



WHALES AND WILDERNESS – 2020 EDITION GUEST HANDBOOK

Please read through this package of information to help you to prepare for your tour. Please also remember to return your signed documents, and read and understand the liability waiver which you will be asked to sign upon arrival. Thank you very much. We hope you are getting excited for your unique kayaking vacation.



Contact us any time if you have more questions during trip planning or before your booked trip starts.

TO RESERVE YOUR
TRIP **CALL**



1 800 307 3982 Toll Free

TO BOOK
ONLINE **VISIT**



kayakingtours.com/reservations

OR SEND US AN
EMAIL



info@kayakingtours.com



THE TRIP AT A GLANCE

| | | |
|------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| TYPE | Basecamping at our glamping site with kayaking and wildlife watching in the beautiful Blackfish Sound and the Broughton Archipelago | |
| LENGTH | 3 days / 2 night or 4 days / 3 nights | |
| GROUP SIZE | Private group tours only. 2 to 8 guests plus 1-2 guides and 1 camp hygiene manager | |
| ACTIVITY LEVEL | Easy, suitable for beginners through experienced kayakers who like creature comforts. | |
| HIGHLIGHTS | Wildlife viewing, kayaking in the realm of the whales, fresh & healthy camp food, hot tub and shower with an ocean view, whales swimming past your tent at night, water taxi journey to and from camp, our highly-trained, friendly guides & naturalists | |
| WILDLIFE | Humpback whales, killer whales, dolphins, porpoises, black bears, eagles, minke whales | |
| PRICE PER PERSON | 3 days / 2 nights (Fri-Sun): | 4 days / 3 nights (Mon-Thur): |
| | 7-8 people \$1249 | 7-8 people \$1599 |
| | 6 people \$1399 | 6 people \$1699 |
| | 5 people \$1599 | 5 people \$1799 |
| | 4 people \$1849 | 4 people \$1999 |
| | 3 people \$2199 | 3 people \$2499 |
| | 2 people \$3299 | 2 people \$3599 |
| INCLUDES | Professional guiding service, customized days with kayaking tailored specifically to the ability and desire of your group, all kayaking equipment, all meals (lunch day 1 to lunch day 3 or 4), everything you need for a wonderful glamping experience, return water taxi service from Port McNeill, park and land use permitspermits | |
| TOUR DATES | 3 days / 2 nights (Fri-Sun): | 4 days / 3 nights (Mon-Thur): |
| | July 17-19 | July 13-16 |
| | July 28-30 (Tue-Thurs) | July 20-23 |
| | July 31-August 2 | July 24-27 (Fri-Mon) |
| | August 7-9 | August 3-6 |
| | August 14-16 | August 10-13 |
| | August 21-23 | August 17-20 |
| | August 21-23 | August 24-27 |
| | August 28-30 | August 31-September 3 |
| | September 4-6 | September 7-10 |
| | September 11-13 | |
| TOUR WEBPAGE | CLICK HERE | |



AN EXCLUSIVE COASTAL RETREAT

Sea kayaking, whales watching, and glamping in the Blackfish Sound

ITINERARY

Below you will find our recommended or typical trip itinerary. **Please remember that being a private group, we can customize and tailor each day of the trip and paddling times and distances can be modified depending on your group desire and abilities.**

Your guides have extensive training and will let you know what is possible in terms of safety, weather and sea conditions. You will be able to discuss your daily schedule with your guides or share any trip ideas with us before booking or at the virtual pre-trip meeting.

DAY 1

Rise and shine ready for adventure! After meeting your water taxi and a safety briefing, our captain James takes us across Johnstone Strait into Blackfish Sound. En route, sightings of marine life such as porpoises, dolphins, sea lions and whales are common. After arriving our team will provide a thorough safety briefing and orientation. We will then settle into the camp and have lunch followed by a kayak orientation and set off on an afternoon paddle.

We will return in time for a fresh locally caught fish dinner (alternatives of course for those who do not eat fish). Enjoy the sunset from the hot tub before retiring to rest for more explorations in the morning.

