

Gwaii Haanas

"Canadian Galapagos" & Haida Homeland

Information about the Journey



Gwaii Haanas, the 'The Place of Wonder' was named by the Haida people who have lived here for thousands of years. These magnificent islands developed as a unique cultural and ecological environment. It is here that some of the world's largest trees grow, and together with an abundance of indigenous species of flora and fauna, has earned **Gwaii Haanas** (formally the Queen Charlotte Islands) a reputation as the '**Canadian Galapagos**'.

This secluded wilderness reaches its peak of beauty as the longer hours of sunlight upon the plankton-rich waters attract a large display of marine life. From the tiniest zooplankton feeding colourful and rich intertidal life, to the beautiful sea birds such as the tufted puffin, and peregrine falcon, to the great marine mammals like the humpback and orca (killer) whales, all depend on this productive habitat for their survival.

Exploring **Gwaii Haanas** provides an insight into the Haida's proud culture. We visit significant historical sites: Cumshewa: **HLKiinul**, Skedan: **K'uuna**, Tanu: **T'aanuu**, Hot Spring Island: **Gandll K'iin**, Windy Bay: **Hlk'yaah'Llnagaay** and the Unesco World Heritage Site of Ninstints: **SGaang Gwaii** where the largest display of original Haida poles reveals family lineage and legend.

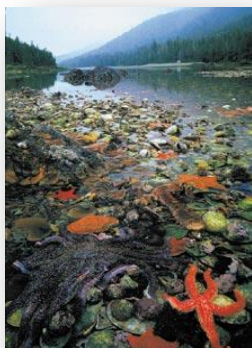


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www.haidaheritagecentre.com



Itinerary: *Subject to changes due to weather conditions, group interest or wildlife focus*

(Sample)

Day 1:

From **Sandspit** airport or your place of accommodation should you have opted to arrive the night before, you will be transported by land shuttle to **Skidegate** (near **Queen Charlotte City**) for a visit to the exceptional Haida Heritage Centre at '**Kay Llnagaay**', its exhibits focus on the rich history, culture and art of the Haida, a great introduction to their rich heritage prior to visiting their ancestral homeland in '**Gwaii Haanas**'. We conclude this day with a traditional Haida seafood dinner at **Keenawii's**: Roberta Olson waterfront home. You will be transported back to **Sandspit** for the night.

Day 2 - 5:

From **Sandspit** shortly after breakfast, you will be transported by the same shuttle service to s.v. Duen location; a one hour road journey to Moresby Camp at the edge of **Gwaii Haanas Park Reserve**. We take our first glimpse at a lush temperate rainforest through **Carmichael Passage** as we glide through **Louise Narrows**. Rounding **Tlunkwa Island** we make our first Haida Village visit at **Tanu: T'annuu**; a spiritual longhouse village site silenced by a luxuriant cover of mosses. **T'annuu** was also homeland of the late world-renowned artist Bill Reid, where a small gravestone marks his final resting place.

We sail scenic **Darwin Sound** towards **De La Beche Inlet** and **Sac Bay**. Here we will hike in the alpine landscape of the **San Cristobal Mountains** and enjoy a spectacular view of **Juan de Perez Sound** and our next destination at **Hot Spring Island: Gandll K'iin** for a visit to the former hot springs which for millennium flowed unrestricted into large beachside pools.



Gwaii Haanas

Itinerary

A recent (2012) earthquake closed off their vents and left the main pools dry. A new hot water source was discovered at the waterline where a small pool allows for a brief soak between tide cycles. Haida legend has it the quake was the work of a supernatural being – Sacred One Standing and Moving- who is believed to hold up the Haida Gwaii and is responsible for the tremors that strike the islands. **Hot Spring Island: Gandll K'iin** is a place of great cultural importance to the Haida Nation and a spectacular vantage point overlooking **Darwin Sound** and the **San Cristoval mountains**.

Onward through **Burnaby Strait, Dolomite Narrows** reveals one of the richest intertidal and diverse collections of sea life in the world. We closely observe colourful sea creatures like the giant sun star, purple sea urchins, Dungeness crab, or sea cucumber. At the **South** side of **Dolomite Narrows** we will experience a magnificent temperate rainforest in **Bag Harbour** and marvel at lush mosses clinging to giant spruce, and laden branches spreading beneath the dense forest canopy.

Along the waterway of **Houston Stewart Channel** we will visit an old whaling station at Rose Harbour. We then travel west of **Kunghit Island** for a glimpse at the colourful tufted puffins, or a pod of resident Orcas or Humpback whales that may transit the area.



We set anchor at **Anthony Island** for a most spiritual journey through **Unesco's World Heritage Site of SGaang Gwaii (Ninstints)**. Here we view an ancient burial cave, and the greatest display of Haida poles guarding the spirits of its magical surroundings.

Weather permitting we may round **Cape St-James** for a visit to one of the largest sea lion colonies found along the Pacific Northwest coast.

Day 6-9

Northbound, we travel to the **Copper Island** group for an opportunity for a zodiac or kayak drift in a small sea cave. Weather permitting, we will journey east of **Lyell Island** for a visit to a traditional Haida longhouse at **Windy Bay: Hlk'aah ' Lnagaay** along the newly raised '**Gwaii Haanas Legacy pole**' the first pole raised in over 130 years. It features the interconnections between the land, sea and people and was inspired by all of those who take care of Gwaii Haanas. Along with Raven, Eagle, Sculpin, Grizzly Bear and more. Included is Sacred-One-Standing-and-Moving, the supernatural being responsible for earthquakes. Here we will also take a walk through the peaceful forest giants, another beautiful example of a temperate rainforest.

Continuing northbound we set compass for **Reef Island** and a visit to the small gathering of sea lions often found basking on the rocks, and nearby cormorants nesting by the cliff-side.

We will sail for **Limestone Islands** on our way to **Skedans: K'uuna**, here we view a spectacular site with the remains of the Haida's original poles.

We conclude our journey in **Cumshewa: HLKiinul** - a silent and spiritual site found on the outskirts of the park. Here we will have the opportunity to view a magnificent bald eagle's nest found on the adjacent Haida burial island. This last day we transit back to **Moresby Camp** and board the return land shuttle service to meet the return flight to Vancouver.



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General traveling info



Joining Instructions & Included in the trip

Trip begin at Sandspit - Day 1 You will be greeted at either the airport or at your accommodation location should you have opted to arrive the day(s) earlier. You will be transported by our local guided shuttle service to Skidegate near Queen Charlotte City for a visit to the Heritage Museum followed by a Haida seafood dinner. Transport back to Sandspit for the night in our choice of accommodation.

Trips end at Sandspit - Day 9 last day from the s.v. Duen in Moresby Camp you will be transported to Sandspit by the same shuttle service in time for the return flight to Vancouver or to your place of accommodation should you have opted to extend your stay.



Sandspit - where is it and how do I get there

Sandspit is on the northeastern tip of Moresby Island. The largest southern island in Haida Gwaii and north of Gwaii Haanas Park.

Flights from Vancouver are with Air Canada. BC ferries provide crossing of the Hecate Strait from Prince Rupert: the Northern most city along the BC coast. Landing at Skidegate in Haida Gwaii. A shuttle ferry runs frequently from Skidegate to Sandspit.

For more information and reservations, please call:

AIR CANADA www.aircanada.com 1-888-247-2262
 BC FERRY CORP www.bcferries.com 604-386-3431
 In Canada1-888-223-3779

Accommodation:

Random selection
 More available along with local info at: www.qcinfo.ca

Sandspit

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