



ROCKY MOUNTAINS – OCEAN ISLANDS

TOUR H

A three-week camping adventure with the famous Icefields Parkway of the Rocky Mountain National Parks, across the varied landscapes of Alberta and British Columbia with tiny Native villages and modern world class cities and an abundance of land and marine wildlife. You experience all this not just from the window of a car, but hiking your guide's favourite trails and paddling an ocean kayak on an overnight excursion.

Demands: easy to moderate hikes with light day pack, always accompanied by the guide. Campgrounds are accessible by our bus. You never have to carry your luggage very far.

Included:

- ✓ all transfers
- ✓ 4 nights hotel accommodation with breakfasts
- ✓ other nights in spacious tents (2 pers./ tent)
- ✓ welcome gift
- ✓ cooking- and eating utensils
- ✓ camping gear (except sleeping bag)
- ✓ hard-foam mattress
- ✓ admission to the National Parks
- ✓ admission Miette Hot Springs
- ✓ camping fees
- ✓ 2 days with ocean kayak and guide
- ✓ ferries as mentioned
- ✓ services of a knowledgeable guide who accompanies the group on the day hikes

Not included: personal equipment, meals (calculate \$300.00 for the food kitty), sleeping bag.

Mountain bike rental in Jasper. \$65.00, white water rafting in Banff. \$185.00, whale watching in Tofino \$150.00.

Hotels:

Day 1, Acclaim Hotel Calgary Airport
Day 8, Twin Pines Hotel, Hinton
Day 14, Best Western Plus Hotel Sands, downtown
Day 21, Sandman Hotel Vancouver Airport
Hotels are not necessarily as listed.

For dates and prices, please see price list or website.



12 GUIDED DAY HIKES USING THE MOST REWARDING TRAILS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARKS

WELLS GRAY PARK, WHISTLER, TOFINO

NO BACKPACKING

A NIGHT IN A HOTEL EVERY FEW DAYS

TIME FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

WINDSCULPTED OCEAN SHORES

VARIETY OF LANDSCAPES

OVERNIGHT KAYAK EXCURSION

EXPERIENCED GUIDES WHO TAILOR THE ACTIVITIES TO INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES

Group size: maximum 12 persons

Length of tour: 22 days

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

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Day 1: CALGARY - Transfer from the Calgary airport with the no-charge hotel shuttle bus. You meet your guide and fellow travelers for pre trip information in the hotel.

Day 2: BANFF NATIONAL PARK - You board the bus for a drive through foothills and ranch country into the eastern range of the Rocky Mountains. On the campground (showers) in Banff National Park you pitch your tent under the trees for the next two days. After lunch it is time for the first hike, a round trip of 8 km (5 mi) starting in the forest of spruce, pine and Douglas fir, climbing 550 m (1800 ft) to the site of an abandoned cabin, a lookout over the green Bow River valley with towering mountain ranges in the background. Dinner on the campground by the fire. Hiking time 3 – 4 hours.

Day 3: BANFF NATIONAL PARK - On a full day hike you explore passes above the tree line and alpine meadows. For example, a 6 km gentle climb through a wide-open valley, a riot of wildflowers in the early season, culminating in a steep ascent into a pass at 2330 m (7644 ft) with nothing blocking the view of the surrounding landscape. All the way to the pass it is a round trip of 18.4 km (11.4 mi) with 655 m (2150 ft) gain. After the hike you might want to relax in the warm sulphur pool of the Banff Hot Springs or browse along the busy streets of Banff with its many stores and visitors from around the world. Hiking time 5 – 6 hours.

Day 4: YOHO NATIONAL PARK - Today you follow the 3.5 km (2 mi) path beside the lake and up through the trees with 400 m gain (1325 ft) to a historic tea house by another alpine lake. Here a network of easy to demanding trails is tempting you to go further and higher. For example, the 15 km (9.3 mi) circuit into the Plain of Six Glaciers or a 2.5 km (1.6 mi) climb with 515 m (1705 ft) gain to a summit with exceptional views of nearby peaks and distant landscapes. Camp for today and tomorrow (showers) is in Yoho National Park on the western side of the Rockies. Emerald Lake, the Natural Bridge, Takakkaw Falls, Spiral Tunnel are among the attractions of Yoho Park. Hiking time 3 – 5 hours.