DAY 2 (AND DAY 3 ON THE 4-DAY TOUR)

After a hearty camp breakfast, we will meet to discuss our plans for the day. Our route and schedule will depend on weather conditions, wildlife viewing oppor-

tunities and group preferences. Generally, we set out in our kayaks after breakfast and paddle to one of the area's many pocket beaches for a picnic lunch before paddling 'home' again in time for some relaxation time before dinner. There is always something to see and learn around the camp. On our way, we'll take breaks for stretching and snacks, and we always take lots of time to explore the intricate shoreline, rich intertidal world, and marine and land-based wildlife. For the very brave there is always the option of a dip into the chilly waters of Blackfish Sound before a restorative soak in the hot tub!

DAY 3 (OR DAY 4 ON THE 4-DAY TOUR)

This is our last day of exploration. After a last breakfast we will have a morning paddle returning to camp for lunch and to pack up our things and soak up the last bit of tranquility before the water taxi arrives to transport us back to the starting point.

RETURN TIME

Our approximate return time to Port McNeill is between is **4-4:30pm** however, due to the variables of weather and wilderness travel, our return can be delayed by elements beyond our control.

This time frame provides the option to continue your journey that evening or to spend the night in Port McNeill.

COVID SAFETY ON YOUR TOUR

We are taking the risks associated with COVID-19 very seriously and have been busy preparing to be able to offer tours while minimizing risk. In addition to the measures outlined below, you may wish to visit our [Trip Planning in the Summer of 2020](#) page for more information.

At this time, we happily welcome guests who are sharing a “bubble”. A bubble includes those with whom you share a household and/or have added to your bubble in a thoughtful and intentional manner and no longer maintain physical distancing from.

OUR EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS A SAFE & ENJOYABLE TOUR

Below is a list of the primary, and most visible, measures we’re implementing for our special Whales and Wilderness 2020 Edition. In addition, Spirit of the West Adventures has taken the lead on developing best practices to minimize the risk for the sea kayaking sector in BC. The extensive written plan has been reviewed by WorkSafe BC.

[VIEW FULL OPERATIONS PLAN](#)

- A shorter water taxi transfer with more time spent exploring by kayak or enjoying the comforts of camp.
- Thorough training of all staff on COVID-safe health and safety procedures, rescues and first aid.
- Staff and guides will maintain a 2-meter distance from you and your group at all times.
- Personal protective equipment (non-medical face masks and latex gloves) available and used when appropriate.
- Masks will be worn in any occasion in which a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained from your staff and guide team (this should be minimal if any).
- Proper hand hygiene, gloves and masks will be worn for all food preparation.
- Thorough cleaning of all camp common areas and high touch areas multiple times per day.
- A redesigned camp layout which includes multiple new hand washing stations, in and out uni-directional trails, private toilets and hand washing facilities for each tent, and plexiglass barriers in food prep areas (don’t worry we can still smile at each other and have a conversation, just with a safety layer between us).
- We have left a night between groups to give our staff time to deep clean all facilities before you arrive.
- We are operating at reduced capacity which allows for your tent to be left unoccupied for at least 3 days in advance of your arrival, after a thorough cleaning of course.
- All meals will be prepared in our controlled camp kitchen and served plated or boxed up for you to enjoy on the beach while out kayaking
- Hot tub available for use only by your group (no staff use) and is drained and thoroughly cleaned between groups.
- Short 40-minute transfer to camp via water taxi which has an open-air back deck if you would like to avoid any enclosed spaces. Masks will be worn by all during the transfer.
- A personalized snack bag for you to carry for the duration of your tour (bonus: you get to take any remaining contents home with you when you are done!)

OUR COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER

As a measure of our commitment to safety and each other, we are introducing two documents that we will kindly ask you to read and sign before joining the trip. The pre-trip screening questionnaire is completed by both guests and staff and attests that you’re not sick when joining the trip and the statement of understanding is your acknowledgment of the expectations we have around our requirements and guidelines while on the trip. Please take your time to review them and contact us anytime if you have questions.

[VIEW STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING](#)

[VIEW PRE-TRIP QUESTIONNAIRE](#)



MEETING LOCATION

TOUR START ON DAY 1

WHERE & WHEN?

Port McNeill Municipal Dock (Harbour Park)

AT 9:00 AM

On day 1 of your trip you will meet the water taxi driver, James Wilson from Silver King Ventures, in Port McNeill at 9:00 am on northern Vancouver Island. (An approx. 5.5-hour drive by car north of Victoria or a 4 hours north of Nanaimo.)

