



# ADVENTURE ASSOCIATES

[www.AdventureAssociates.net](http://www.AdventureAssociates.net)

PO Box 16304 • Seattle WA 98116 • 206-932-8352

[info@AdventureAssociates.net](mailto:info@AdventureAssociates.net)



## QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS: SEA KAYAK EXPEDITION “TOTEMS OF THE PACIFIC TO HOT SPRINGS”

Ranked the #1 National Park in North America by National Geographic and home to the native Haida people, the "Gwaii Haanas" - Place of Wonder, is a wilderness paradise. This relaxed expedition is one of our most popular tours, as we navigate the greater part of Gwaii Haanas National Park, off the coast of British Columbia. At low tide, kayaks are the perfect craft to unobtrusively view the rainbow explosion of marine creatures and witness black bears feeding on the shoreline. You will have time to explore old growth forests, view endless Intertidal wonders, try new campsites, and paddle to places that few experience. The shoreline is diverse: from sea caves to estuaries, to vast beaches to intimate islands. Our campsites are often former homesteads, ancient Haida villages, or old growth forests. They are chosen for their solitude and grand views. A visit to the village of Ninstints, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the highlights of the trip as it gives a glimpse into the culture of the Haida. This island jewel boasts the largest number of original standing totem poles in the world! We paddle corridors that promote wildlife encounters; the nutrient rich waters of Gwaii Haanas support an abundance of wildlife including Humpback Whales, Stellar Sea Lions, seals, the occasional pod of Orca Whales, and a plethora of sea bird colonies. Whether paddling in hidden inlets or relaxing under a huge cedar tree, the remoteness and wildness is magical!

**Land Cost: \$2725 + CN Gov't Tax**

**Trip Dates: Custom Groups May - September**

### **General Note:**

Our trip has all outlined and more! We start our paddle at the southernmost tip of the islands known as Ninstints (World Heritage site), travel north and immerse that much more in the Indian heritage and natural environment. Weather conditions and the interests of the group often determine the actual itinerary of our trip. You'll have responsibilities in terms of helping with day-to-day tasks, as they are taught. The trip is expedition style - camp participation.

We try to start early in the day to make the most of our time in Gwaii Haanas. Of course, tides, currents and weather will also determine our departures and route. We travel, relax, explore and prepare meals together. We'll stop to go ashore or to kayak an interesting reef - immersing ourselves in the rich natural and cultural points of interest in Gwaii Haanas. At the end the day we find a quiet site, set up camp and begin meal preparation. After supper, there is usually time for relaxation. An evening paddle to absorb the peace and tranquility of this magical place is often irresistible.

### **DAY 1**

Arriving by air from Vancouver to Sandspit, the location of the islands' main airport, and transport to night accommodations. Overnight hotel. (Flight arrangements and fees on your own.) (Meals on your own.)

### **DAY 2**

Your tour starts with a pick-up at your accommodation by Laura, the local taxi service. We use a Twin Otter seaplane to transport you from Sandspit to the remote island location of Rose Harbour. From 1905 to 1942 this was a flourishing whaling station. Rose Harbour now has a population of 6 - hardy west coast characters. This special place today offers rustic accommodation and excellent local cuisine for travelers. Once introduced to our mixed fleet of single and double kayaks, our goal is to travel safely in accordance with the weather, tides and general interests of the group. So, depending on the weather, we leave Rose Harbour, paddling out of Houston Stewart Channel and have our first glance of the Pacific Ocean. We establish a camp within close proximity to Anthony Island, home to The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ninstints. One hundred and twenty years after being abandoned, a row of standing totem poles still remains as evidence of the once flourishing culture here. This island jewel boasts the largest number of original standing totem poles in the world! (BLD)

