

# EXPLORE!



## Why book this trip?

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Explore western Canada's awe inspiring natural highlights including the vast Athabasca Glacier and Falls near Lake Louise, spot Orca, Minke and Humpback whale off the coast of Victoria Island, visit a bear sanctuary, hike through the numerous national parks and canoe along Clearwater Lake in Wells Gray Provincial Park with an overnight camp

- **Jasper National Park** - Drive along the Icefield Parkway, visit Banff and Glacier National Park
- **Whistler** - Try out a tree top adventure on a series on suspension bridges
- **Wells Gray Park** - Opportunity to try out an overnight canoe trip along Clearwater Lake



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 11  
Lunch: 11  
Dinner: 11



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader / Driver



**TRANSPORT**  
Maxiwagon



**ACCOMMODATION**  
1 nights standard  
cabins  
8 nights simple  
camping  
2 nights standard  
hotel  
2 nights simple yurt



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
8 - 12

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Trip starts in Vancouver

The trip begins in Vancouver where we transfer to the hotel to meet your local guide.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Ramada Inn Downtown Vancouver (or similar)

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**MEALS PROVIDED: NONE**

### DAY 2 - Explore Vancouver and catch the ferry to Victoria

This morning, we explore the city of Vancouver on foot including visiting Granville Island and its public market which is famous for its seafood and fruit, Chinatown, the Gastown area of the city and Stanley Park. We enjoy a picnic in one of Vancouver's parks that overlook the Bay and catch the afternoon ferry to Victoria on Vancouver Island where we camp on the outskirts of the city. Although the island stretches almost 500km from north to south, it only has a population of 500,000 and with its numerous provincial parks, it is easy to escape into the wilderness.





ACCOMMODATION:

Goldstream Provincial Park Campground (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 3 - Whale watching trip and discover Victoria and its totem poles

Vancouver Island is one of the best places in the world to spot marine wildlife, and we board a catamaran for a whale watching excursion around the surrounding islands. Upon returning to the island capital, we explore Victoria on foot including the Inner Harbour, Bastion Square, the impressive Empress Hotel on the harbour front and Thunderbird Park. The park is home to numerous Totem Poles that were carved by the island's Inuit native people. The rest of the day is left for optional visits including the Royal British Columbia Museum or Butchart's Gardens which is world renowned for its beauty.



ACCOMMODATION:

Goldstream Provincial Park Campground (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 4 - Treetop adventure at the Capilano Suspension bridge and drive to Whistler

We take the morning ferry back to the mainland and stop off at Capilano Suspension bridge for a treetop adventure 70 metres above the Capilano River. Manoeuvre from one Douglas fir tree to another on a series of elevated suspension bridges, some reaching as high as 30m above the forest floor which offers a unique perspective of the forest from above. We continue on to Whistler and arrive in time to enjoy an evening meal cooked by your Explore leader!



ACCOMMODATION:

Whistler RV Park and Campground (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 5 - Visit a First Nations cultural centre and make a traditional drum**

We visit the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre and learn about the indigenous people of the region as well as trying your hand at making your own traditional mini drum during a craft workshop. In the afternoon, we head to Garibaldi Provincial Park for a walk to the beautiful Cheakamus Lake (roughly 8 km and 3 hours). There is the option to explore Whistler Village towards the end of this afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Whistler RV Park and Campground (or similar)

Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 6 - Visit a ranch and travel to Clearwater and stay in rustic cowboy cabins**

Today we spend the morning travelling north east to Clearwater, stopping at an historic ranch originally built during the Gold Rush era. After lunch, we continue towards Clearwater pausing en route at various places to soak up the wonderful views, notably Spahats Creek Falls. We reach our stop for the night, a ranch with rustic cabins and are treated to a cowboy style BBQ cooked by your local guide.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Wells Gray Ranch (or similar)

Grade: Standard Cabins



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Overnight canoe trip in Wells Gray Provincial Park**

