



NORTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND - Orcas, Totems & Grizzlies

Intended Itinerary

7 Days

Aboard S/V Island Odyssey

Start and Finish in Port McNeill, BC

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. Johnstone Strait is the best place in the world to see orcas (or killer whales), as they come to hunt the salmon – their preferred food. We will visit Alert Bay and Village Island, see a variety of other marine mammals such as humpback whales and porpoise, bald eagles, and search for grizzly bears up Knight Inlet!

INTENDED ITINERARY

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.

Arrival Day

We recommend arriving in Port McNeill the day prior to the trip start and staying overnight. This is to ensure the group can set sail on time. When travelling in coastal regions unforeseen weather delays are common, most commonly fog.

Trip Start – Day 1

This trip starts and finishes in Port McNeill, BC. Guests will meet at **10:30 am** at the North Island Marina on the Port McNeill waterfront. Upon boarding the vessel, 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. 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 2-3:

Our focus these days will be on the waters of Johnstone Strait or nearby Queen Charlotte Strait. Part of each day, will be exploring for various species of marine mammals. Not only is the area famous for orcas, but humpback and minke whales are common, and Dall's porpoise often play in the boats bow wave. After a few hours floating with whales, we will visit the modern Kwakwaka'wakw community of Alert Bay to visit the U'Mista Cultural Centre to see the fascinating collection of potlatch masks on display. 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.

Day 4-5:

The trip now shifts as we travel deep into the Coast Mountains up a beautiful fiord called Knight Inlet. Extending nearly 60 miles, Knight Inlet is surrounded by snow-capped peaks and some of the most remote wilderness on the coast. Grizzly bears require vast areas of wilderness to survive. Starting in August, salmon return to spawn up the rivers and creeks and this essential source of food concentrates the bears along the river in the best places to fish. We hope to see bears at the mouth of the river, and often see bears walking the shore. There should be some spectacular photo opportunities so have your cameras ready.

Day 6:

At the entrance to Knight Inlet is the abandoned Kwakwaka'wakw village of Mimquimlees. With permission from the local Native Band, we will explore the old village to discover fallen totem poles and a rich heritage. Returning to Johnstone Strait, we will have further encounters with the whales so all "spotters" spotters are required on deck! With a good low tide, we may explore the shore for different species of colourful sea stars, anemone, and algae. There may be an opportunity to hike into the coastal forest to see big trees and learn about the forest plants.

Day 7: Trip Finish

We return to Port McNeill late morning to complete our voyage. Guests can plan to catch afternoon flights departing from Port Hardy back to Vancouver.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Booking Your Flights

Our designated Travel Agency is UNIGLOBE DIRECT TRAVEL LTD. If you need further accommodation or help with your Airfare and Insurance, please call Elaine at 604-538-2111 ext. 6614 or email elaine@uniglobedirect.com.

PACIFIC COASTAL AIRLINES provides daily service between Vancouver International Airport **South Terminal** and Port Hardy. Pacific Coastal Airlines operates a free shuttle bus between Vancouver's main air terminal and the South Terminal. Frequency is every 30 minutes. Contact Pacific Coastal Airlines for more information Toll Free: 1-800-663-2872 or 604-273-8666 www.pacificcoastal.com

Please Note:

It is possible to take an early flight from Vancouver to Port Hardy on Day 1 and arrive at the yacht on time. Historically, Port Hardy experiences fog in the morning during this time of year which can delay flights. It's recommended to arrive the day prior to the trip start and stay the night in Port McNeill.

WAVIN FLAGS operates a shuttle/taxi service between Port Hardy airport and Port McNeill. Travel between Port Hardy airport and Port McNeill takes about 40 minutes and the cost will be approx. \$50.00 CAD. You should reserve 24 hours in advance by calling Waivin Flags. **(250-230-7655)** and they will meet your incoming flight. *Prices are subject to change.*

TOFINO BUS services Port Hardy – Port McNeill – Nanaimo – Victoria – Vancouver. For schedules, call 1.866.986.3466 or 250.725.2871 or check www.tofinobus.com

SIDE TRIPS

You may wish to extend your visit to Northern Vancouver Island and explore the local area. Port McNeill is ideally situated with ferry access to Sointula and Alert Bay. Sointula was established at the turn of the century by Finnish pioneers with a utopian dream. In Finnish, Sointula means "harmony". It is a 25 minute ferry ride from Port McNeill.

Alert Bay is a 40 minute ferry ride from Port McNeill. During our voyage we will be visiting Alert Bay and the U'Mista Cultural Centre, however, for those particularly interested in native culture it is worth the extra visit. There is a lovely boardwalk trail around a bog where you can enjoy interesting vegetation, bird watching and photography. Locals refer to it as 'Gator Gardens' – however, the name doesn't do it justice. It's well worth the walk.

ACCOMMODATION

Port McNeill

Black Bear Resort Hotel	(250) 956 4900 1 866 956 4900	www.port-mcneill-accommodation.com	\$151-171
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Haida Way Motor Inn	(250) 956-3373 1 800 956 3373	www.pmhotels.com staff@pmhotels.com	\$99 – \$145
The Artists Point B&B	(250) 956 2449	www.theartistspoint.com info@theartistspoint.com	\$189
Ocean Comfort B&B	(250) 956 0002 (250) 230 4495	www.oceancomfort.net	\$135
Nimpkish Forest B&B	1 855 956 3464	www.airbnb.ca/rooms/1342821	\$70-\$115

Alert Bay

Alert Bay Lodge	(250) 974 2410 1 800 255 5057	www.alertbaylodge.com reservations@alertbaylodge.com	\$119-129
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TOURIST INFORMATION

For information on what do to in Port McNeill, visit www.portmcneill.com or www.vancouverislandnorth.ca.

For general information on British Columbia's attractions, travel, restaurants, shopping, transportation and accommodation contact **Destination British Columbia**: 1-800 435 5622 or visit the Destination BC website at www.hellobc.com

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Our vessel is equipped with marine radio and satellite telephone for emergencies. We have direct communication with the Coast Guard and essential services. Cellular telephone service is sporadic and much of the trip you should expect no service. We highly recommend you take the opportunity of becoming disconnected from the electronic world. If someone back home needs to get in touch with you for an important message, instruct them to call the Bluewater Adventures office **(604) 980-3800 / Toll Free: 1-888-877-1770**. Office hours are Monday to Friday (9:00 am to 5:00 pm PST). If they are unable to speak with our office staff they should leave a detailed message which will be relayed at the first opportunity.

In the event of an **emergency** they should first call the Bluewater Adventures office and speak with our staff, or call the emergency telephone number provided through the recorded message. If time is of the essence, the office is closed and the call is urgent contact Comox Coast Guard Radio at **250-339-3613**. Explain the situation and request assistance in contacting a passenger aboard Island Odyssey sailing the Johnstone Strait area. If Coast Guard deems the situation to be sufficiently urgent they will then issue a radio alert for Island Odyssey to contact Coast Guard on Channel 16 for an urgent message. However, it still may take some time to establish contact.



Bluewater Adventures
#3 - 252 East First Street
North Vancouver, BC
Canada V7L 1B3

Phone: (604) 980-3800
Fax: (604) 980-1800
Toll Free: 1 (888) 877-1770
www.bluewateradventures.ca
explore@bluewateradventures.ca