### **DAYS 3-8**

As mentioned previously, our goal over these next 8 days will be to follow a south to north route, ending at Hot Springs Island. The following is our desired route, but weather, tides, currents and other conditions beyond our control will invariably determine our exact itinerary. A short crossing brings us to one of the highlights of our journey where we will spend the day in the presence of the Totems of the Pacific. Weather permitting, paddling around this island allows you the opportunity to view Stellar Sea lions and Seals that haul out on the many islets nearby. After exploring hidden coves and vast beaches, we leave our west coast camp and paddle through Houston Stewart Channel. Our desire on Day 4 is to paddle north along the east side of Moresby Island, round Benjamin Point and make our way across Carpenter Bay. The open waters and strong currents in this area will determine our route; they also create ideal conditions for plankton, krill and herring, attracting a plethora of wildlife: Humpback whales, Orca whales, Sea Lions, and a diversity of sea birds. Species that are not often found in the more sheltered waters to the north congregate here. Breaking camp in Carpenter Bay we paddle by the Rankin Islands. These islands are Ecological Reserves and are nesting sites for the Cassins Auklet. Continuing north along Moresby Island we cross Collison Bay, and Ikeda Cove to make camp in Skincuttle Inlet. This inlet is sheltered by the open waters of Hecate Strait by a chain of Islands known as the

Copper and Bolkus Islands. These islands are also Ecological Reserves. They are nesting sites for the Cassins Auklet and the rare Ancient Murrelet. Skincuttle Inlet is also known for its Haida myths and history. Waking the next day, a day paddle from our camp will be made to view Burnaby Narrows. Studies conducted by Parks Canada have determined that this area contains more than 290 aquatic species, making this some of the highest levels of living material (called Biomass) of any Intertidal zone in the world! We pack up camp and continue north, paddling alongside the beaches found on the eastern shore of Burnaby Island. Rounding Scudder Point we will make our camp on the northern shore of Burnaby Island in hopes of a grand sunset. This route is weather-dependent and has rugged beauty and less visited campsites.



Crossing Juan Perez Sound brings us to a conglomeration of islands surrounding Hot Springs Island. Here we establish a camp in close proximity to where the following day we will be rewarded after more than a week of paddling, with a leisurely soak in one of the natural thermal pools found on Hot Springs Island. (BLD Daily)

**DAY 9**

On our final day, our adventure takes a new turn and our friends from Moresby Explorers come to our remote camp to transport us back to Sandspit. They will entertain you with stories and show you coastal attractions while making our way back to Moresby Camp. Depending on the weather, a stop to the Village of Tanu can be made. This village is the resting place for world famous Haida Artist Bill Reid. Now covered in moss, the sound of eagles and ravens fill our ears as we walk through this once flourishing village. Return to Sandspit for your final night in the islands before returning home or continuing on with a planned extension to Queen Charlotte City. (BL)

**DAY 10**

Depart for home. (B)

***Continued...***

**Please know that our itinerary may vary depending on weather, tides, currents, and the interests of the group. Also, spontaneous moments and opportunities may fill parts of a day. No two trips are ever the same. Please remain flexible to fully enjoy the wildness, beauty and daily events of Queen Charlotte Islands life.**

Land Costs	CN Gov't Tax	Deposit	In-country Flight(s)	Trip Dates	Group Size	Difficulty	Activities
\$2725	Estimate \$94.75	\$400 (non-refundable)	Included	May - Sept	8 Max	Beginner/ Intermediate	Kayaking, Camping, Wildlife, Cultural Exchange



**A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT YOUR TRIP...Read carefully**

**Included in your Trip Fee:** All meals as indicated on itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, Dinner); Seaplane one way Sandspit to Gwaii Haanas National Park and return boat shuttle to Sandspit; camp kitchen equipment; wilderness first-aid certified kayak guides; kayaks and related gear; 2-person tents; two nights lodging on double basis; National Park, camp and entry fees at sites, and parks orientation session.

**Not Included in your Trip Fee:** International airfare; sleeping bag and pads; meals not specified on itinerary; alcoholic beverages; airport departure tax; dry bags, outdoor clothing and gear (a complete packing list will be supplied upon registration); tips to guides, driver and bellhops; personal travel/medical insurance.

**Guide Note:** I recommend planning one day on your own in Queen Charlotte City and Graham Island. There are some great shops, museums, galleries and sites: the famous Bill Ellis Book Store, Skidegate Museum, a hike to a shipwreck and shopping. This free day in QCC may be taken pre or post trip. Let Adventure Associates, (888) 532-8352, know your plans and we can make suggestions and help with accommodations, shuttles, car rental and dining suggestions (all expenses on your own).

