

CANADA WILDLIFE VANCOUVER ISLAND – 14 DAYS

Day 1: Calgary

Welcome to Calgary, a cosmopolitan Alberta city. Calgary has historically been known for its Wild West roots and is oozing with the Western culture that earned it the nickname 'Cowtown', still evident in the rodeo and the Calgary Stampede, but it has become a dynamic and vibrant city of skyscrapers at the centre of Canada's oil industry. Wander around the city at your own pace ahead of your welcome meeting at 18:00 hrs in the hotel lobby, where you'll meet your tour leader and fellow travelling companions.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 2: Banff National Park

Leave city life behind and transfer to Banff, Canada's first national park and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Banff town can easily be explored on foot and with plenty of optional activities there's more than enough to fill your time. Check out the iconic Banff Springs Hotel where tourism in the Canadian Rockies first began, visit some of the many souvenir shops in town or take a short trail to the tumbling Bow Falls. You could also walk along Tunnel Mountain trail for a view of Banff and the Bow Valley. You can take the gondola up to Sulphur Mountain for rewarding panoramic views of the Rockies or simply relax in the heated, natural pools of the Banff Hot Springs.

Accommodation: Lodge included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 3: Banff National Park - Lake Louise

It's time to see more of the magnificent mountains, lakes and forests that Banff is so famous for. Drive to Moraine Lake located in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, the highest of which is Deltaform Mountain (3,424m). Next take a walk on one of the many trails at nearby Lake Louise; a favourite with many visitors is the hike up to the Plain of Six Glaciers, offering incredible views of the valley. Both of these lakes are famous for their striking blue glacial colour, caused by rock flour carried into the lakes by meltwater from the surrounding glaciers. This is picture-perfect scenery at its very best!

Accommodation: Lodge included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 4: Icefields Parkway - Jasper National Park

Brace yourself, as this morning you hit one of the most famous and beautiful drives in the world, the Icefields Parkway. This spectacular road traverses the Rockies, running parallel to the Continental Divide. Mountain passes, glaciers and high peaks are some of the many scenic highlights and there are opportunities to see elk, caribou, bears, Bighorn Sheep and goats, which often graze on the vegetation found at the roadside. You'll stop at all of the 'must see' sights, including Bow Summit and Bow Lake, Peyto Lake and Crowfoot Glacier. There's also the option to enjoy a guided glacier walk along the way. Your overnight location will be in Jasper National Park, around forty minutes out of town.

Accommodation: Cabin included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 5: Jasper National Park

Jasper is much quieter and less developed than Banff, which means it is much easier to escape the crowds and spend the day getting to know Jasper National Park and its surroundings. One option is to take the SkyTram and walk to the summit, which provides fantastic views over the Canadian Rockies. Alternatively, there are various hikes at Mount Edith Cavell including a short hike in the alpine meadows with chances to see caribou, and from where you'll enjoy spectacular views of Angel Glacier, a beautiful hanging glacier in the shape of angel wings. A visit to Miette Hot Springs is included, to relax your muscles after a day of exploring and hiking.

Accommodation: Cabin included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 6: Mount Robson - Williams Lake

As the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies, Mount Robson is indeed a stunning sight. Pause to take in over 3,000m (10,000 ft.) of snow-capped loveliness. You have the option to hike at Kinney Lake, located in the Mount Robson Provincial Park, or you could join a wildlife river safari with the chance to see bear, moose, eagle and osprey from Blue River. Drive to the historic gold rush city of Williams Lake to spend the night.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 7: Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

Today you drive through authentic Canadian wilderness as you head completely off the beaten track towards Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. The park was named after the 15th Governor General of Canada, Baron Tweedsmuir, who travelled extensively throughout the park by float aircraft and horseback. With a varied landscape you can expect to see rugged mountains, deep valleys and ocean fjords. Your overnight location is close to the shores of Anahim Lake, a popular lake for fly fishing that supports plenty of wildlife. There's an optional canoeing excursion on the lake this afternoon and in the evening we recommend relaxing by the fireplace! Please note, this area has very basic facilities but is extremely beautiful and off the tourist trail.

