

GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST EXPEDITION

GUEST HANDBOOK



SPIRIT
OF THE WEST
ADVENTURES

TOUR OVERVIEW

Eight days of magic and wonder

One of the last great stretches of wilderness: the Great Bear Rainforest is the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world. The misty forests, rugged coastlines and windswept beaches are sure to take your breath away. The soul of the wild Central Coast tends to capture the heart of everyone lucky enough to pass through.

Where you'll go

Beginning in the Heiltsuk community of Bella Bella, you'll head south through the Hakai Conservancy - the largest marine protected area on the BC coast, exploring 50 nautical miles of islets and inlets on your way to Calvert Island. Paddling through kelp forests and remote stretches of the inside passage, you'll nose into the fringes of ancient glades and camp on white sand beaches under the stars.

Weather & wildlife

This area receives 1700mm of annual rainfall. Even during the summer of June, July & August, you can expect precipitation to fall for half the month. Average daily and nightly temperatures are 17°C/10°C respectively, and the sea surface temperature sits at around 8°C. The abundance of moisture and cooler temperatures on land, plus the ocean's cold water upwelling, create the perfect environments for flora and fauna to flourish.

And wildlife really is plentiful here. During your expedition, you might be lucky enough to see everything from black bears, eagles and wolves, to humpback whales, porpoises and sea otters.

Who this trip is for

Our Great Bear Rainforest Expedition is the most challenging kayak tour we offer. This 8 day trip involves outer coast paddling and exposed crossings. Some days may see us paddling in swell and winds. Because of the dynamic environment, the remote location and the longer days on the water, we do require that all participants on this tour have previous sea kayaking experience. Think you're up for the challenge?

[CONTACT US](#) to determine if this is the right trip for you.

What do people say about this trip?

[CLICK HERE](#) and navigate to the "reviews" tab to read past guest testimonials.

KEY DETAILS

TRIP TYPE: Expedition

TRIP DURATION: 8 days / 7 nights

MAX GROUP SIZE: 8 guests & 2 guides

WHEN WE GO: Various dates in June-August

DATES & PRICES: [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO & TO BOOK](#)