**How Strenuous is this trip:** You do need to have some sea kayaking experience (beginner, not novice) - all basic skills will be presented. Our kayaks are a mix of doubles and singles - very stable and seaworthy! *This is a participatory trip, everyone will be involved with camp setup, meal preparation and clean up, loading and carrying kayaks, and generally involved in keeping all gear clean (sponging out boats). The equipment is our lifeline in this environment. Keeping things clean and in good repair is our safety net.*

**How is the Food:** It's wonderful - healthy and nourishing! Fresh veggies, fruit and all of the guides' favorite recipes to share. If you decide to fish, you can hope for lots of freshly caught seafood. As this is a participatory trip, you will be partly responsible for meal prep and clean up. You are also responsible for bringing your own snacks for camp and paddling (2-3 high energy snacks per day). Tastes and individual needs/eating habits vary. It's nice to have something to grab without asking and to have different treats to offer around. If you have special dietary needs or concerns, please inform us at time of booking.

**Fishing Licenses:** Fishing licenses are required and must be purchased the evening before your departure at the front desk of the Sandspit Inn. There is no tackle shop in Sandspit, so bring your own from home. Contact us for recommendations.

**Transportation/Flight Arrangements:** Please consult with Adventure Associates as you prepare your transportation arrangements for the best time of arrival/departure. **By Air:** Air Canada Jazz (1-800-665-1177; www.aircanada.ca) flies twice daily to Sandspit from Vancouver, B.C. If you are flying Air Canada and you are traveling with a partner(s) we strongly suggest that you make individual arrangements if possible. The reason for this is your luggage. Air Canada from Vancouver to Sandspit is notorious for bumping luggage. If this happens to you, our transportation on Day Two most likely won't be able to accommodate an alternative departure for the group. By making individual bookings, Air Canada will provide you with a voucher of \$250 to cover delayed luggage (this ONLY applies on flights to Sandspit). This voucher, they believe, will cover the transportation cost to get the luggage and/or yourself to the very remote location in Gwaii Haanas.

Not so!!! By individual bookings you could collectively have enough to cover the costs of what should be their problem, not yours. I have been dealing with this situation once a summer, whether with guests or others, and truthfully it works out. Airport Shuttle (1-877-747-4461) meets scheduled flights in and out of Sandspit. **By Ferry:** Ferries offer schedules from Prince Rupert or Port Hardy to Skidegate Landing. Six BC Ferries (www.bcferries.bc.ca) sail a week from Prince Rupert (1-888-223-3779). From Rupert, anticipate a 7-hour crossing. From Port Hardy you will take the scenic route: it is a 24-hour tour to Rupert, then an additional crossing to Skidegate Landing. A return trip via Highway 16 along the Skeena River and through the Bulkley Valley to Prince George and south makes for a great trip through "Supernatural B.C." Call "Supernatural B.C." at 1-800-663-6000 and ask for both their Gwaii Haanas and Queen Charlotte Islands information packages. If you're traveling as a foot-passenger on a ferry, you won't need a reservation. Traveling on the ferry with a vehicle, you will need to make a reservation ASAP, space is limited and your car may not arrive when you do. It costs roughly CAN\$125 one-way to bring your car across from Rupert. If you're not making an extended stay on the islands, contact me and I will help you with finding day care for your car in Prince Rupert. **By Car:** You should anticipate 18 to 22 hours of driving from Vancouver, Edmonton, or Calgary, followed by an 8-hour ferry crossing from Prince Rupert.

**Trip & Travel Insurance:** We strongly recommend that travel insurance be purchased immediately following your registration. The insurance protects you and your money from late cancellations, accidents or illness in remote areas, emergency evacuation, and loss of baggage, airline flight changes and other unexpected delays. The particular program we recommend (Access America) will cover "preexisting" conditions if you purchase full coverage within fourteen (14) days following your registration. Please see "Travel Resources" on our website for more information and call with any questions.

**How to Register:** If you have not downloaded an application form, please contact our office for a complete registration packet. Complete the application form and return it to our office along with the appropriate deposit. Upon receipt of your application, we will send you a confirmation and details about your pre-trip preparation.

**Payment Schedule:** We accept checks, Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

\$400 deposit due at the time of registration (deposit is non-refundable)

Full payment due 75 days prior to trip departure

**\*Special Note:** The American dollar fluctuates constantly in Canada. The trip price is based upon the dollar value at the time of printing (December 2007) and is subject to change.