This morning we head out to the nearby Wells Gray Provincial Park, home to Helmcken Falls which is double the height of Niagara Falls. There are spectacular views from all along the park entrance road and great opportunities for wildlife spotting. In the afternoon, we depart for an overnight canoe and camping trip on Clearwater Lake. After about 3 hours of easy canoeing on the lake, we find a camping spot and set up our tent by the lake for the evening of real Canadian adventure. Full instruction is given and no

previous experience required.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Wells Gray Campground (or similar)

Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 8 - Walk along the Fraser Canyon and overnight in Jasper**

This morning we canoe back to our starting point and then head northeast towards Mount Robson Provincial Park. We also see Mount Robson itself which is the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies (3954m). It is tall enough to create its own weather patterns and if we're lucky we'll be able to view this photogenic monolith from top to bottom. From here, we enjoy a walk along Fraser Canyon to Overlander Falls (1km round trip, 45 minutes' walk) and then drive in the afternoon on to Jasper, our final destination for today and the largest of Canada's Rocky Mountain Parks. Look out for black bears, elks and eagles on the drive, many of which can usually be spotted from the road. We set up camp for the next two nights in the National Park.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Whistler Campground (or similar)

Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 9 - Visit Maligne Canyon and walk the Bald Hill Trail**

Maligne Canyon where we visit today has a reputation as being one of the most spectacular gorges in the Canadian Rockies with sheer limestone walls that plunge some 50 metres down into the waters of the Maligne River. We take a short walk along the canyon passing by a number of springs, waterfalls, bridges and beautiful forests with dramatic views of the area. We then drive on to Maligne Lake, the largest in the Rockies. After enjoying a picnic lunch near the lake, the afternoon then sees us hiking along the Bald Hill Trail (approximately 13km and 4-5 hours of walking). There are a number of routes that can be taken and your local guide will choose which trail is best depending upon the fitness of the group - there are three Bald Hills summits which vary in steepness, all providing great viewpoints overlooking Evelyn Creek. There are also opportunities to explore the lake by canoe and cruise boat (optional), before enjoying the drive back to Jasper through the Maligne Valley.





**ACCOMMODATION:**

Whistler Campground (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Camping**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER**

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**DAY 10 - Drive along the Icefield Parkway, snow coach glacier tour and overnight in a yurt**

Today's drive takes us along the celebrated Icefield Parkway to Golden. The road negotiates its way through a landscape of coniferous forests, towering mountain peaks, turquoise lakes and impressive glaciers. Possible scenic stops en route include Bow Lake, Peyto Lake and Athabasca Falls. Get on board the Ice Explorer, a vehicle designed specially for glacial travel, for an excursion on the surface of the Falls Glacier. We then drive in the afternoon to Golden with wildlife spotting as we go so be on the lookout for black bears, elks and eagles on the drive. Tonight we will stay at the Golden Eco-Adventure Ranch in the heart of the Columbia Valley where we stay in a mixture of yurts and tents. The yurt is a rounded tent-like structure installed on a wooden deck, each with a double bed and a large futon which folds out into a bed.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Golden Eco-Adventure Yurts (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Yurt**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER**

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**DAY 11 - Visit a grizzly bear refuge and walk in Yoho National Park**

This morning we head to the remarkable Kicking Horse Grizzly Bear Refuge, the world's largest enclosed grizzly bear habitat. It offers us a unique opportunity to watch a grizzly behaving exactly as it would in the wild. After a short hike to the reserve you'll have a chance to meet Boo, the refuge's very own orphan grizzly, and learn more about the life of these magnificent bears from one of the centre's resident naturalists. Next we head for Yoho National Park, to take a short walk up to Takkakaw Falls which is the second highest waterfall in Canada. You can either relax at our campsite or stretch your legs on nearby trails.