Day 5: YOHO NATIONAL PARK - There is an opportunity for a great white-water rafting trip on the wild Kicking Horse River. Alternative is a day of exploring the Iceline Trail, a network of loops and trails around lakes and past glaciers high above the tree line, up to 22 km (13.6 mi) with 585 m (1920 ft) gain. Hiking time 6 hours.

Day 6: JASPER NATIONAL PARK - Frequent stops and short excursions along the Icefields Parkway on your way into the heart of the Rockies. Famous names like Peyto Lake and Bow Summit. At the Columbia Icefields huge glaciers spawn rivers, which eventually reach three different oceans. Trails here start at tree line and are especially rewarding thanks to their magnificent views. One of your guide's favourite hikes is the 8 km (5 mi) hike with 335 m (1155 ft) gain into a pass at 2375 m (7980 ft). Mighty Athabasca Falls count among the attractions of this park. Camp for the next three days is near the little holiday town of Jasper (showers). Hiking time 2 hours.

Day 7: JASPER NATIONAL PARK - So many possibilities, swimming and a picnic at Pyramid Lake, mountain biking, trail rides, canoeing and more. Or take advantage of the trail system near Maligne Lake, for example an 8 km (5 mile) loop hike with 460 m gain (1532 ft) into the hills above tree line at 2150 m (7160 ft) elevation and possibly all the way to a 2790 m (9290 ft) peak overlooking this picturesque lake. Hiking time 2 – 6 hours.

Day 8: JASPER / HINTON - Today's highlight is the peak experience of Sulphur Skyline in the eastern ranges of the Rocky Mountains. A side trip into a remote valley ends at the parking lot of warm outdoor pool of a natural hot spring. From here you climb 4 km (2.5 mi) with 700 m (2296 ft) gain to the 2070 m (6791 ft) summit and then along the ridge with panorama views. The reward, on the way back, is the warm, relaxing water of the Miette Hot Springs (included). Tonight you stay in a pleasant hotel in the town of Hinton, just east of the National Park. How about a game of pool in the tavern, meeting local miners and forestry workers. Hiking time 3 - 4 hrs.

Day 9: WELLS GRAY PARK - At Mount Robson, highest peak of the Canadian Rockies with 3954 m (12964 ft), You hike the 4.5 km (2.8 mi) trail under huge cedars and hemlock trees to Kinney Lake. Leaving the western ranges Rockies behind you cross the Columbia Ranges and reach Wells Gray Provincial Park in the Cariboo Mountains. A beautiful lakeside campground (showers) for tonight and tomorrow where you can rent a boat and fishing gear and try to catch your dinner.

Day 10: WELLS GRAY PARK - Relax by the lake or join the guide on a side trip into Wells Gray Park, famous for its spectacular water falls. Today's easy hike actually takes you behind one of the falls. You also can go on a trail ride western style or rent a canoe on Clearwater Lake. Hiking time 2 hours.

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Day 11: CACHE CREEK - Following the North Thompson River you are soon in the warm and dry interior plateau of British Columbia with Kamloops the only larger town. Time to browse and to shop for supplies and groceries. Your campground (showers) is by the historic Hat Creek Ranch, once an important “road house”, a place to rest and stock up supplies during the gold rush of 150 years ago.

Day 12: WHISTLER - The Gold Rush Trail cuts through the land of the Salish First Nations. It came into existence during the 1850 Frazer River gold rush and linked the coast with the northern interior before the automobile. You visit the small historic town of Lillooet which celebrates those wild gold rush years. Now you make your way down the western slopes of the steep and rugged Coast Mountains to Whistler, the popular summer and winter resort town at the edge of Garibaldi Park, years ago an almost unknown hideout for hippies and artists. On the menu are the attractions of the town and an easy hike under ancient trees to a lake surrounded by mountain giants. You pitch your tent for the next two nights in or near the town of Whistler. Hiking time 1 to 2 hours.

Day 13: WHISTLER - Mount Garibaldi, with 2678 m (8786 ft) is the highest peak of the park, which contains a multitude of plant and animal species and 90 km (56 mi) of hiking trails from easy walks to extreme trekking. Black Tusk, in the heart of the park, offers amazing natural spectacles like Panorama Ridge, Helm Glacier, or the Sphinx. A day hike takes you to the shore of a Lake with trails for further exploring. Hiking time 4 – 6 hours.