The Municipal Dock is located at 1600 Beach Drive in downtown Port McNeill, between the visitor information centre and the ferry dock. There is a parking and unloading area conveniently located at the top of the dock. **You'll find the Silver King boat ("Rainbow Chaser")** on the first finger on the right at the bottom of the ramp. **Please arrive 15 minutes early** to allow time to unload, carry your luggage down to the dock and arrange parking (if necessary).

Your water taxi journey will be approx. 40 minutes and will give us the remainder of the day for camp orientation, paddling and enjoying this beautiful setting.

The previous group at the camp will have checked out the day before, so your guides will have had lots of time to go over the camp and sanitize tents and common areas thoroughly.

HOW TO PREPARE?

VIRTUAL PRE-TOUR MEETING

WHERE & WHEN?

Via your computer before leaving your home

Our team will be in contact with you to set up a Zoom (virtual video) pre-tour meeting. This meeting gives us a chance to answer any questions you may have, for you to meet our team, go over the logistics of the tour and to discuss what to expect. **We plan this for 7pm, 3 days before your trip starts, but alternate times may be arranged to suit your schedule.**

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

To sign and return as soon as possible:

- Medical Information Form** - if you didn't do this as part of the booking process, you can click on the blue button at the bottom of your trip invoice ("Complete Guest Details") to do so.

To read and understand now and sign before joining the trip:

- [Our company waiver](#)
- [COVID statement of understanding](#)
- [COVID pre-screening questionnaire](#)
- If you are travelling with a minor this will also include the [permission form](#) and [risk assessment summary](#).



PACKING LIST

On our Blackfish Sound basecamping tour we are transported to our wilderness base camp by boat which is equipped to carry all of our passengers, plenty of gear and is specially designed for safety and comfort. With this style of tour we are not restricted in the amount of luggage and gear we can bring as our gear does not have to fit in the kayaks. Although your gear will be stored in the cabin of the boat, you may want to waterproof some items, in the unlikely event that it may get wet while being transferring to and from boat.

At our glamping paradise on Swanson Island we have dry bags (waterproof bags) that will be given to you for use while kayaking. The small dry bags are great for cameras, sunscreen, and other small personal items that you would like to have near you. The larger ones will be for your spare clothing for the day.

TEMPERATURES

Please note that our summer temperatures from July until September are generally quite comfortable with temperatures from 18-30 degrees Celsius / 70-85 degrees Fahrenheit. It's not uncommon to find mid day summers hot enough to want to cool off in the ocean! June and later September will have cooler temperatures, and at ANY TIME OF YEAR we can have rain & wind, with temperatures occasionally as low as 13 C / 55 F. So, we say it is best to come prepared for any type of weather.

PLEASE NOTE WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- All safety & kayaking gear and everything you need for the perfect glamping:
 - Walk-in canvas tents on wooden platforms
 - Real beds (2 twins or 1 king size)
 - Thick soy foam mattresses
 - Warm blankets, 2 pillows, linens
 - Bath towels
 - Flashlight / headlamp
 - Mosquito repellent (Insects are generally not

- a significant concern for us on the coast.)
- Tea/coffee mug
- Dry bags
- Library of natural history books
- Camp binoculars (you may wish to bring your own pair for paddling)

If you have your own gear and would prefer to use it on your tour, please bring it to the pre-trip meeting so that we can make sure it is suitable and meets safety requirements. The following is a list of suggested items to bring along. If you have any concerns or questions about the list, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The following is a list of suggested items to bring along. If you have any concerns or questions about the list, please don't hesitate to contact us.

- Your own face mask(s) and hand sanitizer** – for travelling and for the water taxi ride to camp.
- Wetshoes** – A pair that can get wet such as sturdy full strapped sandals (such as Keens, Texas or Chacos), neoprene booties, crocs, or rubber boots. Please avoid flip-flops/thongs. Spirit of the West has a wide range of rubber boot sizes (youth – men's size 13) available to borrow free of charge if you don't have your own wet shoes or have limited space in your luggage. There will be an opportunity to try on boots at the pre-trip meeting.
- Camp footwear** – An additional pair of footwear that you plan to keep dry. Runners, trainers or light hikers are great.
- Hat** – A sun hat such as a baseball hat or full-brimmed hat as well as a wool or fleece warm hat for evenings or cooler days.
- Sunglasses & sunscreen** – A must for protection from sun and glare off of the water. Safety cords on your glasses are highly recommended.



