

Natural Wonders of Vancouver Island

June 1 - 9, 2024 • 9 Days • \$3750

NOTE: This Adventure is currently FULL. Standby requests are accepted by clicking the CONTACT US button to the right.

Rimming the northern border of Washington State's Puget Sound across the Juan de Fuca Strait, lies Vancouver Island, largest island on the Pacific Coast of North America.

WAI groups have several times visited its popular provincial capital, Victoria. Each time we've heard about the natural wonderlands that lie further north. WAI guide, Scott Isom, our Washington State expert, has been probing possibilities and talking with local walking friends.

We are happy to announce a trip dedicated to Vancouver Island in 2024. Listed below is the itinerary which will be refreshed with additional on-site planning before departure next June.

[Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Classic Curated](#)

Overview / Trip Details

- [Tour Details](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Nanaimo** - a classic West Coast community surrounded by natural beauty, boasting one of Canada's longest shorelines, and known for its bouquet of colorful murals featured on our walk
- **Ucluelet** - a place of rugged beauty on the wild Pacific side of Vancouver Island. Activities abound, including the eye-popping natural beauty of Wild Pacific Trail and Ucluelet Lighthouse Loop, trails Scott claims to be among the best he's done for some time.
- **Tofino** - situated at the northern tip of the Esowista Peninsula (Ucluelet is on the south end), Tofino offers more Vancouver Island delights - several outstanding nature trails, plus bear viewing and whale watching, to name a few - and claims to be the surfing capital of Canada as well
- **Butchart Gardens & Victoria** - always full of charm and grace Victoria, named for the beloved British queen, is a great place to soak in a bit of Vancouver Island sophistication with a superb walk, tea at the Empress Hotel, and the splendid Butchart Gardens, which never fails to disappoint

Including:

- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations

- 11 meals: all breakfasts, and 3 dinners as listed in itinerary (BD)
- 11 walk routes as listed plus an optional walk on Day 1 for those arriving early
- Walking fees for 7 walks for those collecting IVV/Canadian Volkssport Federation credit (if CVF sanctions approved)Fees for walking credit
- WAI guide service throughout
- All tipping for coach drivers, any local guides, and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$950. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

Visits to / Admission fees:

- Goldstream Provincial Park
- Chemainus Murals
- Cultural Tour and Walk on Newcastle Island
- Coombs Country Market
- Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park
- Pacific Rim National Park
- Beaches of Tofino
- Wild Pacific Trail in Ucluelet
- Englishman Falls Provincial Park
- Malahat Skywalk
- Westwood Lake
- Duncan Totem Poles
- Historic Victoria Harbor
- More fun stops than we can list!

Optional excursions:

- Butchart Gardens (Day 1)
- Tofino Whale Watching Excursion (Day 5)
- Afternoon Tea at the Empress or Royal BC Museum (Day 8)

- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)





Adventure Pace

Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5

Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

Tour Pace: On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

Walk Challenge: This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

24 travelers maximum



Accommodations

Strategically located Tourist Class accommodations or better



Meals

Breakfasts included with 3 dinners. Letters BD indicate which meals are included.



Airfare

Not included. Victoria International Airport (airport code YYJ) serves our starting hotel in Sidney (5 minute taxi ride from the airport) and our final hotel in Victoria (30 minute taxi ride).



Transportation

Included. We use motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 40-55 seats.



Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

Your Guides



Scott Isom has had a passion for the outdoors ever since his childhood days spent exploring the waterfalls and outstanding hiking trails of the Columbia River Gorge with his family.

Scott has led tours on all 7 continents and is one of WAI's busiest guides and on-site Adventure planners.

Scott has led several trips across the Puget Sound to Victoria from Washington State and is eager to explore the wonders of Vancouver Island that lie further north. He will be assisted by one other lucky, but as yet unnamed, WAI guide.



Michael & Andrea Le Roy

After many years leading university study abroad programs in Europe and Latin America, Michael and Andrea are excited to shift their focus from college students to adventuresome lifelong learners. Andrea began her work as a wilderness guide as a college student, later worked as a social worker, and is interested in religion, history, and culture. As a professor, Michael taught courses in International Affairs and later served in administration while pining to be outside on the trail . . . any trail. They are excited to be part of the WAI guide team.

Itinerary

Click on each day for more details. (BD) refers to meals included - Breakfast and Dinner.

[Day 1~Jun 1: Arrive Sidney BC \(Vancouver Island\), Canada](#)

Our Canadian Island Adventure begins today in the city of Sidney, British Columbia, very near to the Victoria International Airport (airport code YYJ).

Travelers arrive throughout the day. Our first official activity is the Welcome Orientation this evening at 7:30 pm at our hotel. Please plan to arrive in time to attend this important Adventure kick-off!

For those who arrive into Sidney a day early (May 31), an optional Butchart Gardens is available today (June 1). Butchart Gardens is a fanciful floral funhouse that is listed as a National Historic Site of Canada. This exciting exploration of these world-famous gardens includes round-trip transport from our airport hotel to Butchart Gardens, entrance to the Gardens, and guide services. Estimated price: \$75

[Day 2~Jun 2: Sidney - Nanaimo \(BD\)](#)

Walk #1: Goldstream Provincial Park Walk

Walk #2: Chemainus Murals Walk

We depart the Saanich Peninsula this morning on our way up the east coast of Vancouver Island, with views of the Salish Sea.