DEPARTURE POINT: Bella Bella, BC

DAY 1 MEETING: 9am - Bella Bella Government Dock

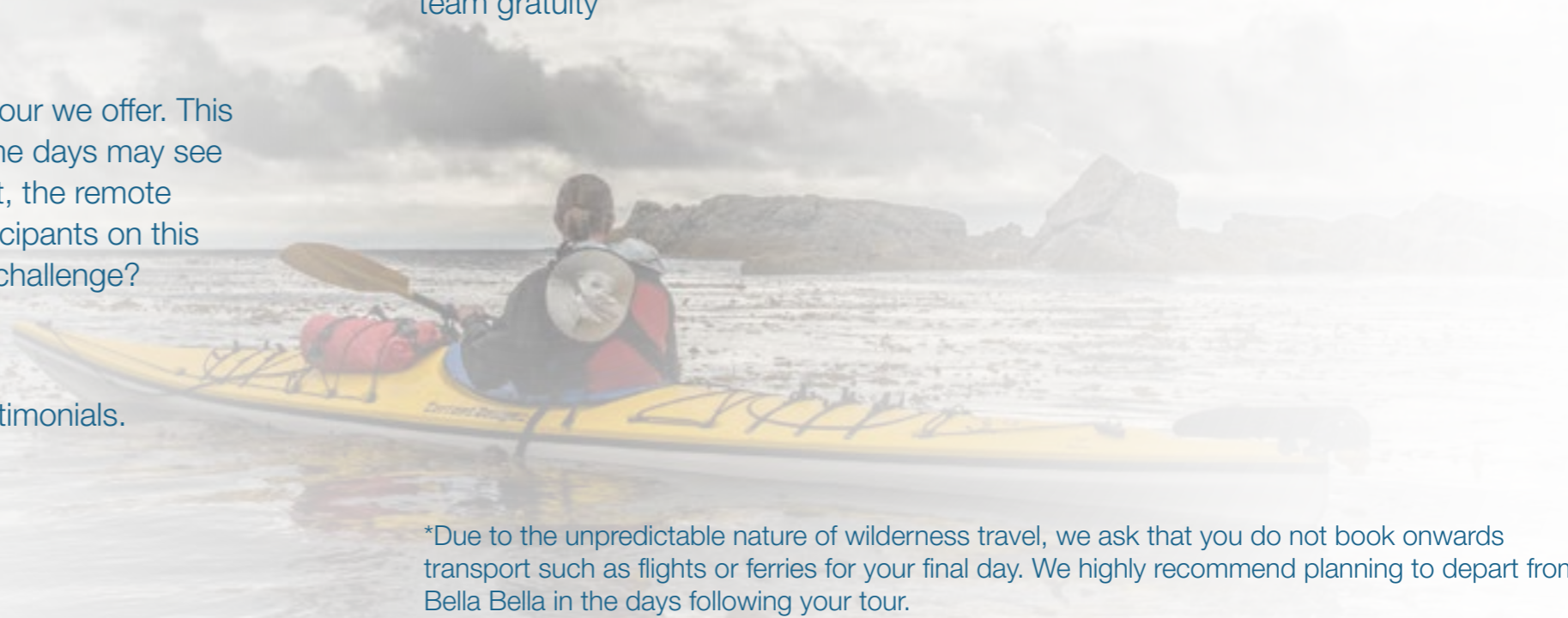
DAY 8 RETURN TIME: 3pm*

PRE-TRIP WELCOME MEETING: Day 0 - 6pm in Bella Bella

INCLUDED: Expert guides, paddling & camping equipment, all meals and snacks from lunch day 1 - lunch day 8, return water taxi, park permits & land use permissions

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

*Due to the unpredictable nature of wilderness travel, we ask that you do not book onwards transport such as flights or ferries for your final day. We highly recommend planning to depart from Bella Bella in the days following your tour.



EXAMPLE ITINERARY

This example itinerary is flexible and may be adapted based on weather conditions and group ability. This is a nomadic expedition, and you can expect to move camp between 5-7 times during the 8 days of paddling.

DAY 0

Travel to Bella Bella by air or sea.

[CLICK HERE](#) for up-to-date transport options and recommendations.

Once you have arrived and settled into your accommodation for the evening, [CATCH THE SEABUS](#) to Shearwater Resort on Denny Island to meet your guides for a pre-trip welcome meeting in the Fisherman's Bar & Grill at 6pm. You'll meet the rest of your group, receive your waterproof drybags to pack your gear into and have the chance to ask any last minute questions.

DAY 1

Meet your guides in central Bella Bella at the government dock at 9am.

After an introduction to the area and Heiltsuk First Nation through a cultural interpreter, you'll depart on our water taxi to shuttle out to our first campsite. Once there, your group will sort out gear and prepare for your adventure, beginning with an orientation to the kayaks and gear, learning efficient paddling techniques and safety procedures. When everyone is comfortable with their boats, you'll launch for your first strokes in the Great Bear Sea.

DAYS 2-7

After a delicious breakfast whipped up by your multi-talented guides, you'll tear down camp, carry boats down to the water and pack up to depart. With a careful assessment of the weather, tides and sea state, your guides will determine the best direction and area to paddle in that day. Perhaps you'll explore the remote Goose Group Islands, or maybe you'll meander through the spectacular islands of the Hakai Conservancy.

Lunch will be enjoyed at a beach en-route, and you'll arrive at your new campsite in time to beachcomb, watch the sunset and enjoy a hearty dinner before a good night of sleep.

DAY 8

Your final day will begin with a magical morning paddle. At 12pm, you'll meet our water taxi at your end destination, which will transport the group and all the gear, back to your start point in Bella Bella.

You can expect to be back by around 3pm, but we do request that you avoid booking onwards travel for that day, just in case delays are encountered. But, do you really need an excuse to stay another night?

Need a recommendation of where to stay in Bella Bella? [CLICK HERE](#).

WHAT TO EXPECT

YOUR JOURNEY: This is a nomadic-style expedition, you will be moving camp regularly, if not every day.

SELF-SUPPORTED: Your group will be carrying everything you need in the boats. There is no support crew, stash points or supply drops. For this reason, it is important to pack well and pack light.

PART OF A TEAM: Our expeditions require everyone to work together as a team. You will be needed to help keep camp tidy, and to assist with loading, carrying and unloading kayaks at the beginning and end of every day.

KAYAKING: Each day on the water, you can expect to be paddling for 5-7 hours and cover 8-12 nautical miles per day. You may encounter wind, swell, currents and technical landings.

KAYAKS: A fleet of good quality fibreglass kayaks will join your expedition. Typically, your group will have 6 single and 2 double kayaks. You can expect to rotate through the boats and to get to paddle different vessels throughout your trip.