- ❑ **Camera** – In a waterproof bag or case, or you may use our dry bags.
- ❑ **Bathing suit** – For the hot tub, or brave ocean swimmers!
- ❑ **Water bottle** – Bike bottles or Nalgene-style bottles work best.
- ❑ **Personal items** – Toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap/shampoo, washcloth, feminine hygiene products, hairbrush, etc.
- ❑ **Medication** – If you are bringing medication please ensure that; 1) The name and expiry date of drug is on the container; 2) You have the detailed instructions of your dosage and frequency; 3) It is packed in a water and sunproof container; 4) You bring a full extra dosage of your medication in a separate container to leave with your guide, in case you misplace or lose yours, or are weathered in. If you are flying, please pack all necessary medication in your carry-on luggage. This will help eliminate some stress should your checked bags be misplaced in transit.
- ❑ **Ziploc bags or other large plastic bag** – We will provide you with dry bags, but these come in handy for transporting laundry and/or wet clothing.
- ❑ **Gloves** (optional) – Biking gloves work well to protect your hands from blisters. If you are really concerned about cold hands, and are paddling in the spring or fall seasons, you may want to invest in neoprene gloves or pogies.
- ❑ **Beverages** – We supply a wide range of teas and coffee as well as juices. We also serve wine with dinner, but feel free to bring your own beer, or other alcoholic beverages or soda pops if you wish.
Please note however that we do expect our guests to consume alcoholic beverages responsibly and strictly enforce a no alcohol on the water policy.

- ❑ **Fishing gear** (optional) – Make sure you have a valid B.C. fishing license. These can be purchased on-line at <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/licence-permis/index-eng.htm>
- ❑ **Personal books or journal**
- ❑ **Binoculars** (optional)
- ❑ **Gratuity for your guides** – at your own discretion

CLOTHING

Clothing should be suitable for the time of year, bearing in mind that it could become cold and wet at any time of year. Layering is the best way to regulate body temperature and maintain warmth. We suggest avoiding cotton (except for those hot days). Cotton has no insulation value when wet. An inner material that wicks moisture from the body and gives a comfortable dry feeling even while wet is the best first layer (Polypropylene, Lycra, Nylon, Polyester). A synthetic material such as fleece or pile makes the best second layer to provide warmth. Wool is also suitable.

- ❑ **Rain jacket & rain pants** – For the unexpected nasty weather. To test your waterproofness – jump in the shower and see if you stay dry! (we're serious!). If you would like to rent/hire raingear from us, please reserve in advance of the tour. Tops and bottoms can be rented for \$25 plus tax for the set.
- ❑ **Light windproof jacket** (optional)
- ❑ **Long pants** – 1 pair of fleece or warm comfortable pants. 2 lighter pairs made of a quick drying, synthetic fabric. Athletic style pants (running or yoga) are generally appropriate. Jeans are **NOT** recommended for paddling, but can be worn around camp.



- ❑ **Lightweight long underwear** – 2 pairs, helps to keep you warm at night or as a base layer during the day. We recommend one set for kayaking and one set which is reserved for sleeping and always stays dry.
 - ❑ **Sweaters** – 2 warm wool or fleece sweaters (one may be all you need, but it is nice to have a spare in case one gets wet).
 - ❑ **Long-sleeved non-cotton shirt** (synthetic/wool)
- 2
 - ❑ **T-shirts** – 2 or 3.
 - ❑ **Shorts** – 1-2 quick dry nylon
 - ❑ **Warm socks** – 3 to 5 pairs (1 warmer pair for around camp)
 - ❑ **Undergarments**
 - ❑ **An extra set of clothes** that you may want to reserve for the end of the trip.
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SANITATION IN THE WILDERNESS

The kayak cuts no grooves and leaves no scars, as it travels freely through the waters. However, on land, especially with the increasing number of kayakers venturing into new territory and seeking the untraveled path, we must respect our surroundings and be aware of our impact on these environmentally sensitive areas. Spirit of the West Adventures makes every effort to ensure we leave our area as we found it, if not better.

All of our camping & glamping sites are in natural settings - a true and beautiful wilderness experience. However, as far as our glamping goes, this is a relaxed and comfortable setup. With outhouses, washing stations with sinks, and hot showers with stunning views

into the rainforest or overlooking the Pacific ocean you'll feel better than at home.

Our newest glamping site feature for the 2020 summer season is a private outdoor toilet for each tent as well as a hand-wash station.