ACCOMMODATION:  
Golden Eco-Adventure Yurts (or similar)



Grade: Simple Yurt



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 12 - Walk by Lake Louise and Moraine Lake and drive to Banff**

This morning, we drive to Banff National Park - a landscape of mountains, meadows and crystal clear lakes. On our way, we stop for a walk around the picture postcard Lake Louise and Moraine Lake - the walk will be based upon the groups abilities with routes from 6km and 2 ½ hours to 14km and 5 hours (all are easy to moderate walks). You also have the option of renting a canoe on Lake Louise. We then continue on to Banff and visit the Cave and Basin Historic Site which is a natural thermal mineral springs which the town is famous for - their discovery in 1883 led to Canada's National Park system . Relaxing in these geothermal waters will be a wonderful way to relax, or taking a gondola up the mountain for spectacular views.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Tunnel Mountain Village Campsite (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 13 - Explore Banff before hiking in Banff National Park and drive to Calgary**

This morning, we hike in Banff National Park which is rich in wildlife with over 60 species of mammals and some 280 species of birds being recorded here, including golden eagles, cougars and black bears. We then drive to Calgary and spend the afternoon exploring on foot. There is the option to climb Calgary Tower for a 360 degrees' panorama view over the city - all set against a backdrop of the Rockies.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Ramada Downtown Calgary (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 14 - Trip Ends Calgary**

The tour ends in Calgary this morning after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **Trip information**

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### **Country information**

#### **Canada**

##### **Climate**

May-Sep is the best time to visit, when the weather is usually warm, dry and pleasant. Temperatures can be a little cooler on the coast and in the mountains; rain can be expected at any time. Early in the season, there can be snow in some areas which may limit walking possibilities.

<b>Time difference to GMT</b>	<b>Plugs</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Language</b>
-7	2 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic, Protestant	English and French

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### **Budgeting and packing**

#### **Optional activities**

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

There are a number of exciting optional excursions you can do on your trip. These activities are booked



and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Victoria - visit to Butchart Gardens CAD\$ 35 / adult (CAD\$ 18 for 13-17yr olds; CAD\$ 4 for 12 yrs and under)

Whistler- Gondola CAD\$ 50; Rafting CAD\$ 95 (CAD \$ 65 for 6-16yr olds) (option of class 1 to 2; class 2 & 3; or class 3 & 4 rapids)

Jasper - Bike rental from CAD\$ 15 (per hr), Rafting trip CAD\$ 72-103 (option of class 2 or class 3 rapids); Jasper Skytram \$50; Canoe hire (Maligne Lake) CAD\$63 for 1 hr; Maligne boat tour CAD\$ 70

Athabasca Glacier - Ice walk CAD\$ 110 (payable in cash only)

Kicking Horse - Rafting CAD\$126 (without barbecue) CAD\$139 (with barbecue) (option of class 2 & 3; class 2 to 4; or class 4 rapids)

Lake Louise - Canoe rental CAD\$110.25 per hour

Banff - Gondola CAD\$ 65; Canoeing on the Bow River CAD\$ 42 (1hr) CAD\$63 (2 hrs); Hot Springs CAD\$ 7.30; Three Sisters Peaks Helicopter tour (15mins) CAD\$ 129/adult (CAD\$ 64.50 for upto 12yrs old); Royal Canadian Helicopter (25mins) tour CAD\$ 259 (CAD\$ 129.50 for upto 12yrs old); Mt. Assiniboine Helicopter tour (30mins) CAD\$ 314 (CAD\$ 157 for upto 12yrs old)

Calgary - Climb on top of the Calgary Tower CAD\$ 18

All optional excursion costs are subject to change at the discretion of the local supplier and are per person prices.

## **Clothing**

Include some loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts with tight-closing cuffs (insects). Warm clothing for cool nights beside water or at higher altitudes is essential as is a good waterproof jacket. Also bring swimwear, sunglasses and a sun hat.

## **Footwear**

Hiking boots are a must. Bring sandals or comfortable shoes for walking in the cities and at night at the camp.

## **Luggage**

20kg

## **Luggage: On tour**

A main luggage backpack, case or holdall plus a daypack for hikes and trips and for personal items carried with you inside the minibus. (Main luggage is stored in the closed trailer towed by the minibus). Bring plastic bags to keep things dry.

## **Equipment**

Bring a 3-season sleeping bag (see below), sleeping bag liner, a water bottle, biodegradable soap and shampoo, towel, sun block, and a small torch. Do not forget your camera. Binoculars are useful. Small flies and mosquitoes are part of the environment during forest evenings, so equip yourself with insect repellent.