CAMPsites: All sites are remote wilderness campsites without built infrastructure or established facilities. There will be no toilets or running water for the duration of your journey. Your guides will carry a portable toilet, which will be tucked into a private nook at each site.

HYGIENE: Your guides will set up handwashing stations at each lunch spot and camp site. Though the water is cold, refreshing ocean swims can be used for bathing.

SAFETY: Risk assessment and safety protocols are a big part of wilderness travel. Listen to the safety briefings given by your guides and [FOLLOW THE PRECAUTIONS](#) put in place to keep everyone safe.

REMOTE ACCESS: Upon leaving Bella Bella, you will be off-grid for the remainder of your expedition. There will be no wifi, cell service or charging stations. Please bring extra batteries or battery packs for phones and cameras.

PACKING LIST

This is a list of recommended items to pack for your expedition.

You will be provided with waterproof drybags that offer 30L of capacity to pack your clothing and personal items into. Your sleeping bag and shoes do not need to fit inside your drybags.

In addition to your primary storage space, you will have an extra 10L 'lap bag' for anything you need quick access to i.e. raingear, phone, camera.

Spirit of the West provides the following: sleeping pad, inflatable pillow and pillowcase, tents, paddling equipment, drybags & deckcharts.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF EXPEDITION PACKING

- ◆ Synthetic, wool & fleece perform better than cotton & down. They will dry faster and keep you warmer, even when wet.
- ◆ Lots of thin layers are much better than fewer, thicker layers.
- ◆ Check your raingear is waterproof before arriving (wear it in the shower).
- ◆ Athletic gear you already own is often very suitable for kayaking. Ski base layers, yoga pants, hiking pants & running shirts are all great. You don't need to buy brand new paddling-specific clothing.

CLOTHING FOR PADDLING

- A full set of rain gear - jacket & pants
- 2 x long-sleeved synthetic shirts
- 1 x long-sleeved fleece or mid-layer
- 1 x quick-dry or synthetic pants
- A pair of water shoes: gum boots, crocs, neoprene booties or sandals with straps. No flip flops.

Recommended:

- 1 x sun hat
- A pair of sunglasses (with a strap)
- 1 x buff/neck gaiter

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING FOR AROUND CAMP

- 2 x shirts
- 1 x fleece or sweatshirt
- 1 x camp pants: yoga pants or synthetic/quick dry pants
- 2 x long underwear/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 quick dry towel
- 1 x toque/beanie
- A pair of camp shoes: runners, light hikers, sturdy sandals

OTHER ITEMS TO BRING

- Sleeping bag: 3 season synthetic, waterproof & in a compression sack
- Headlamp & spare batteries
- Personal toiletries: ecofriendly/biodegradable if possible
- Bug repellent & sunscreen
- Medication*
- Face mask(s) & hand sanitizer
- Book and/or journal
- Water bottle
- A few ziploc bags & garbage bags for extra waterproofing
- Guide team gratuity

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

- Binoculars, camera & spare batteries
- Cards, crib or small camp games
- Phone charging battery bank
- Paddling gloves
- Spare eye glasses & contact lenses
- Fishing gear & licence**
- Your favourite carbonated or alcoholic beverages

*Steps to take if you're bringing medication: 1) Pack medication in a water & sun-proof container. 2) Write the name and expiry date of drug on the container. 3) Ensure you have detailed instructions of your dosage and frequency. 4) If you are flying, please pack all necessary medication in your carry-on luggage.

**You need a valid Canadian fishing licence if you'd like to fish. [CLICK HERE TO GET ONE](#)

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Reserve your trip & pay deposit
- Read the [TERMS & CONDITIONS](#)
- Provide contact details for other members of your group
- Purchase [TRAVEL INSURANCE](#)
- Review [ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVEL TO CANADA](#)
- Organize [TRANSPORTATION](#) to/from departure point
- Book [YOUR ACCOMMODATION](#) for the night before & night after your trip
- Complete all Spirit of the West paperwork
 - Click on the big blue 'Complete Guest Details' button at the bottom of your invoice
- Inform Spirit of the West about any dietary or medical requirements
- Make final payment
- Review [THE PACKING LIST](#)
- Attend pre-trip welcome meeting
- Embrace the excitement