We stop first for a walk among massive trees and a meandering river at Goldstream Provincial Park, mere miles away from the urban fun of downtown Victoria but a verdant landscape that feels far removed from city life.

Continuing north along the Cowichan coast, we savor a lunch break followed by a memorable stroll among the dozens of delightful murals that dot this picturesque artisan village nestled between the mountains and the sea.

We wrap up our day with a group dinner at our harborside hotel in Nanaimo, a picturesque town located along the Strait of Georgia.

[Day 3~Jun 3: Activities from Nanaimo \(B\)](#)

Walk #3: Newcastle Island Walk - 5 or 10 km

Today we enjoy the natural beauty and history of Newcastle Island Provincial Park, a picturesque island off the coast of Nanaimo's downtown and the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Accessible only by passenger ferry or boat, we'll take picnic lunches with us as we are transported on a short ride across the bay. Once at Newcastle, we engage the island's cultural richness as we hear the sacred stories from Knowledge Keepers of the Snuneymuxw.

Next we continue our exploration of the island on its excellent trail system, where we also witness evidence of coal mining, sandstone quarrying, and herring fisheries. Once we've had our fill at Newcastle Island, our return ferry whisks us back across the waters to downtown Nanaimo, where the remainder of the evening and dinner are free for you to enjoy as you see fit.

[Day 4~Jun 4: Nanaimo - Ucluelet \(BD\)](#)

Walk #4: Little Qualicum Falls Walk

Walk #5: Cathedral Grove Walk

Departing Nanaimo this morning, we transition from the calmer seas of the eastern Vancouver Island shore to the wild Pacific waters of the west coast, exploring some fascinating natural beauties in the central part of the island along the famed Pacific Rim Highway.

After a fun morning stop at Coombs Country Market (famous for its goats grazing on the roof), we walk alongside a thundering torrent at Little Qualicum Falls, an impressive set of cascades that careens through a forested rocky gorge.

From Little Qualicum Falls, the grandeur continues with a short but stunning stroll in the magnificent temperate rainforest of Cathedral Grove. Located within MacMillan Provincial Park, the combination of 800 year old trees, bountiful ferns, and verdant, draping moss is awe-inspiring.

Following a lunch break in the town of Port Alberni, we finally reach the Pacific shores and make the first of many beach stops on our way to a two-night stay in Ucluelet, a wonderfully-set coastal town near Pacific Rim National Park.

[Day 5~Jun 5: Activities from Ucluelet \(B\)](#)

Walk #6: Tofino Beaches Walk

Optional Whale Watching Excursion

Nestled along the rugged west coast of Vancouver Island, Tofino is a truly special place! Set on the southern edge of Clayoquot Sound, in the traditional territory of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations people, this area is a nature lovers paradise attracting surfers, hikers, birdwatchers, whale watchers, and campers, especially in the summer months.

This morning, we feature a couple of short beach hikes in the Tofino area. Several great candidates include Chesterman Beach, Cox Bay, Tonquin Beach, and Middle Beach. After a lunch break, the remainder of the day is free to continue exploring Tofino. We may also offer an afternoon bonus beach walk.

Whale Watching Excursion: For those who would like to participate in a wild boat-based afternoon adventures from the marina in town, a 2.5 hour whale-watching tour is available. It is not uncommon to see grey whales, humpback whales, and killer whales (orcas) in addition to other aquatic mammals (seals, sea lions, dolphins), and eagles. Estimated price: \$150

[Day 6~Jun 6: Ucluelet - Nanaimo \(B\)](#)

Walk #7: Wild Pacific Trail Walk

Walk #8: Englishman Falls Walk

Before leaving the stunning west coast of Vancouver Island, this morning brings one more jaw-dropping treat as we walk along a couple different sections of the Wild Pacific Trail.

This easy footpath in Ucluelet is chock full of dramatic coastal vistas along a rocky and gnarly coastline that will have you snapping photos left and right. In addition to constant views, other highlights include a lovely little lighthouse, an ancient grove of Western red cedars, and a dense rainforest canopy throughout.

On our way back across the spine of the island, we stop for a lunch break in Port Alberni before a short but sweet hike at Englishman Falls Provincial Park, where a pristine mountain stream plunges into a narrow chasm then descends through a deep canyon.

After this visual feast of a day, we arrive back alongside the harbor front of Nanaimo for a night of rest and relaxation before our final push to Victoria.

[Day 7~Jun 7: Nanaimo - Victoria \(B\)](#)

Walk #9: Westwood Lake Walk - 5.5 km

Walk #10: Duncan Totem Poles Walk

Before departing the lovely Nanaimo area this morning, we explore one of the city's best loved parks, enjoying a nice, forested walk around Westwood Lake, nestled in the foothills of Mt. Benson.

Next, we immerse ourselves again the rich cultural First Nations heritage of the island with a visit to Duncan, which serves not only as a lunch break but also as the site of over 40 beautifully carved totems scattered throughout the city. Our walk here takes us past several of these picturesque poles, each telling a unique story.