### **Cancellation & Refund Policy**

If you must cancel prior to departure, the following fee will be assessed based upon our receipt of your written cancellation request:

Days Prior to Departure (trip destination)

76 or more ..... \$400 (non-refundable trip deposit)

1 to 75 ..... 100% fee

No partial refunds are possible for any unused portion of your trip.

Penalties on airline tickets are subject to the individual air carrier's rules and regulations. Departure is defined as the date of the first flight, or the trip departure date as indicated on our Trip Schedule, whichever comes first.

Once a trip has been confirmed, medical circumstances will not be considered as exceptions to our cancellation policy. However, if you have purchased a comprehensive Travel Insurance plan that covers cancellation, you may be able to retrieve some of the funds.

## Fun Reading for your Queen Charlottes Kayak Expedition

Listed below are a few guides and general interest books that will enhance your knowledge of the Islands and help you to plan your trip. Most are available through major booksellers (at least on an order basis). If you like to shop locally, there are numerous gift shops on the Islands that offer most of these books for sale (Bill Ellis Books: [nwcbooks@island.net](mailto:nwcbooks@island.net) 250-559-4681, Rainbows Gallery: 250-559-8420, Joy's Island Jewellers: 250-559-8890 and the Haida Gwaii Museum: 250-559-4643 are just a few in the Queen Charlotte City area). Bill's bookshop is a must see when in Queen Charlotte City, by the way. There is everything relating to northwest coast native, environmental and historical interests including all (maybe) of the books mentioned below.

### Guide Books

Haida Gwaii, The Queen Charlotte Islands - Dennis Harwood (2000, \$18.95 CDN\$) Good up to date general guide with sections on the geography, social history and natural attractions of the Islands.

Guide To The Queen Charlotte Islands, Haida Gwaii (2001 edition) - Observer Publishing (Phone: 1-250-559-4680, \$3.95) Published annually. A good source of who offers what and things to do while on the Charlottes.

Haida Gwaii: Journeys Through The Queen Charlotte Islands - Ian Gill and David Nunik (1997, \$18.95) Fabulous photos, text a bit coloured.

A Guide To The Queen Charlotte Islands, Twelfth Edition - Neil Carey (1998, \$14.95)

Trail Guide To The Queen Charlotte Islands (or something...) - Fern Henderson (published by the Haida Gwaii Museum, \$7.00). A great little guide to hiking trails on the Charlottes. Available through the Museum 250-559-4643 and other outlets on the Islands.

The Queen Charlotte Islands - Book 2, Of Places and Names - Kathleen Dalzell (1973, numerous reprintings in paper) The level of detail in this book probably extends beyond "general interest". It's on the boat as a great reference source providing lots of history through a place name format.

Islands At The Edge - Islands Protection Society (1984). Not actually a 'guide book' but has a wealth of information and great photographs. Put together by John Broadhead and Thom Henley as part of the effort to increase awareness of the value of preserving Gwaii Haanas. Unfortunately out of print, so grab it if you see it anywhere. Bill Ellis Books ([nwcbooks@island.net](mailto:nwcbooks@island.net) 1-250-559-4681) may have a copy.

### Guide picks

Passage to Juneau, A Sea and Its Meanings - Jonathan Raban (2000, \$23.00)

Guns, Germs, and Steel, The Fates Of Human Societies - Jared Diamond (1998, \$19.99)

Northern Haida Master Carvers - Robin K.Wright (2001, \$45.00)

Solitary Raven, Selected Writings of Bill Reid - Bill Reid (2000, \$40.00)

Story as Sharp as a Knife: An Introduction to Classical Haida Literature - Robert Bringhurst (Douglas & McIntyre 1998, recently released in paperback.)

Haida Monumental Art: Villages of the Queen Charlotte Islands - George F. MacDonald (1994, \$45.00)

To the Charlottes - Douglas Cole & Bradley Lockner isbn: 0-7748-0415-7

The Curve of Time - Muriel Wylie Blanchett (1993, \$15.95)

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PO Box 16304 Seattle, WA 98116-0304 Ph: 206-932-8352