



GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Sample Itinerary

Start: Bella Bella, BC

Finish: Terrace, BC

8 Days

Join Bluewater Adventures on this spectacular journey into the protected waters of the north central coast of British Columbia – an area known as the ‘Great Bear Rainforest’. This stretch of coastline is a rich and unique ecosystem of impressive biodiversity – from the herring, salmon and large marine mammals in the sea, to carnivores, birds and massive cedar and hemlocks trees on land. It is home to grizzly bears, wolves, humpback whales, eagles, and the elusive, all-white Spirit Bear.

This voyage will explore the northern reaches of the Great Bear Rainforest with the anticipation of seeing some amazing wildlife while enjoying the peace and tranquility of the central BC Coast. We go ashore to explore each day, to visit various estuaries, bear viewing sites and first nations villages. At sea, we keep a sharp eye out for whales and other marine mammals as we travel the fiords below towering rock faces and rushing waterfalls.

The Tshimshian and Heiltsuk First Nations people have lived in the area for tens of thousands of years. We will learn about their culture and how important this remote and pristine wilderness is to them and their future generations. Conservationists and First Nations have been actively working to protect this area as it contains the largest remaining untouched temperate rainforest on the Pacific Coast. In 2006, following the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement between the British Columbia government, Coastal First Nations, the forestry industry and environmental groups, 10% of the Great Bear Rainforest was set aside for protection as Conservancies. First Nations received support to shift from resource-based revenue to developing ecotourism and any logging must now meet sustainable ecosystem-based management guidelines. Just in 2016, the British Columbia government and Coastal First Nations announced that a further 75% of the land area will be protected.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

On all of 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 into Bella Bella

Our trip starts in the small First Nations coastal town of Bella Bella. Located on remote Campbell Island, Bella Bella - also known as Waglisla - is the home of the Heiltsuk First Nation. Their traditional territory is spread out over area of 16,658 square kilometers. Bella Bella is located 181km north of Vancouver Island and 144km west of Bella Coola and counts 1450 residents.

Arrive in Bella Bella the day prior to the trip start and stay overnight in one of the three accommodation options. This is to ensure the group can set sail on time without delays. When travelling in coastal regions unforeseen delays due to weather are to be expected.

There are three accommodation options: People will stay at the Heiltsuk-owned and operated, Shearwater Resort, located on Denny Island, just off Bella Bella. Denny Island has the most facilities for tourists visiting the area, such as a restaurant, a couple of small stores and a pub.

Upon arriving at the Bella Bella Airport, you will be met by the local taxi company for transport to the Municipal Dock where you will board the water taxi on to Denny Island.

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Once on Denny Island, you can walk up the ramp to the Shearwater Lodge

Trip Start - Day 1

You will meet the vessel and crew at the Shearwater Dock. Upon boarding, cabins will be assigned and following a brief introduction and safety orientation we will set sail for the Great Bear Rainforest where each night we anchor in a different, secluded anchorage.

During our daily shore excursions, our onboard naturalist will help identify different coastal plants, animals, birds and marine life and 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.

Days 1- 7: We head deep into the coastal mountains and travel the next two days through Milbanke Sound, Finlayson Channel, continuing on to Douglas Channel. As we approach the waters of Milbanke Sound keep watch for sea otters. With the nuclear testing at Amchitka between 1968 and 1972, 89 sea otters were transplanted to Vancouver Island. Some found their way to the central coast occasionally you will spot them in the kelp beds wrapped in the leaves of kelp to anchor themselves against the currents.

Douglas Channel: Here you will see spectacular rock faces and impressive waterfalls. We travel along the shore of *Princess Royal Island* – the best-known area for seeing the rare Spirit or Kermode bear. These bears are black bears expressing a genetic variation that results in about ten percent of the population in this area being all white.

We will wind our way through remote areas and expect to see bears and an array of coastal birds attracted by the spawning salmon. We are fortunate to spend a day with local Tsimshian Native guides who will take us to their favourite wildlife viewing areas where we will get one of our best chances to spot the elusive Spirit bear. There are two Native villages in this area: Klemtu and Hartley Bay.

In *Whale Channel* we expect to see humpback whales and will take the time to observe these amazing, 15-metre-long creatures, whenever the opportunity arises. In open Principe Channel, we hope for a good wind to set the sails and have one of our best sails of the voyage!

On departing from the bear viewing area we will travel up Douglas Channel past Hawkesbury Island. It is along these mainland shores that we will look for grizzly bears. We will explore an estuary for foraging bears and birds, and other life thriving on the spawning salmon.

Day 8: Trip Finish Kitimat/ Terrace

We will arrive in Kitimat by mid-morning. The local shuttle bus will transport you and your luggage to the Terrace airport. The travel time to the airport is approximately 1 hour.

Shuttle fees to and from the Kitimat Marina Dock to the Terrace Airport are included in your trip fees. Any transportation beyond this service is the responsibility of the guest.

Note: 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.

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