Finishing off our day, we drive south to Victoria, capital of British Columbia, and check in for two nights near the historic harbor in one of Canada's great cities!

[Day 8~Jun 8: Activities from Victoria \(BD\)](#)

Walk #11: Victoria Harbor Walk

Optional Afternoon Tea at the Empress or Royal BC Museum

With a reputation of being "more English than England," Victoria combines wonderful European charm with outstanding scenery and one of the oldest Chinatowns in North America.

This morning provides a chance to explore this multi-faceted city on foot, with numerous highlights including the picturesque Inner Harbour, fascinating alleys of Chinatown, regal Empress Hotel and architecturally stunning Parliament, vibrant hues of Fisherman's Wharf, endless Olympic Mountain views across Juan de Fuca Strait, and nicely manicured grounds of Beacon Hill Park.

Lunch, as well as the afternoon, are free for you to explore Victoria's many great eateries and harbor scenery. In the evening we gather at our hotel for a Farewell Dinner.

For those who would like to take a deeper dive into the BC scene this afternoon, we offer a couple of different optional activities for you to mull over.

Royal BC Museum: First consider a visit to the amazing Royal BC Museum, one of North America's must-see collections. Easily accessible on foot from our hotel, this Canadian treasure offers a great way to spend an afternoon. This is not a group activity. Museum-goers will visit on their own or with friends and pay individual admissions.

High Tea: For those who would like to fully immerse themselves in the English tradition of afternoon tea, Victoria's most recognizable landmark, the Fairmont Empress Hotel, offers the grandest of the grand afternoon teas in town. This popular activity takes place in their famous Tea Lobby, which overlooks the city's beautiful Inner Harbour. While formal attire is not necessary for this optional experience, smart-casual dress is recommended as you sample from the hotel's exclusive tea menu, followed by fresh fruit cocktail or berries with whipped cream, and an assortment of tea sandwiches, fresh scones, tea cakes, and pastries. Estimated price: \$89

[Day 9~Jun 9: Departure from Victoria \(B\)](#)

Our Vancouver Island Adventure draws to a close with breakfast at our hotel. The WAI guide team will help travelers with similar departure times arrange ride-sharing for the 30-minute taxi to Victoria International Airport (YYJ).

Thanks for sharing this adventure with us on one of the world's most diverse and beautiful islands!

Before You Book

Click on each heading for more details.

[How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a non-refundable \$300 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Soon after registration, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

[What is a Classic Curated Tour?](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are crafted with extensive on-site planning by WAI tour planners.

When designing Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us *inside* these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see, but also touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, interactions with locals amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

[Walk Ratings](#)

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Several walks on this trip are oriented more towards education, and therefore take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we're stopping less to talk.

In most cases, we are not "strolling." We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of "training" beforehand in order to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please call our office at 1.360.260.9393.

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

INCLINE

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.
3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

TERRAIN

- A. Almost entirely on pavement.
- B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.
- C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

[How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official start point for this Adventure is our hotel in Sidney, BC, on Vancouver Island

just a 5 minute taxi-ride from Victoria International Airport (airport code YYJ). The official finish point is our hotel in Victoria, about a 30-minute drive to Victoria International Airport.

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment!

More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in an Adventure Advice PDF by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

- Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or llp@wtpdx.com

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provides air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

Laura Pfahler: 503-434-6401 or llp@wtpdx.com

Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

Be aware that some travel insurance policies contain time-sensitive provisions (i.e. some benefits, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, are available only if the policy is purchased within a certain number of days of the purchase of the travel package). In addition, remember that airfare is not covered by any travel insurance policy you may have purchased for the tour.

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the SquareMouth.com website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

WAI bears no responsibility for travel insurance benefits advertised by various credit card companies. If you are relying on this type of benefit for insurance, we advise you to verify

coverage types and limits and that your purchase does in fact qualify you for this insurance.

NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing “cancel for any reason” insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

[What if WAI Cancels the Tour](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 15 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received.

This refund policy contains one exclusion. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Though it is rare, unforeseen circumstances can force us to cancel a tour. In cases where supplier’s non-refundable policies are imposed, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

[Wellness Procedures for This Tour](#)

Our approach to wellness on tour has traditionally been to encourage travelers to:

- Focus on health before the tour so you start healthy.
- Pace yourself while on tour; travel is inherently stimulating and can produce adrenalin boosts that mask energy drain. Guard your energy reserves and consider the length of the trip and whether to opt out of some activities and/or walks.
- Be self-aware. If you feel yourself tiring or feel a bug coming on, take precautions to block it (e.g. extra rest, extra doses of vitamin C, etc).
- If you feel a bug coming on or if you take ill, distance yourself from others when possible.
- If you feel ill, isolate yourself towards the back of the bus and away from others

Click [WAI Wellness on Tour Policy](#) to view the WAI policy on Wellness on Tour.

[What Happens Next?](#)

Soon after registration, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure (March 3, 2024) and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see

our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

We look forward to enjoying this brand new Adventure through the natural wonders of Vancouver Island!