Please note: Sleeping bags can be provided locally. These must be reserved at the time of booking and paid directly to your Explore Leader on arrival at a cost of 50CAN\$ per sleeping bag hired for the duration of the trip.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between CAD\$7 to CAD\$14 per person per day as a guideline.

### Local crew

In North America tipping 15%-20% is a recognised part of life across the service industry, including restaurants, activity suppliers, taxis and guides. Local staff will look to you for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Unlike other Explore trips, during our trips in North America our Explore leaders will not operate a tips kitty. However, they will be more than happy to provide guidance throughout the trip on who to tip when and to suggest appropriate amounts.

## Canada

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£13.00	£20.00	£3.00	£1.10

### Foreign Exchange

#### Local currency

Canadian Dollars.

#### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Bring your money in Canadian Dollars or US Dollars cash which can be used almost everywhere, although local stores are not keen to change anything over \$50.

#### Where To Exchange

Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities. Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

#### ATM Availability

There are ATMs in the towns.

#### Credit Card Acceptance

Widely accepted just about everywhere.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Maxiwagon

### **Accommodation notes**

Accommodation on Day 6 is in a cowboy log style cabin in Wells Gray Park. There is also a Ranch House which was built by settlers to the area in 1912 which now serves as the ranch's kitchen and breakfast room. The rustic cabins are equipped with four to five bunk beds each with comfortable mattresses, tables and chairs, water containers and wash basins and double propane ceiling lights (Sleeping bags and pillows are available for rent).

Accommodation on Days 10 and 11 are in Yurts which come with a double bed, futon (that can be used as a bed), a wooden floor, shelving unit, picnic table, lawn chairs and a BBQ fire pit. Facilities at the site include; washing machines, toilets and showers. If the family is larger than 4, an additional tent will be provided for this family as the yurt can only sleep up to 4 people. Please note that there are 3 yurts thus some families may need to stay in the tents provided.

We stay in National Park Camp grounds throughout the trip where all camping equipment is provided except a sleeping bag. Like many adventures of this type, much of the team spirit and camaraderie is developed through mucking in and helping out with basic camp responsibilities which will include the setting up and taking down of camp and the loading and unloading of the trailer. At some points you may also be asked to help with meal preparation, washing and clearing up. Be prepared for some early starts and some long days - there is an enormous amount to see!

Facilities include; toilets, showers, kitchen shelters where we have our meals, picnic tables and fire pits. Inflatable mats are provided when we camp with the tents able to be closed for mosquito protection. The tents are capable of sleeping three people although we normally have two people allocated to each tent.

### **Family swimming**

In rivers, lakes and natural hot springs

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## **Essential Information**

### **FCO Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

## **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## **Visa and Passport Information**

When travelling to Canada, you will need the following:

ETA - Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ETA here - <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp> - other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

ESTA - only if transiting via the USA

Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ESTA here - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> - you must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information. If you have visited Libya, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen since March 2011, or dual national of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. In this case you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US embassy or consulate.

I94 - The I94 is a history of entries and exits to the US. You can get this online here for \$6 - <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> - as each i94 accessed is only valid for border crossings for 7 days, it is best to apply for this when in country - your Explore Leader will assist you with this.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## **Booking conditions**

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## **Transfers**

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

## **Booking a land only package with Explore**

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you

have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

### **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

### **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

#### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our

dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport. On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

## Canada

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## Family information

**Vehicle information:** The vehicles that we use on our Canadian trips are either low-roof or high-roof transit vans. Where possible, we aim to get the high-roof ones, allowing that little bit of extra comfort. Although not flashy, these small-group vehicles are perfect for exploring western Canada as they allow greater flexibility to get to those more off the beaten track places. Your Explore Leader will rotate seating positions regularly within the van. Please see the image gallery for further details.

**Triple rooms:** This trip allows the option for triple rooms, tents and cabins to be included within the booking on all nights except Whistler and Banff. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information. Please note that triple or quad hotel rooms in North America are generally two queen size beds. For the camping nights whilst tents can accommodate 3 people we would suggest two tents between 3 to give you more space.

**Average Age:** As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 13 years old; this trip is suitable for children of all ages.





**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**