

Haida Gwaii Sailing Itinerary

Link: Haida Gwaii Sailing

Tour Overview

The Islands of Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands) are one of the richest biological and cultural areas in North America. The majestic coast, wilderness, people and wildlife of coastal British Columbia are stunning; this coast has some of the most magnificent tracts of temperate rainforest remaining on the planet.

Aboard our 82' sailing vessel, we will cruise the waters of this remote archipelago seeing ancient Haida villages, an incredible abundance of wildlife and outstanding wilderness scenery. We should encounter Killer Whales, seals and sea-lions, maybe Humpback and Gray Whales, Black Bears, as well as dozens of Bald Eagles, puffins, murres, guillemots, and murrelets. Sabine's Gulls, shearwaters, petrels and even Black-footed Albatross are possible, as are other surprises!

Our crew are experienced sailors and naturalists with extensive knowledge of Haida Gwaii. They will help you learn about the diverse natural history and about issues that made preservation of Gwaii Haanas a vital environmental battle for more than a decade. We hope you join us for what promises to be an engaging and exciting voyage of discovery!

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 9-day trip, however, activities may occur in a different order or be substituted by suitable alternatives. Itinerary

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Sandspit, BC

Arrive in Sandspit. Overnight at the Inn at Sandspit. Most of our guests fly with Air Canada direct from Vancouver. Transportation to The Inn is not required as it's located across the street from the Airport. It is a quick walk (approximately 150 yards), out the main doors and to your right. There are carts available to help you transport your baggage. In order to facilitate the check-in process, we have reserved a room for you under your name at the Inn's front desk. Dinner for this evening is on your own. We recommend the Inn's dining room. If you would like to venture out, Sandspit has two other restaurant choices; Dick's Wok Inn (Chinese cuisine) and the Orange Roof. Your evening's accommodation at the Inn at Sandspit and breakfast the following morning are included.

Day 2: Begin Your Haida Culture Learning



Meet early morning to take part in what Bluewater calls the 'Land Tour' of Haida Gwaii prior to boarding the boat; expanding your understanding of Haida culture and allowing a deeper appreciation and comprehension of the land and incredible historic sites we will see during the trip. The land tour includes a visit to the Haida Heritage Centre, traditional Haida lunch, and an interpretive walk at Spirit Lake. In the afternoon, guests are transferred by shuttle van to Moresby Camp where you will meet your Bluewater Adventures crew & vessel, enjoy dinner onboard, and set sail south for Gwaii Haanas. The islands of Gwaii Haanas offer an ethereal landscape of sandy beaches, lowland rainforest, and boggy plateau. The archipelago also provides a remarkable evolutionary showcase. Theories suggest that parts of Haida Gwaii escaped the last ice age, forming a refuge for plant and animal life. This helps to explain the presence of unique plant species and sub-species of wildlife found only in archipelago.

Days 3 - 8: Gwaii Haanas & Historic Village Sites



We will journey through history as Haida Watchmen welcome us to historic Haida village sites including T'aanuu Llnagaay (Tanu), K'uuna Llnagaay (Skedans), and SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island) - a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Haida Watchmen share their knowledge of traditional culture and bring their ancestors' villages to life under weathered monumental poles and amid the remains of multitiered longhouses. Weather permitting, we may visit Hlk'yah GawGa (Windy Bay) on Lyell Island, the site of the first pole raised in 130 years. There may also be a chance to visit Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotspring Island) for a refreshing hot soak. In addition to these incredibly special historic Haida sites, we can anticipate days filled with flora and fauna, shore excursions, and the potential for morning and evening kayaking. A vast array of seabirds and marine life such as whales and sea lions will keep us company at sea; while floating through K'iid Xyangs K'iidaay (briefly known as Burnaby Narrows) gazing down at the rainbow of intertidal life is always another highlight. With around 1.5 million seabirds that breed on its islands, Haida Gwaii is a birder's paradise. Eagles and a wide array of seabirds, attracted by concentrations of forage fish and plankton, will keep birders glued to their binoculars. Long-distance pelagic species can often be spotted, and on land many year-round resident birds are unique subspecies. We hope for a steady wind to raise the sails and enjoy the silence and serenity of nature. The tranquility of the wind and waves against the backdrop of the ancient forests of Haida Gwaii makes for a powerful experience. There will also be plenty of time to explore the protected waters using our stable sea-kayaks - the perfect way to start or finish the day. Each night we anchor in a different, secluded anchorage.

Day 9: Sandspit



The trip will finish late morning and you will disembark before noon at Moresby Camp. There will be charter bus waiting to shuttle the group to (Sandspit) K'il Kun Xidgwangs Daanaay Airport. The trip by bus takes about an hour. You can expect to arrive in Sandspit by midday. This will give you time to have lunch and do any last minute shopping at the souvenir shop located in the Sandspit Airport, prior to your afternoon flight to Vancouver.

What to Expect

Regardless, 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.

Typical Day

In the morning, you might expect to have breakfast served around 8am. If you are an early riser there is always the opportunity for a morning kayak around the secluded bay we are anchored in. After the meal, a shore excursion will take place – Either to search for wildlife, look at intertidal zones, or go for a culture/nature hike. We will load into the zodiacs and take off to see what nature has in store for us. Bring your backpack, water bottle and camera! You never know what you will see on these outings.

We come back to the boat for a gourmet lunch served by one of our amazing chefs. At this time, the skipper might take us to our next destination, while we look for more wildlife along the shores, or try to find pods of whales. The crew will be explaining all the places we are passing and all the species that you might see flying, swimming, or walking near the vessel. If something is of interest we will stop or slow down to enjoy. We are never in any hurry. We travel to all of our destinations only when the weather and wildlife is consistently good – And our skippers are experts and finding exciting things to show you. A stop at an ancient village site is always a unique experience for our guests.

After lunch, we might spend some time relaxing, while the crew puts up the sails and takes you through a passage or strait. This would be a good time to reflect in a journal or take a book from our extensive reading library. If we are lucky, you may see some Humpbacks frolicking in the waters around the boat. If this happens we turn off the engines and float silently among them – quite

spectacular. Before dinner we might do a light hike to bear stands to view some grizzly or black bears feeding on the salmon, or enjoy an afternoon kayak. We serve dinner and then might go for a dip in some remote hotsprings along the coast, and then come back to the boat and enjoy some BC wine.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 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
- \$200 CAD Sustainability fee
- Taxes (5% GST)
- Airport transfers
- The only money participants require during the trip is for optional purchases and gratuities for the crew.