

British Columbia Orcas & Grizzlies Sailing Itinerary

[Link: British Columbia Orcas & Grizzlies Sailing](#)

Tour Overview

At the northern end of Vancouver Island lies a maze of islands and waterways, full of wildlife, beautiful scenery, and the history and traditions of the Kwakwaka'wakw people (Kwakiutl). The Pacific Ocean funnels into the protected waters of Johnstone Strait creating strong tidal currents, and incredibly nutrient-rich waters. Millions of salmon, returning to spawn in the mainland rivers, must converge to pass through the Strait. Groups of orca (or killer whales) hunt the salmon in the passages.

Johnstone Strait is the best place in the world to see orca / killer whales. Visit Alert Bay and Village Island, see diverse marine mammals and view grizzly bears up Knight Inlet!

On all our voyages we intentionally keep our itineraries flexible to take advantage of wildlife sightings, weather and tides, and the interests of the group. This sample itinerary describes a typical 7-day trip, however, activities may occur in a different order or be substituted by suitable alternatives. Itinerary

Itinerary

Day 1: Embarkation, Port McNeill



Our Orcas & Grizzlies sailing tour starts and finishes in Port McNeill, BC. Guests will meet in the morning at the top of the Cab's Fuel Dock on the Port McNeill waterfront. Upon boarding "Island Odyssey", cabins will be assigned and an introductory safety briefing will be completed. We have chosen Port McNeill as the starting point for this voyage because it is the closest port to the core killer whale area. We expect to discover our first pod or group of whales the first afternoon. You will agree that orcas are one of the most exciting marine mammals to watch as we see them foraging for salmon, spyhopping, and breaching (leaping clear of the water). Guests will learn about the behaviour of these fascinating creatures, listen to them calling on the ship's underwater microphone, and learn how to identify individual animals. Each night we anchor in a secluded anchorage.

Days 2-6: Johnstone Strait



Our focus these days will be on the waters of Johnstone Strait, the core whale watching area. In addition to multiple encounters with orca, we expect some wonderful experiences with humpback whales also. We have been gifted with visits from super pods of Pacific white-sided dolphins and Dall's porpoise often come over to the boat to play on the yacht's bow wave. We will visit the modern Kwakwaka'wakw community of Alert Bay to visit the U'Mista Cultural Centre and see a fascinating collection of potlatch masks. If we have a good wind, we expect to raise the sails and enjoy the silence and beauty of sailing. There will be time to explore the protected waters using our stable, sea kayaks that we carry onboard. At the entrance to Knight Inlet is the abandoned Kwakwaka'wakw village of Mimquamlees. With permission from the local native band we will explore the old village to discover fallen totem poles and a rich heritage. With a good low tide, we may explore the shore for different species of colourful sea stars, anemone, and algae. We often hike into the coastal forest to see big trees and learn about the forest plants.

Day 7: Departure

Mid morning we return to Port McNeill to complete our voyage. Participants can catch afternoon flights back to Vancouver.

What to Expect

On our British Columbia Orcas and Grizzlies sailing tour, as in all of our destinations, our itineraries remain flexible. This allows the crew to take time to enjoy wildlife sightings, spend more time at an ancient village site, or simply cater to the interests of the group.

Usually on the Pacific Coast we have a good variety of constantly changing weather. Expect a mixture of sunshine, rain and wind on most trips. You will require waterproof rain gear and rubberboots as most of our landings will be wet, where you will be stepping into the water and onto the beach.

We travel in protected areas most of the time. On many days of the summer this coast is like sailing on a lake - flat and calm. Sometimes we cross into open water for short periods of time where we may experience greater motion. If you are prone to motion sickness it is a good idea to bring sea sickness medication. Check with your doctor.

All of our meals are served buffet style. We can usually accommodate most special dietary concerns if we are given sufficient advance notice.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All meals from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on the last day
- All accommodation onboard ship; skipper, cook, naturalist;
- Full use of all onboard facilities, including kayaks.

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Transportation to the start point and from the finish point of the trip
 - Accommodation or meals prior to the start of the trip or after the completion
 - Travel or cancellation insurance
 - Airport transfers
 - \$100 CAD / \$85 USD Sustainability fee
 - Taxes (5% GST)
 - The only money participants require during the trip is for optional purchases and gratuities for the crew.
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