

SALISH SEA EXPLORATION



GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Sample Itinerary

Start: Sidney, BC

Finish: Sidney, BC

Vessel: Island Odyssey

Minimum 3-days

This is intended as a Sample Itinerary. Please do not book flights based on information listed in this document as changes are possible. You will be provided with an Arrivals and Departures Itinerary once all details have been confirmed. Please contact us with any questions.

In the southern reaches of the Salish Sea, the **Canadian Gulf Islands** offer an abundance of marine parks, all manner of wildlife, and small communities of artisans producing unique wines and fresh produce. These islands host a robust diversity of wildlife due to the convergence of oceanic currents from the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, and the Strait of Georgia. We hope to see orca and humpbacks whales, porpoise, seals, sea-lions, otters, many species of migratory birds, and diverse intertidal life.

For an active group, there are many fabulous hikes through coastal forests and shorelines, and opportunities for kayaking and paddle boarding in protected bays. Other groups may be more interested in visiting local wineries and farms to sample their offerings.

Groups with an interest in natural history will thoroughly enjoy this trip. Each voyage is accompanied by an experienced naturalist who will give talks, slide shows, and lead shore excursions. With the help of interested participants we plan to keep a list of the animals and plants we sight each day. We do daily shore excursions in our inflatable zodiacs, as well as hikes on the various islands that suit the abilities and interests of your group. As on all of our trips, you will enjoy absolutely fabulous meals and snacks prepared from scratch by our on-board chef. Expect the food to be delicious and nutritious – a definite highlight! In addition, you will have the opportunity to assist in the handling of our beautiful yacht, learning about sailing and navigation from our experienced crew.

The Gulf Islands are considered by many sailors to have some of the best cruising on the west coast of North America. In most years, late spring and fall are the ideal time of year to visit; summer crowds are absent, and the weather is generally mild and gentle. Due to the present border closures there are no international yachts so we may see a quieter summer than in previous years.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

On all voyages we intentionally keep our itineraries flexible to take advantage of wildlife sightings, weather and tides, and the interests of the group.

Arrival Day into Sidney

Our trip starts in the small town of Sidney. Located at the north end of the Saanich Peninsula at the Southern end of Vancouver Island, and is situated in the traditional territory of the **W̱SÁNEĆ** people. “Sidney by the Sea” is a charming seaside town with all of the amenities you might need in preparation for your trip.

BLUEWATER ADVENTURES SAMPLE ITINERARY – SALISH SEA COLLECTIVE

It is just a 20-minute drive from downtown Victoria and is just minutes from the Victoria International Airport and Swartz Bay, BC Ferry Terminal.

As unforeseen weather and ferry delays are common when travelling in coastal regions – to ensure that the group can set sail on time – we advise you to arrive in Sidney the day prior to the trip and spend the night at an accommodation of your choice if you are not coming from Vancouver Island.

We will spend each evening in different and beautiful anchorages with wonderful views. During our daily shore or small boat excursions, our onboard naturalist will help identify different coastal plants, animals, birds and marine life. Interested participants can help keep a species list for the trip. There will be time to explore the protected waters using our stable sea-kayaks.

Day 1 – Trip Start

Guests will meet the vessel's crew late morning at Port Sidney Marina in downtown Sidney. Upon boarding the vessel, cabins will be assigned and following a brief introduction and safety orientation we will set sail for Gulf Islands National Park Reserve where each night we anchor in a different, secluded anchorage.

Immediately outside of Sidney we will enter Haro Strait, where we hope to raise the sails and take advantage of the consistent local winds. Depending on the wind direction, we could sail around Sidney Spit towards Mandarte Island, where nesting cormorants and other seabirds have a protected respite from human visitors as an ecological reserve. Deep waters near shore allow us a close look at this unique habitat before we head on to our first of many shore excursions on nearby Portland or Russell Island.

Days 2 – 4

Heading deeper into the Southern Gulf Islands we can adapt the itinerary to the interests of your group. There are a number of excellent hikes and walks in a variety of coastal ecosystems. Monarch Head on Saturna Island offers a magnificent view over Boundary Pass looking south with only moderate exertion, while Mount Norman on South Pender Island will provide a good workout and offers a glorious view to the west of the Gulf Islands from a height of 240 meters. From these viewpoints we will likely see bald eagles and turkey vultures soaring on the thermal winds.

There are many opportunities to explore the extremely rich intertidal ecology in the tidepools around Cabbage Island, Portland Island's Arbutus Point, or the tidal narrows at Lizard Island. For groups with an interest in snorkelling, the waters in the Gulf Islands are truly magical if a little bit chilly, and many opportunities to explore kelp forests and invertebrate encrusted reefs can be found! Let us know in advance if this is of interest to you so we can arrange snorkelling gear for the group.

While sailing around the islands, we will always be keeping an eye on the horizon to spot marine mammals engaged in a variety of activities. Particularly exciting to witness would be Bigg's orcas engaged in a hunt, sea lions playing in strong currents, or river otters slipping stealthily along the shoreline or hunting among the kelp. Venturing out into the Strait of Georgia, we may get a chance to view humpback whales as they feed in the deep waters outside of the islands. These magnificent whales were hunted to extirpation (local extinction) in the Salish Sea in the early 20th century and have only recently returned to our local waters in significant numbers. For birding enthusiasts, we expect to see many species - bald eagles, auklets, murrelets, cormorants, phalaropes, and various species of gulls.

Day 5 - Trip Finish

We will arrive back in Sidney around noon and disembark at Port Sidney Marina.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Do you require assistance with flights or Travel Insurance?

Our designated travel agent is [Ellison Travel & Tours](#), a member of CWT Vacations. CWT is a full-service travel agency with offices across Canada and they can assist you with flight arrangements, travel/medical insurance, pre-post hotel stays, and more. Bluewater guests will receive the benefit of their local knowledge, contacts and pricing.

You can reach Ellison Travel and Tours directly by completing the [Bluewater Guest Inquiry Form](#).

By telephone: 1-800-265-7022 / 604-983-2470

Or by email: bluewater@ellisontravel.com

Sidney, BC

If you do not wish to drive and take a ferry to Sidney, you can fly with a number of carriers from Vancouver. Pacific Coastal Airlines provides daily service between Sidney and Vancouver International Airport South Terminal.

Allow for adequate layover time when transferring between the YVR main and south terminals to accommodate potential shuttle or flight delays. Please check with your airline for further details regarding required check in times and baggage information. For shuttle schedule and further information see <http://www.yvr.ca/en/passengers/transportation/airport-south>.

Pacific Coastal	1 800-663-2872	www.pacificcoastal.com
Air Canada	1 888-247-2262	www.aircanada.ca
WestJet	1 888-937-8538	www.westjet.com
Harbour Air	1 800-665-0212	www.harbourair.com

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Sidney Cabs - (250) 656-6666.

Peninsula Taxi - (250) 656-1111

TOURIST INFORMATION

For information on activities you can do in Sidney before your trip starts, visit http://www.sidney.ca/Things_To_Do.htm or call the visitor centre at 250-665-7362.

To learn more about the Gulf Islands and 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.

BLUEWATER ADVENTURES SAMPLE ITINERARY – SALISH SEA COLLECTIVE



BLUEWATER ADVENTURES

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

Telephone: (604) 980-3800

Fax: (604) 980-180

Toll Free: 1 (888) 877-1770

www.bluewateradventures.ca

explore@bluewateradventures.ca