Accommodation: Basic hotel (multi share) | Meals: Paid locally

Day 8: Tweedsmuir Provincial Park - Bella Coola

Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is completely off the radar for most tour groups, despite being named as British Columbia's most beautiful park. Spend time in the southern area of the park and enjoy a hiking trail through an area of thick forest. A healthy population of Grizzly and Black Bear exists throughout the park, as well as elk, deer, moose and coyote; it is possible to see any of these whilst visiting Tweedsmuir. Wildlife aside, the colours of the mountains combined with the flora and the wilderness feel will ensure that Tweedsmuir is a park that you'll remember. After some time spent hiking, you'll drive over 'the Hill' with superb views all the way to Bella Coola.

Accommodation: Lodge included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 9: Bella Coola

Bella Coola is located at the point where the Bella Coola River joins with the saltwater of the Pacific Ocean. Here, amongst the lush valley bottoms and snow-capped peaks, some of the largest Grizzly Bear in the world reside and this little community is gaining a reputation as one of the best places to spot them in British Columbia. The best time of year to view Grizzly Bear is from the middle of August to the end of September as this is when they descend from the mountains to catch salmon in the rivers and eat berries. In season, it's possible to join an optional excursion in search of Grizzly Bear. Outside of bear season there's a selection of excellent hikes on offer and plenty of optional activities, such as fishing and wildlife viewing.

Accommodation: Lodge included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 10: Inside Passage

An absolute delight for wildlife lovers, the Inside Passage offers one of the most amazing ferry journeys in the whole of North America, with everything from frozen fjords to forest-covered hillsides flanking your route. The journey cannot be completed with one ferry so we take two ferries with a total duration of 16.5 hours. The scenery is simply spectacular: towering, forest-clad peaks surround the deep fjords and those with a keen eye can often spot Bald Eagles and bear. The Inside Passage also supports one of the world's richest marine environments and it may be possible to see Gray, Orca, Pacific White Sided and occasionally Humpback Whales. The remoteness of the Inside Passage is its most stunning feature; this area is largely inaccessible by road and the tiny communities spread along it rely on boats for transportation. Spend tonight in Vancouver Island's most northerly town, Port Hardy.

NB: In order to cross the Inside Passage you will need to take two different ferries with a total duration of 16.5 hours. One of the ferries is more basic, without a restaurant or lounge area, but offers an excellent opportunity to spot wildlife.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 11: Tofino - Ucluelet, Vancouver Island

Drive from northern side of Vancouver Island to the area of Tofino on the western side, through some beautiful scenic areas. Make a stop at Cathedral Grove, where there are many trails which meander through the Douglas Fir, Western Hemlock, Grand Fir and Western Red Cedar trees. Enjoy the scenery and breathe in that fresh island air! You'll stay in Ucluelet for the next two nights.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 12: Tofino - Ucluelet, Vancouver Island

The west coast of Vancouver Island is well-known for its whale and bear sightings and this morning you'll undertake a boat trip that gives you a unique chance to get up close and personal with the beautiful Black Bear, with experienced on-board guides who know the area in depth. You may even be lucky enough to spot whales in the distance. The afternoon is yours to enjoy as you wish with kayaking, hiking or a whale watching boat trip.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 13: Victoria

Travel to Victoria, Vancouver Island's main city and the capital of British Columbia. It's a remarkable mix of English Edwardian, First Nations and even some unique Chinese style buildings, and was home to the first Chinatown in Canada. Victoria is well-known for being the ultimate place to spot Orca so we have included a zodiac tour to search out these magnificent mammals in their natural environment. In the late afternoon enjoy a brief tour of the city's highlights with free time for you to explore afterwards.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Paid locally

Day 14: Victoria - Vancouver

In the morning board a ferry across the Salish Sea, admiring the small islands and breathtaking panorama of the city of Vancouver as it comes into view. This cosmopolitan and diverse metropolis is a real contrast to the rest of British Columbia, but always proves to be a highlight. Enjoy a scenic drive through Stanley Park, a 400-hectare green wonderland with authentic totem poles erected in the 1920s; and stop by Prospect Point, a scenic lookout where you can gaze out at spectacular views of Lions Gate Bridge, North Vancouver and West Vancouver.

This tour ends at our gateway hotel at approximately 17:00 hrs. We can book you post-tour accommodation at our gateway hotel if required. If you are planning to fly tonight, please do not book a flight that departs before 21:00 hrs.

Tour Notes

Please note, when crossing the Inside Passage this will be a combination of two ferries and will take 16.5 hours. The first ferry is basic in nature with no restaurant or lounge.