While out on our day excursions with the kayaks, your guide will discuss proper elimination techniques and suggest a suitable private area. Your guide will carry a toiletry bag complete with toilet paper, Ziploc and paper bags as well as hand sanitizer. If you have any concerns while on tour please do not be shy to ask your guide – they are very used to making sure everyone feels comfortable while in the wilderness.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below is a list of commonly asked questions. Feel free to visit our website, select your tour and find an even more detailed FAQ section. Of course, feel free to contact us with any questions at all, before or during your trip. We are happy to help you find the perfect tour for you and your comfort is very important to us.

Where can I find updates on CORONAVIRUS?

Please [click here](#) for the most updated 'Trip Planning in the Summer of 2020' guide. You will learn about all our adaptations to COVID-19 and paddling safely in British Columbia. To read our general Terms and Conditions, please [click here](#). We also published a [Travel Insurance 101](#) which will help you answer basic travel insurance questions, such as 'What is travel insurance?' and 'Why do I need it?'

What is the minimum age required to join our tours?

Being a private bubble group you can bring your younger kids starting at **age 6**. The tour can be tailored to you and your family. Depending on your desire and abilities we can custom design the daily schedule and kayaking.

Can you accommodate food allergies/special diets?

Our food preparation crew are masters at accommodating dietary restrictions. We are able to offer gluten-free, vegetarian, pescatarian, dairy light and vegan menus with prior notice. Other dietary requests may involve additional charges and need to be discussed in advance with our food crew. **We are NOT a nut-free facility.**

Will I comfortably fit in the kayaks?

If you are over 6ft (182cms) tall, if you are on the more petite side of things, have larger hips or weigh over 250lbs (115 kg) we have certain kayaks that may work best for you. Please give us a call and we can ensure we have the appropriate kayak available for you.

What is included in the tour costs?

We supply everything that you will need for kayaking and glamping except for a few personal items such as your face mask for travelling and to wear on the water taxi ride to camp) clothing, toiletries, and rain gear (rain gear can be rented if needed). Please note that bedding is provided on the Whales and Wilderness Glamping - 2020 Edition tour.

We provide all meals from lunch on day one to lunch on the last day. Non-alcoholic beverages including a variety of teas, coffee, juices, hot chocolate are provided. Alcohol is not provided and you are welcome to bring your favourite wine, beer or pop to enjoy responsibly.

What do I need to bring?

For this 2020 Edition tour starting mid July, we ask you to bring your own face mask and hand-sanitizer for travelling

and on the water taxi ride to camp. Please find all details in the packing list in this reservation package.

How much kayaking experience is required?

This designed to cater to all levels of experience and abilities from first-timer to expert paddler.

Remember that this can be a customized and tailored trip for your private group. Paddling days on the water can be adapted to shorter or longer excursions depending on your group's desires and abilities. Your guides have extensive training in keeping all sea kayaking excursions safe and joyful and will always consult the group in terms of the weather and wind forecasts. You will be able to discuss your daily schedule with your guides or share any trip ideas with us before booking or at the virtual pre-trip meeting.

Do I need to be in great shape for this trip?

The majority of our adventures are not considered to be overly strenuous or physically demanding and therefore do not require a high level of fitness. Each tour is slightly different in its demands so if you are concerned, please do contact us. As a general rule, you need to be capable of a few hours of moderate exercise each day and be comfortable with the uneven ground of a wilderness environment. The Whales and Wilderness Glamping - 2020 Edition can be suited to folks with mildly limited mobility or those who wish to be in the wilderness, but not do any kayaking (you can always choose to stay at camp on our base-camping style tours). Please keep in mind that good general health will go a long way towards the enjoyment of your tour. Most important though is an adventurous spirit.

How much paddling do we do each day?

This can be designed as a fully tailored trip and the paddling depends on your desires and weather conditions. Generally, we travel between 3-5 hours a day on our base-camping style tours. We set a pace which is manageable and enjoyable for all.

Is there electricity at the camp?

We have plenty of electricity supplied by solar panels and a battery bank. When the weather is nice, we have more power; when it's not, we have a little less. Each of the tents have LED lighting to see at night. Everyone should be able to charge a camera battery or phone during the trip. No high-energy power appliances like hair dryers.

How many people sleep in each tent?