OTHER WAYS TO PREPARE

Preparing for a kayaking expedition isn't just about having the logistics sorted. There are a few other steps you can take to ensure that you get the most from this amazing experience.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Build your strength for 8 days of paddling! Time on the water is the best way to prepare, but if that isn't an option for you, take a look at some of these programs to build your kayaking strength, endurance and mobility:

- ◆ Watch [THE 7 MINUTE UPPER BODY WORKOUT](#) you can do at home
- ◆ Watch [YOGA FOR KAYAKERS](#)

MENTAL PREPARATION

The Great Bear Rainforest is a truly magical part of the world. 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:

- ◆ Great Bear Wild - Ian McAllister
- ◆ Staying the Course, Staying Alive - Frank & Y. Kathy Brown
- ◆ British Columbia: A Natural History - Cannings & Cannings
- ◆ Our blog on [RESPONSIBLE WILDLIFE VIEWING](#)
- ◆ Our suggestions of ways to [MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF YOUR TRAVEL](#)

Think you've missed something? Still have questions?
[REVIEW OUR FAQs](#) or [SEND US AN EMAIL](#)

TERMS+CONDITIONS

1. A NOTE ABOUT COVID-19

We recognize that travel has changed as a result of COVID-19 and we want to assure you we are here to help you have a safe and wonderful experience. We will work with you to help you find appropriate travel insurance protection for your adventure to give you the peace of mind to travel while protecting your hard-earned vacation dollars. Learn more on our Travel Insurance page.

We are a small family-run company and really appreciate your understanding that we incur many expenses in preparing for these tours. Our terms and conditions and cancellation policy reflect this. If you are unable to join your tour as planned, we will provide any paperwork needed for your insurance claim, should you wish to reclaim any retained travel or tour costs.

In order to participate in our tours you will need to complete and answer satisfactorily:

- ◆ COVID-19 Pre-Screening Questionnaire
- ◆ COVID-19 Statement of Understanding
- ◆ Liability Waiver
- ◆ Medical Information Form

Please note that if you exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been ordered to self-isolate, you will be immediately isolated from the group and likely removed from the tour. There will be no refunds after tour departure and you will be responsible for the costs associated with being removed from the tour and any additional expenses incurred as a result. Please contact your travel insurance provider in order to submit a claim for expenses incurred.

Please visit our website for more details on the Pre-Screening Questionnaire, Statement of Understanding and our COVID-19 specific procedures and safety measures.

2. HOW TO RESERVE YOUR TRIP

Reserving your adventure with Spirit of the West Adventures is simple. Just call 1-800-307-3982 to speak with one of our friendly and helpful office crew, e-mail your request to info@kayakingtours.com or reserve your trip on the web through our online reservation request system. If reserving a private bubble tour, please contact us to have special group rates applied to your reservation.

If you're not sure if a particular trip is right for you or you're looking for more information, let us know and we would be happy to answer your questions or put you in touch with a past guest who has experienced the trip before.

To reserve space on our tours we ask for a deposit as well as a completed reservation form. We require a deposit of 25% on all tours.

Payment can be made by cheque, money order, Visa, MasterCard, or Interac e-Transfer; any processing charges or fees are your responsibility.

3. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A deposit to reserve your space on a tour is due at time of booking. For tours that take place in Canada, the balance of your trip cost is due 60 days prior to departure. For tours that take place outside of Canada, the balance of your trip cost is due 90 days prior to departure. If you book and pay after the final balance due date, all monies paid are non-refundable. For your convenience, with your authorization, we automatically charge your credit card when the balance is due unless otherwise arranged.

4. PRICING

All tours which take place in Canada are priced and charged in Canadian dollars; tours to Chile, the Bahamas and Greenland are priced and charged in US dollars. Any foreign currency pricing is only approximate. It is your credit card company or bank who determines your exchange rate on the day your transaction takes place. If for some reason you have to cancel and funds are refunded to your card Spirit of the West Adventures is not responsible for any differences in exchange rates. Pricing is subject to change.

For all Canadian tours there is an additional 5% Goods and Services Tax (GST). Tours that take place outside of Canada are not taxed. Non-tour add-ons (equipment rentals, merchandise) must be charged both 5% GST and 7% PST. All tours are also subject to a non-taxed voluntary \$20 per person sustainability fee which is donated to research and conservation organizations that work in the areas where we operate.

5. CANCELLATION POLICY

Please read section 1 in regards to cancellations due to COVID-19.