Day 14: VANCOUVER - South along the scenic Sea to Sky Highway with towering rock faces that plunge to the sea and rivers cascading in bubbly plumes off sheer cliffs. The intense blue colours of Howe Sound clash with brilliant white glacier ice and jagged black peaks against an azure sky. It winds through mountain communities that started as logging, mining, ranching and farming outposts and ends just north of Vancouver. Short city tour of downtown with Canada Place, Chinatown, Gastown, a walk on busy Robson Street and then the downtown hotel for tonight.

Day 15: SOOKE - For your island adventure you board a ferry for the 90-minute crossing to Vancouver Island. In Victoria a stroll by the busy and picturesque Inner Harbour. Now it is off to your campground (showers) under giant cedar trees on the southern end of the island. Here you have a choice of easy to demanding hikes or pick nicks by the beach. Suggested for the first outing is a short drive to a small preserve. For thousands of years the crashing waters of the Sooke River have carved deep pools and caves out of the rock. Nothing, not even the river runs anything close to straight. So many amazing vantage points and so many unbelievable swimming spots. Here is also the trail head for a somewhat demanding hike (13 km with 420 m gain, 8 mi, 1378 ft) to two remote mountain lakes. Hiking time up to 4 hours.

Day 16: SOOKE - The attraction of another park in the area is the variety of trails and loops through forests and along coast lines. For example, on today's 12 km hike you walk high above the weather blasted rocky cliffs, small bays and deep fjords and every few minutes another startlingly desolate ocean vantage point with views of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Olympic Peninsula. You have good chances to see whales. Sea lions and eagles. Then the trail winds up into the forested hills and back to the starting point. Dinner by the campfire and hopefully another spectacular sunset. Hiking time 3 – 4 hours.

Day 17: PARKSVILLE - A stop and descend to Botanical Beach, the most unique and richest tidal area for plant and animal life along Canada's west coast with so many differently coloured star fish, crabs, clams and other sea creatures. The shore is guarded by fantastic geological formations of shale and quartz. Lunch break during the drive to the eastern side of Vancouver Island is by a beautiful lake. The campground (showers) for today and tomorrow features majestic old growth forest of Douglas firs and a wide sandy beach near the city of Parksville. Hiking time 2 to 4 hours.

Day 18: PARKSVILLE / STRATHCONA PARK - Some of the best wilderness hiking on Vancouver Island is among the glaciated peaks of the Central Island. Strathcona Park was created in 1911 for those who seek adventure in remote alpine surroundings. You can reach the “Forbidden Plateau” via several routes. A 15 km (9.3 mi) loop trail near starts already at the 1100 m (3665 ft) level and offers panoramic views over southern British Columbia. Hiking time 5 hours.

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Day 19: TOFINO / VARGAS ISLAND - For your next adventure you explore the quiet inlet waters and ancient coastal rainforest of Clayoquot Sound in 2-person ocean kayaks. No previous kayaking experience is necessary. Route planning is chosen with both the novice and advanced paddlers in mind and with 1 kayak guide for every 6 participants. Starting in Tofino early afternoon you make your way to the shores of Meares Island for a break to go on a short hike under the giant cedars while the guide introduces you to the natural and cultural history of the island. Then you paddle across an inlet and past a Native village and by late afternoon arrive at your overnight camp on Vargas Island. A zodiac delivers your equipment and camping gear and takes the kayak guide back to Tofino. Your tour guide stays with your group to set up the overnight camp on one of the beautiful wild beaches. (Instead of paddling you can take the zodiac to get to the island).

Day 20: TOFINO / UCLUELET - The kayak guide returns this morning to paddle with you a different route past Stubbs Island back to Tofino. Planned for the afternoon is a side trip to Pacific Rim National Park where you walk mysterious trails with boardwalks and stairs in a fairy tale forest of ferns, lichens, mosses and thousand-year-old trees. There is more: boutiques and small stores in the charming villages of Ucluelet and Tofino offer crafts and souvenirs made by local artists. You also can join optional whale and bear watching excursions and even surfing lessons. Campground in Ucluelet (showers). Hiking time 1.5 to 4 hours.

Day 21: VANCOUVER - On the return trip to the mainland you pass through Cathedral Grove with giant cedars and Douglas fir trees, some over 800-year-old and up to 9 meters (29.5 ft) in diameter. You walk on a network of short rainforest wilderness trails which weave amongst moss and fern blanketed fallen trees. Now the ferry back and arrival at the Vancouver airport hotel late afternoon.

Day 22: Transfer to the airport with hotel owned shuttle bus.