2020 Edition: four glamping tents will be available to your private bubble group. You can decide amongst yourselves how the tent arrangement works for group. The tents are designed for two adults, or two adults and up to two children. Each tent contains two twin beds that can be pushed together to make a king size bed if you prefer. We are able to put 1-2 cots in a tent too.

How stable are the kayaks?

What is the likelihood of flipping over?

The kayaks we use are stable and designed for comfort. Your guides will give you thorough instruction on how to safely use and enjoy the kayaks and what to do in case of a capsize. For those concerned about capsizing, the double kayaks are slightly more stable than the singles and we have a variety of both singles and doubles on every trip. The likelihood of a capsize is minimal and if it does happen your well-trained guides will be there before you know it to help.

What happens if my kayak flips over?

In the rare event of a capsize, all of our guides are trained in rescue procedures in order to quickly and efficiently get you back in your boat. At this point, we will take you to the nearest shoreline to change into some warm clothing and carry on with our journey when you are ready. While we are out on the water, it is of the utmost importance that the group stays together for safety.

If the weather turns bad? Will I be comfy and warm?

Our weather in the Pacific Northwest is generally pleasant from May through until September. For a reference please check the Port McNeill, BC weather forecast.

Fog is very common on summer mornings, however, this nearly always clears at midday. Although it is uncommon, it can rain in the summer. Be prepared for any type of weather and you will stay comfortable. Layering is the key. It allows you to put on or take off layers while on the water if you need to. This camp offers two hot showers and a wood-fired hot tub to keep you fresh and warm end of the paddling day.

What sort of wildlife might we see?

The diversity and abundance of wildlife in the Pacific Northwest and in particular in the Blackfish Sound region where our glamping camp is located are one of our great privileges. From the rich marine life of colourful plants and invertebrates, seabirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, mink, otter, seals, sea lions, dolphins, and whales, to the land animals of deer, raccoons, cougars, wolves, and bears, we are bound to see something.

For those keen to see humpback whales- you are in luck. The population of humpbacks in our area is doing well and we are fortunate to often see these whales any time of the year. If orcas are your main priority then we recommend traveling between mid-July and mid-September.

Please just remember that wildlife is just that wild and we cannot control sightings. That said the whales are the icing on the cake in this stunning, rich and diverse area.

How close to we paddle to whales & other wildlife?

We do our very best to provide awesome sightings of whales but all the while ensuring that we do not disrupt the natural behaviour of all the wildlife we encounter. We abide by the Canadian whale watching regulations which means **we do not approach killer whales (orcas) any closer than 200 meters (656 ft) and all other cetaceans no closer than 100 meters (328 ft).**

To learn more about how we do our best to minimize our impacts on whales check out nimmsa.org the North Island Marine Mammal Stewardship Association. Your trip fees help to fund whale research and conservation efforts through the NIMMSA fund which Spirit of the West Contributes too.

What is the camp setup like?

If you are looking for the most comfortable camping experience, this tour is your best choice! The Whales and Wilderness Glamping - 2020 Edition provides large walk-in canvas wall style tents, real beds with organic soy foam mattresses, pillows of various levels of firmness, warm bedding, two hot showers, a wood-fired hot tub, a large deck with a comfortable lounge and our Blackfish Sound Bistro to enjoy your meals.

Our newest camp feature for the 2020 summer season includes a private outdoor toilet for each tent as well as a hand-wash station!

We offer thoroughly cleaned and sanitized facilities and a full time hygiene manager at camp.

Where do we wash and are there toilets?

You are offered two hot freshwater showers and established pit style outhouses. We provide soap but if you want to bring your own, we kindly ask you to bring biodegradable, environmentally friendly brands. **Our newest camp feature for the 2020 summer season includes a private outdoor toilet for each tent as well as a hand-wash station!**

Where can I leave my vehicle while on tour?

Most hotels in Port McNeill will allow you to leave your vehicle while being on tour.

Where do I have to get to to start this trip and how long does the boat ride take into camp?

Port McNeill Municipal Dock (Harbour Park) at 9:00 am

Port McNeill based on Vancouver Island (approx. 5.5-hour drive from Victoria and 4-hour drive from Nanaimo) is our meeting location for the Whales and Wilderness - 2020 Edition tour. A short 40-minute water taxi ride across Johnstone Strait brings us to our camp. You can comfortably stay on the open-air back deck for the duration.

What about kayak preferences? Do you provide double and single kayaks?