Please understand that our trip dates and capacities are limited, and when we accept your reservation we may be turning others away from booking that trip. If you find it necessary to cancel your tour, please let us know as soon as possible. No refunds are given once tours have departed. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for any additional costs that may arise in the event of a trip alteration or delay caused by circumstances beyond our control. To avoid confusion, we require written notice of cancellation, by email or mail. The following fees will apply to cancellations and are calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation notice, which can be sent by email or standard mail.

Tours that take place in Canada: If you must cancel your tour, your refund is as follows:

- ◆ 60 days or more prior to the trip departure date – Full amount is refunded less a \$150 administration fee (per person).
- ◆ 59-30 days prior to the trip departure date – 50% of total tour price is refunded.
- ◆ Less than 30 days prior to the trip departure date – No refund will be given.

Tours that take place outside of Canada: If you must cancel your tour, your refund is as follows:

- ◆ 90 days or more prior to the trip departure date – Deposit is refunded less a \$250 administration fee per person and the guest is responsible for any costs incurred for cancelling any additional tours or travel arrangements.
- ◆ 90-60 days prior to the trip departure date – 50% of total tour price is refunded.
- ◆ Less than 60 days prior to the trip departure date – No refund will be given.

We strongly recommend that all guests purchase travel insurance, including interruption, cancellation and medical coverage to cover costs associated with your travel in case of unforeseen circumstances. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for ensuring the appropriate level or amount of coverage is purchased. Please contact your travel insurance provider to ensure you have appropriate coverage for your entire trip. If you use a credit card for payment for your tour expenses, you may have trip interruption insurance as part of your card benefits. This coverage, however, is often a limited dollar amount, may not cover COVID-19 related issues and does not usually include cancellation or medical coverage. Please check with your specific card provider to ensure you are adequately insured. Personal equipment, baggage and valuables (cameras, electronics, jewellery, etc.) are carried entirely at the owner's risk. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for lost, damaged or delayed property.

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. reserves the right to cancel any trip prior to departure for any reason whatsoever, including but not limited to insufficient bookings. If we have to cancel a tour due to insufficient bookings, you may choose between an alternate trip or a full refund. We will inform participants of cancellations due to insufficient bookings at the earliest possible point and no later than 30 days prior to the tour departure. If the alternate trip chosen is of a lower value than the originally booked, then you are entitled to a refund of the difference. If the alternate tour chosen is of a higher value, then you will pay the difference in price.

If a tour has to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control and/or a circumstance amounting to "force majeure" such as war, threat of war, political instability, riots, civil disturbances, actual or threatened terrorist activity and its consequences, natural or nuclear disasters, fires, epidemics, health risks and pandemics, acts of God, industrial disputes, unforeseeable technical problems with transport for reasons beyond our control or that of our suppliers, closed or congested airports or ports,

hurricanes and other actual or potential adverse weather condition, and any other similar events, there will be no refund from Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Please contact your travel insurance provider for details on how to start a claim. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is not responsible for expenses incurred by trip participants in preparing for a cancelled trip (for example non-refundable advance purchase plane tickets, visa fees, inoculations, equipment etc. or for any additional arrangements for other travel plans associated with your travel). Spirit of the West will make every reasonable effort to contact you as soon as it appears that a trip may be cancelled.

6. TRIP PREPARATION

Once your tour is booked and your deposit is received by us, we'll send you a detailed document that includes everything that you will need to prepare for your tour including an itinerary, packing list, transportation options, directions, meeting times and frequently asked questions. For tours outside of Canada, we also include information about topics such as passports, visas, immunizations and currency exchange. All you need to bring is your passport, a sense of adventure, your clothing and personal items. Let us know if you're planning a birthday or anniversary trip. We'll pack a surprise!

7. DIETARY RESTRICTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

We need to know as soon as possible about any dietary requirements we should consider when planning your trip menu. If you have food allergies or restrictions, we will do our best to accommodate your needs. However, people with severe food allergies may need to supply some or all of their own food as we can't entirely mitigate the risk of cross-contamination. Additionally, some specific needs can only be met if we charge you a supplemental menu fee to cover our increased costs. Please note we are not a peanut- or nut-free facility.

Note: Pending a detailed discussion about a guest's specific dietary requirements, Spirit of the West Adventures may determine that a person with severe allergies and/or dietary restrictions is not suitable for our adventures due to the constraints of preparing food for groups of people in a wilderness setting.

