the peak of summer. Please keep this in mind while packing!

PRINTABLE PACKING LIST

To print only this page, select page 7 from the print dialog box that pops up when you press "Print".

CLOTHING FOR PADDLING

- ☐ A full set of rain gear - jacket & pants
(rentals available with advance notice)
- ☐ 2 x long-sleeved synthetic shirts
- ☐ 1 x long-sleeved fleece or mid-weight layer
- ☐ 1 x quick-dry or synthetic pants
- ☐ A pair of water shoes *(Gumboots, crocs, neoprene booties or sandals with straps. No flip flops.)*
- ☐ 1 x sun hat *(secure fitting in case of windy conditions)*
- ☐ A pair of sunglasses with a retainer strap

CLOTHING FOR CAMP

- ☐ 2 x shirts
- ☐ 1 x fleece or sweatshirt
- ☐ 1 x camp pants *(yoga pants or synthetic/quick dry)*
- ☐ 2 x long underwear or base layers *(keep 1 pair for sleeping)*
- ☐ 1 x pair of shorts
- ☐ 4 x warm socks
- ☐ Underwear *(a mix of cotton and synthetic)*
- ☐ 1 x bathing suit
- ☐ 1 x toque/beanie
- ☐ A pair of camp shoes *(runners, light hikers, sturdy sandals)*

OTHER ITEMS

- ☐ Sleeping bag: 3 season bag in a compression sack *(rentals available with advance notice)*
- ☐ Headlamp & spare batteries
- ☐ Personal toiletries *(ecofriendly/biodegradable)*
- ☐ Quick dry compact towel, face cloth & wipes
- ☐ Sunscreen, bug spray, & SPF lip balm
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ A few Ziplocs and garbage bags *(for extra waterproofing)*

OPTIONAL

- ☐ Binoculars, camera & spare batteries
- ☐ Buff or neck gaiter
- ☐ Book, journal, cards or small games
- ☐ Waterproof phone case or water camera
- ☐ Battery bank
- ☐ Paddling gloves or pogies
- ☐ 1-2 x Carabiners
- ☐ Spare eye glasses & contact lenses
- ☐ Medication *(if flying, please pack necessary medication in your carry-on luggage)*
- ☐ Fishing gear & license *(you need a recreational fishing license to fish, [more info here](#))*
- ☐ Carbonated or alcoholic beverages *(we have a no alcohol on the water policy, please refrain from drinking alcohol until we are done kayaking for the day)*
- ☐ Guide team gratuity *(cash preferred - there is a 3% transaction surcharge on credit card gratuities)*

PLANNING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Read our **Terms and Conditions**
- ☐ Pay deposit to confirm your reservation
- ☐ Provide details for other members of your group through the links in your confirmation email
- ☐ Inform Spirit of the West about any dietary or medical requirements (at least 60 days in advance)
- ☐ Purchase **Travel Insurance**
- ☐ If needed, request rain gear rentals from Spirit of the West
- ☐ Organize **Transportation** to/from Alder Bay
- ☐ **Book Your Accommodation** for the night before & after your trip
- ☐ Complete all Spirit of the West paperwork through the blue 'Complete Guest Details' button on your invoice or links in your confirmation email
- ☐ 60 days before the tour, final payment is due (automatically charged to card on file)
- ☐ Update us with any dietary changes or rental requests at least 30 days before tour start date
- ☐ Get excited for the adventure!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To fully immerse yourself in the environment, we highly encourage you to learn about the local ecology and First Nations culture. Here are some great resources to help you get started:

- [Heart of the Raincoast](#) - Alexandra Morton & Billy Proctor
- [Totem Poles and Tea](#) - Hugina Harold
- [Full Moon, Flood Tide](#) - Billy Proctor & Yvonne Maximchuk
- Our blog on [responsible wildlife viewing](#) and our suggestions of ways to [minimize the impact of your travel](#)

[MORE RECOMMENDED RESOURCES](#)

QUICK LINK BUTTONS

[TOUR PAGE](#)

A tour overview including gallery, itinerary, FAQ and reviews

[FAQ](#)

Commonly asked questions about our tours

[ACCOMMODATION](#)

A list of accommodation options close to Alder Bay

[GETTING HERE](#)

Directions on how to get to Alder Bay

[INSURANCE](#)

More detail on why we strongly recommend travel insurance

[TERMS & CONDITIONS](#)

Our terms & conditions with full cancellation policy

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