We use a mix of single and double kayaks on every trip. Double kayaks offer great advantages for carrying cargo, matching paddler abilities, or sharing the load if someone is feeling a little tired one day. If there are a lot of people on one trip that prefer singles then we take turns in the double(s), so we ask that everyone have a bit of flexibility with regard to what they paddle.

If I would like to tip the guides, what is the industry standard?

If you would like to express your appreciation to the guides through a gratuity, such recognition would be enthusiastically received. The industry standard for tipping is approx. 10% per person of the trip cost. All tips received will be collected and disbursed amongst your guides & basecrew by the trip leader.



ACCOMMODATIONS

WHILE ON TOUR

For this tour we provide white, bright and spacious cotton canvas tents made here on Vancouver Island 10×12' (3×3.6m). They are 8' (2.4m) high at the peak so have ample room for standing up and moving around with ease. The screened windows and front door provide sweeping views of the forest and and/or ocean. The tents are perched off the ground on cedar platforms, helping to protect the delicate ecosystem below.

YOUR GLAMPING HOME

Inside your tent are 2 twin beds which can be pushed together to make a king size if desired. These beds are handmade by our wonderful crew with locally milled red cedar and beach driftwood accents. The beds each have a 6-inch thick soya foam mattress, comfortable pillows crisp white linens, a warm duvet and fleece blankets for those cooler nights. Bedside tables, crafted from local wood, hold a lamp for reading and a hot water bottle to help take the chill off when you crawl into your bed to dream about what's in store for the morning.

BEFORE & AFTER TOUR

We encourage our guests to spend the night before and after your Spirit of the West kayak tour in Port McNeil on Northern Vancouver Island.

If your travelling plans look differently it is possible to have an early start and drive from southern parts of Vancouver Island to arrive in Port McNeill before 9am on your tour departure day. The same applies for the last day of your tour. You can either spend the night in Port McNeill or continue your journey in the late afternoon/evening after returning from camp.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN PORT MCNEIL

SPORTSMAN'S INN

Special rate for our guests, \$99/night, parking is \$10/day and cars can be left for duration of your tour, no breakfast service

mcneillsinn.northislandsportsman.com

250-956-3354 or cell 250-230-519

guspub@telus.net

BLACK BEAR INN

Special rate (10% off) for our guests, no breakfasts other than juice boxes and granola bars due to COVID. Free parking for duration of your tour but quite a distance from where you meet the water taxi.

port-mcneill-accommodation.com, blackbr@telus.net

1-866-956-4900 or 250-956-4900

HAIDA WAY INN

Special rate for our guests, \$95 plus 15% tax for a single room, \$112 plus 15% tax for double or twin room, free parking for duration of your tour but quite a distance from where you meet the water taxi

pmhotels.com

TELEGRAPH COVE RESORTS

25 minutes south of Port McNeill

Hotel rooms in the new building or cabins, tenting or RV spaces available, online booking preferable

Parking available for \$5/day

telegraphcoveresort.com

AIR B&B

Multiple locations, various prices, rates and amenities. Ensure you select Port McNeill (not Port Hardy or Sointula which also appear in the search results).



GETTING HERE

Tour meeting location:

This tour departs from Port McNeill on northern Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, Canada. You can travel to Port McNeill by car or plane.

DRIVING / FERRY SERVICE

Driving to Port McNeill is quite straight forward. When you are on Vancouver Island: From Victoria drive north on Highway 1 to Nanaimo. From Nanaimo head north on Highway 19 until you see the sign for Port McNeill. Port McNeill is 1 minute off the main highway. The only other option to this route is north of Nanaimo just before you reach Parksville you can take the seaside route on Highway 19A. This route rejoins the main Highway 19 at Campbell River. The seaside route may add an extra hour to your trip.

Drive time from Victoria to Port McNeill is approximately 5.5 hours and from Nanaimo to Port McNeill is approximately 4 hours.

If you are coming from the mainland of British Columbia (Vancouver area), you first need to sail on BC Ferries to either Nanaimo or Victoria on Vancouver Island. Then follow the directions above.

BC FERRIES

1 888 223 3779, Overseas 1 250 386 3431
customerservice@bcferries.com.

Visit bcferries.com for current schedule information

CAR RENTALS

Car rentals are available through various rental locations in Vancouver, Victoria or Nanaimo. If you are planning a one-way rental, your only option is Budget who have a location at the Port Hardy Airport (closest car rental to Port McNeill).