8. MEDICAL & RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/ LIABILITY RELEASE FORMS

Each participant is required to fully fill out the Medical Information Form, Liability Release Form, a COVID-19 Pre-screening Questionnaire and Statement of Understanding in order to join the tour. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. must receive the completed Medical Information Form, Liability Release and Statement of Understanding at least 30 days prior to tour departure. Please read and understand the COVID-19 Pre-screening Questionnaire as you will be asked to complete the questionnaire the day before or day of your tour departure.

9. GUEST RESPONSIBILITY

All guests will be required to complete a Pre-Screening Questionnaire and Statement of Understanding regarding COVID-19. Your honesty in self-reporting on these forms, as well as compliance with our COVID-19 policies and procedures, is required and will help to keep us all safe.

Although no previous kayaking experience is required on our tours, as with any adventure there is always an element of risk. While our trips are not considered to be overly strenuous or physically demanding, we do require a moderate level of fitness and good general physical condition. If you have any physical limitations or concerns, please let us know. As we are not qualified to evaluate your level of fitness we ask that you (possibly along with your doctor) determine whether or not you are able to join one of our adventures. If you have any special medical conditions, we encourage you to check with your doctor before you reserve your trip. Please also note that all of our tours take place in remote areas and evacuations can take a great deal of time and can be expensive. Persons with physical limitations and/or disabilities are welcome on Spirit of the West tours, pending a discussion of any special needs and requirements.

You must also acknowledge that travel with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. requires a degree of flexibility and understanding that the trip's route, itinerary, accommodation and modes of transport are subject to change without prior notice due to local circumstances. While traveling with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. you agree to accept the authority of the leader at all times. You need to be aware that group travel may involve

compromise to accommodate the diverse desires and abilities of group members. We just ask that you welcome your adventure with an open mind and be able to laugh and have fun when encountering the unexpected. Spirit of the West is dedicated to providing safe, environmentally sensitive, well-organized, fun-filled adventures.

10. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

You must carry a valid passport and/or necessary documentation and have obtained the appropriate visas when travelling with Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Please ensure your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of your trip. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of the correct visas for your travels. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. does not accept responsibility if you are refused entry to a country because you lack the correct documentation, or the authorities deem you unsuitable for entry.

11. ACCOMMODATIONS ON TOUR

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. will do our best to make you comfortable and feel at home on your tour.

Tours within Canada: Keep in mind that our sea kayaking tours are a true wilderness experience that can involve camping in established and non-established sites. Our expedition style tours involve camping at sites with minimal facilities and rustic surroundings. Basecamp style tours afford more facilities and comforts. This is all part of what we call an adventure! Tenting and lodging is generally based on double occupancy, however if you are traveling solo we do our best to provide you with your own tent, please confirm this is possible when making your reservation.

Tours outside of Canada: Hotel portions of tours are based on double occupancy. If you prefer a single room there is an additional \$100/night single supplement charge. Availability of single rooms may be limited. Single accommodation on the mothership in Chile is not possible. All tenting is also based on double occupancy, however if you are travelling solo we do our best to provide you with your own tent.

12. GRATUITIES

Gratuities are not included in your tour costs. Gratuities are always appreciated. If you feel the guides and crew have done an exceptional job, tipping is a great way to show your appreciation. 10% of your tour cost is the industry standard – an amount which is then split between the guide team and any crew behind the scenes.

13. STORAGE OF PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Due to the nature of our services, it is necessary to collect and store a certain amount of personal and financial information. By providing us with address, personal and financial information, you consent to the storage of this information for a period of time deemed appropriate by Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, your first name, last name, phone number, email address and billing address and date of birth. Financial information includes, but is not limited to, your card account number, card expiration date and cardholder name. Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. is PCI compliant and is committed to ensuring the safety of your information.

14. PRIVACY POLICY

Spirit of the West Adventures occasionally sends out an e-newsletter and occasionally area- or activity-specific news that we think you'll want to hear about. We will assume you agree to email correspondence when you make an e-booking or provide us with your email in other situations such as competitions, promotions, prize draws and social media. We will NEVER SELL your email address to any third-party company. We do however sometimes share this information for the purpose of coordinating trip logistics, for example booking airline tickets, arranging travel and for helping with our marketing efforts. You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing or clicking on the links in newsletters. See our privacy policy for more details.

15. PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd, reserves the right to take photographic or film records of any of its tours. Trip members should be aware that Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. may use these photos or film for promotional and or commercial purposes without remuneration to the trip participants.



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#kayakrealmofwhales

Photos: Dave Hartman, Bex Dawkes & Kimberley Kufaas