



GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Arrival & Departure Itinerary

Start: Bella Bella Finish: Terrace/Kitimat

8 Days

This natural history voyage explores the protected waters of the north central coast of British Columbia – an area known as the ‘Great Bear Rainforest’. Conservationists and First Nations have been actively working to protect this area as it contains the largest remaining, intact temperate rainforest on the Pacific Coast. The British Columbia government and Coastal First Nations just announced that 85% of the land area will now be protected. It is home to an incredible variety of animals such as grizzly bears, wolves, humpback whales, and the elusive, all-white Spirit Bear.

We will see some incredible wildlife. We go ashore to explore each day on the lookout for wildlife. 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 thousands of years. We will learn about their culture and how important this remote and pristine wilderness is to them and their future generations.

INTENDED 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 unceded traditional territory is spread out over an area of 16,658 square kilometres. Bella Bella is located 181km north of Vancouver Island and 144km west of Bella Coola and counts 1450 residents.

We highly recommend arriving in Bella Bella the day prior to the trip start and staying overnight. This is to ensure the group can set sail on time without delays. When travelling in coastal regions unforeseen delays due to weather are common.

There are three accommodation options: The majority of people will stay at the Shearwater Resort or Whiskey Cove B&B 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. There are also walking trails and kayaks at Whiskey Cove. The third option, Annette’s Beach House allows you to stay in Bella Bella and experience life in a First Nations coastal town, but will require you to do your own cooking.

Upon arriving at the Bella Bella Airport, collect your luggage outside and look for Star Shuttle driving a large white or silver passenger van. They will be notified of your arrival and a driver will meet your flight to transport you to the Municipal Dock for the water taxi on to Denny Island, or your accommodation in Bella Bella. Once at the Municipal Dock proceed down the ramp to where you will catch your water taxi for the 10-minute crossing to the Shearwater Marine Resort.

Shuttle fees to and from the Bella Bella Municipal Dock are included in your trip fees. Any transportation beyond this service is the responsibility of the guest. Please remember to mention to the driver that you are a Bluewater Adventures guest.

If you are staying at the Shearwater resort, your water taxi fare is included in your room charges. Let the water taxi driver know you are a hotel guest. If you are staying at the Whiskey Cove B&B, upon booking,

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provide the B&B with your arrival information into Bella Bella and they will provide transportation from the Shearwater dock to their B&B on Denny Island. You will have to pay \$5.00 per person for the water taxi.

Trip Start - Day 1

For guests staying at the Shearwater Resort or Whiskey Cove B&B – please meet the *Island Odyssey* at the Shearwater Marine Resort Dock at **10:30AM** and prepare to board. Please request Whiskey Cove B&B transport you to the Shearwater Dock in the morning following breakfast.

Guests staying in Bella Bella - please meet at the top of the Municipal Dock at **11:00AM** on the Bella Bella waterfront. Please ask Starr Shuttle about transportation to the dock.

Upon boarding the *Island Odyssey*, 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 - 4: 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 and occasionally we spot them in the kelp beds wrapped in the leaves of kelp to anchor themselves against the currents.

We now head deep into the Coastal Mountains and will focus on a large marine park called the Fiordland Conservancy. Here you will see some spectacular rock faces and impressive waterfalls. We will explore remote estuaries and expect to see grizzly bears attracted by the spawning salmon. We may visit the native village of Klemtu to see the longhouse that was recently built by the local community.

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. Khutze Inlet has a beautiful river valley providing an estuary for an abundance of birdlife

Days 5 – 7: In Whale Channel and Douglas Channel (and at various places along our journey) we expect to see humpback whales and will take the time to observe these amazing, 15-meter-long creatures whenever the opportunity arises.

We are fortunate to spend a day with local Gitga'at First Nation guides, who will take us to their favourite wildlife viewing areas. This will be one of our best chances to spot the elusive Spirit bear.

Trip Finish – Day 8

We will arrive in Kitimat by late morning. Bluewater Adventures will provide transportation for you and your luggage to the Terrace Airport for a mid-afternoon flight. The travel time to the airport is approximately 1 hour. Alternatively, you can decide to spend an extra day in Terrace and either depart on the evening flight or the next day.