BUDGET CANADA

Calling from Canada: 800-268-8900, budget.ca

AIR TRAVEL

Flights to Port Hardy (YZT), the closest airport to Port McNeill, depart from the South Terminal of Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and are approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. These flights are operated by Pacific Coastal Airlines. Port Hardy airport is a 30 minute taxi ride from Port McNeill. We recommend reserving a taxi with Waivin Flags Taxi from Port McNeill.

PACIFIC COASTAL AIR

Toll Free 1 800 663 2872, Overseas 1 604 273 8666,
reserve@pacificcoastal.com, pacific-coastal.com

AIR CANADA

1 800 247 2262 (in Canada), Overseas 1 514 393 3333, aircanada.com

If flying with Air Canada or one of its partners, and you are not planning to visit Vancouver, you may want to check on flying to either Nanaimo (YCD), Victoria (YYJ), Comox (YQQ), or Campbell River (YBL) on Vancouver Island. While you would still need to rent a car it saves you the time and cost of the ferry.

TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR 2020 EDITION TOURS

- If either Spirit of the West Adventures or guests need to cancel for COVID illness or precautions, then the full amount paid for the tour is refundable. Guests may need to provide medical documentation that the cancellation is due to COVID illness or precautions versus other reasons to receive refund. If cancelling for anything other than COVID our regular cancellation policy applies (see "Cancellation Policy" section below). Please note, expenses outside of the kayaking tour i.e. travel, hotel etc. would remain your responsibility.
- In order to participate you will need to complete and answer satisfactorily a Pre-Screening Questionnaire as well as a Statement of Understanding.

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

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 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.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A deposit to reserve your space on a tour is due at time of booking. The balance of your trip cost is due **60 days** prior to departure. For your convenience, with your authorization, we automatically charge your credit card when the balance is due unless otherwise arranged.

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. 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.

CANCELLATION POLICY

*Please see above for updates as a result of 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:

- Earlier than 60 days before trip – Full amount is refunded less a \$150 administration fee (per reservation).
- 59-30 days before trip – 50% of total tour price is refunded.*
- Later than 30 days before trip – No refund will be given.*

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

- Earlier than 90 days before trip – deposit is refunded less a \$250 administration fee and the guest is responsible for any costs incurred for cancelling any additional tours or travel arrangements.
- 90-60 days before trip – 50% of total tour price is refunded.*
- Less than 60 days before trip – No refund will be given.*

*If we can find someone to fill your space, you may be eligible for a partial refund.

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 (travel insurance is mandatory for all Chile and Bahamas tours). 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 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.

Learn more about Travel Insurance here: [Travel Insurance: The Basics](#)

Spirit of the West Adventures Ltd. reserves the right to cancel any trip prior to departure for any reason whatsoever, including insufficient bookings, safety threats including natural disasters, political instability, terrorism, infectious disease or logistical problems that may impede trip operations.

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 no later than 60 days prior to the tour. 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, e.g. political instability, natural disasters, labour strikes, infectious disease, etc., 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 this tour.**) **Spirit of the West will make every reasonable effort to contact you as soon as it appears that a trip may be cancelled.**

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TRIP PREPARATION

Once you've made your choice and sent in your deposit, 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 international tour destinations, we include information about issues 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!

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. On Chile and Bahamas tours the availability of ingredients or restaurant kitchens outside of our control may limit the type of dietary accommodation we are able to offer. 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 is not suitable for our adventures due to the constraints of preparing food for groups of people in a wilderness setting.

MEDICAL AND RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/ LIABILITY RELEASE FORMS

Each participant is required to fully fill out the [medical form and 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 medical form either at least 30 days prior to tour departure or upon reservation. Please read and understand the liability waiver, pre-screening questionnaire and statement of understanding upon registration. You will be asked to sign the waiver and complete the pre-screening questionnaire and statement of understanding before tour departure.

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.

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.

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 with minimal facilities and rustic surroundings. 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 or a suitable tent partner.

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 or a suitable tent partner.

TIPPING

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. We also appreciate other expressions of thanks including cards, letters etc.

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. 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.

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 NEVER sell your email address with any third-party company (unless it is for the purpose of coordinating trip logistics, for example booking airline tickets). You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing or clicking on the links in newsletters. See our [privacy policy](#) for more details.

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.