

ULTIMATE FAMILY ADVENTURE



GUEST HANDBOOK



SPIRIT
OF THE WEST
ADVENTURES

TOUR OVERVIEW

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

This Ultimate Family Adventure is specially designed for families with kids age 5 and older. This tour provides opportunities for exploration, learning about wildlife, playing games, and beachcombing. The emphasis of this tour is on having fun in the wilderness, exploring by kayak, and experiential learning in nature.



OUR FAMILY BASECAMP ON WEST CRACROFT ISLAND

The Ultimate Family Adventure basecamp on West Cracroft is the perfect family setting, with comfortable amenities such as large tents on wooden platforms, a hot tub overlooking the ocean, hot showers and delicious kid-friendly food. Positioned with mountain views of northern Vancouver Island, you may catch a sweeping sunset or a wildlife sighting from the oceanfront hot tub. Children and adults love exploring and relaxing in this wilderness oasis!

The area we share with you on this tour is the traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw people of the 'Namgis, Mamamlilikala, and Ławitsis 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: Base camp

TRIP DURATION: 4 days / 3 nights

GROUP SIZE: 12 guests, 3 guides & 1 camp staff

WHEN WE GO: July + August

[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 4 RETURN TIME: Between 2 - 2:30 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, daily kayaking excursions, paddling equipment, base camp accommodation, all meals and snacks from lunch day 1 to a bagged lunch on the final day, use of camp hot tub, return water taxi journey, 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



WHAT TO EXPECT



KAYAKING

We aim to paddle every day of your tour, but the duration of paddling will vary depending on the weather conditions and your family's wishes and abilities. Please communicate your family's preferences to your guides.

A fleet of good quality fibreglass kayaks are available for use. Please expect to rotate through a variety of single and double kayaks during your tour. Children under 12 are always placed in the front of a double boat. If an older child demonstrates their competency and conditions are favourable, they may have the opportunity to try paddling solo at the discretion of the guides.

Our tours require everyone to work together as a team. Your assistance will be required to help unload luggage from the water taxi and with carrying kayaks up and down the beach. If you need help at anytime, please let us know.

CAMP

Your guide team are a fun and dynamic bunch who will help ensure you and your family have a great time. We have a variety of books, games, resources, the hot tub, and of course kayaking to help keep your family engaged and smiling.

We will stay at our basecamp on West Cracroft Island for all three nights of the trip. At the basecamp, you will encounter uneven surfaces, unsupervised rocky and slippery beaches, and bluffs. Please note you are always responsible for your children and keeping an eye on them. Our team will help with your kiddos when they can, however they will also be busy keeping camp running smoothly. Traditional childcare services are unavailable.

The basecamp sits just outside normal cell service areas, so you can enjoy your time with us free from digital distractions. If you need to find a signal to check in, you can find service as you paddle. In a pinch, we occasionally are able to provide (very limited and spotty) wifi.

We have a limited supply of electricity through solar panels and a battery bank at camp. Everyone should be able to charge a camera battery at least once while on the trip and possibly more, but we recommend bringing your own personal battery bank to use throughout your tour to ensure you are able to charge your devices. Please be aware that water is sourced from a stream, so shower length may need to be limited during summer dry periods.

FOOD

All meals and snacks are included, from lunch on day one to a bagged lunch on your final day. On our tours, you can look forward to hearty, healthy, and satisfying food. For our Family Tours, we like to check in about food as we recognize that some children may prefer alternatives for some of our meal options (such as ling cod). Please feel free to review [a sample of our menu here](#) and let us know as soon as possible (at least 30 days before your tour) if there are any foods your child may not enjoy eating.

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.

After a quick safety briefing, you'll jump aboard our water taxi for a scenic 40 minute boat journey across the Johnstone Strait.

Upon arrival at West Cracroft Island, your guides will serve lunch before an orientation of camp. After the orientation, you'll have the opportunity to settle into your tent.

Following this, the group will meet on the beach for a kayak orientation, before heading off for an optional late afternoon paddle.

Delicious appetizers will be ready and waiting for when you get ashore. Spend the rest of your evening relaxing, enjoying dinner and taking in the incredible scenery that surrounds you.

DAYS 2-3

Tailor your days to your family's preferences: paddle as much or as little as you'd like, explore beaches and tidepools, and learn all about the diverse world of living creatures big and small from our enthusiastic and engaging guide team.

When out kayaking, a picnic lunch will be prepared en-route. Each day, we aim to be back at our basecamp by mid-afternoon.

Evenings are spent playing games, relaxing in the wood fired hot tub, and savouring a delicious, kid-friendly meal before cozying up in your private walk-in tent for a restful night's sleep.

DAY 4

Savour a tasty breakfast and your final moments on the water during an early morning paddle. The water taxi arrives at camp around 1 pm to bring you back to Alder Bay. You can expect to be back at your vehicle by 2 - 2:30 pm.



PACKING FOR YOUR ADVENTURE



As we are traveling by water taxi, you are welcome to pack in a duffel bag, backpack, suitcase (or a combination of these!) Please be prepared that you will be required to carry your own luggage along boardwalks to the water taxi and along uneven trails to your tent.

Spirit of the West provides the following: safari-style tents with cozy beds (*bedding not provided, please bring your own 3-season sleeping bag*), pillow, a towel, shower gel, shampoo and conditioner, paddling equipment, waterproof drybags, small backpack for optional hike, travel mug, camp binoculars and plenty of comfy places to sit. We have some games available, but please bring additional activities, books, toys, or games that your child enjoys.

Spirit of the West does **not** provide a sleeping bag or rain gear (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
- ☐ 1 x windbreaker, shell, or second rain jacket
- ☐ 3 x warm socks
- ☐ Underwear *(a mix of cotton and synthetic)*
- ☐ 1 x bathing suit
- ☐ 1 x toque/beanie
- ☐ A pair of shoes *(runners, light hikers, sturdy sandals)*

OTHER ITEMS

- ☐ Sleeping bag *(3-season, recommended, rentals available with advance notice)*
- ☐ Headlamp
- ☐ Personal toiletries *(ecofriendly/biodegradable)*
- ☐ Sunscreen, bug spray, & SPF lip balm
- ☐ Water bottle

OPTIONAL

- ☐ Camera & spare batteries
- ☐ Activities, cards, or games your family enjoys
- ☐ Battery bank
- ☐ Waterproof phone case or water camera
- ☐ 1-2 x Carabiners
- ☐ Paddling gloves or pogies
- ☐ Buff or neck gaiter
- ☐ Spare eye glasses & contact lenses
- ☐ Medication *(if flying, please pack necessary medication in your carry-on luggage)*
- ☐ Carbonated or alcoholic beverages *(we have a no alcohol on the water policy, please refrain from consuming alcohol until we are done kayaking for the day)*
- ☐ Guide team gratuity *(cash or credit card - 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:

- [Listening to Whales: What the Orcas Have Taught Us](#) - Alexandra Morton
- [Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast](#) - Hilary Stewart
- 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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