

EXPLORE!



Why book this trip?

A remarkable journey across the Rockies, combining spectacular mountain scenery with the rugged rainforest found on Vancouver Island. Canada's jagged mountain peaks, magnificent national parks, glaciers and waterways are full of wildlife including bears, moose and whales.

- **Banff National Park** - Including the picture postcard Lake Louise, the vistas from this stunning park are hard to beat
- **Icefields Parkway** - This famous drive covers the stunning landscapes including the mighty Athabasca Glacier, and moose and elk can be found along the way
- **Pacific Rim National Park** - With chances to whale watch or spot bear, this temperate rainforest is an amazing contrast to the Rocky Mountains.



INCLUDED MEALS



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader / Driver



TRANSPORT
Ferry
Minibus



ACCOMMODATION
2 nights standard
cabins
10 nights standard
hotel
2 nights standard
lodge



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 - Join tour in Calgary

Arrive Calgary and check-in to the hotel. Home to the world renowned Calgary Stampede, this most dynamic of cities is a rich fusion of modern architecture and traditional heritage, where the pioneering history of the Canadian west is woven into everyday life. You may have some free time today to explore the city and soak up the friendly ambience of this spectacularly located community. Filled with museums, shops and cafes, the centre of the city is a great place to just wander and take in its majestic setting against the backdrop of those ever present mountains.



ACCOMMODATION:
Ramada Downtown Calgary (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Visit Calgary, drive to Canmore, explore Kananaskis Country

This morning we will take some time to explore the glittering city of Calgary. The centre of town is a great place to wander around, marvel at the impressive architecture and absorb the friendly atmosphere - all set against a backdrop of the Rockies that rear like a distant tidal wave. These rugged mountains, interspersed with moments of sublime serenity in the form of turquoise lakes and cascading falls, beg for further exploration and before lunch we waste no time and head west up into the hills. Our base for the next three nights is the small town of Canmore situated in the picturesque Bow Valley. Described as the gateway to the Rockies, it is the perfect place from which to make our forays in to the nearby Kananaskis country and Banff National Park. This afternoon we explore Kananaskis country and the valleys of this region on foot.



ACCOMMODATION:
Rocky Mountain Ski Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 3 - Walks in Banff National Park, optional hot springs

Over the next two days we will explore the splendour of nearby Banff National Park. We will follow well-marked trails to discover beautiful lakes, stunning vistas and perfumed pine forests. We highly recommend taking an optional excursion by aerial tram to the top of Sulphur Mountain - if the weather is clear, the views across the Rockies are simply breathtaking. You may also want to spend time in the town of Banff itself. A bustling and lively place, it is easy to get infused with the energy that surrounds you. Banff is also famous for its hot springs, in fact, it was the discovery of the hot springs in 1883 that led to the building of the settlement in this location. Relaxing in these geothermal waters is a wonderful way to while away a few hours one afternoon. For the more active among us there are numerous optional trips, such as canoeing on the Bow River, that can be organised locally.



ACCOMMODATION:
Rocky Mountain Ski Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 4 - Free day to discover Banff National Park including Lake Louise

Today is left free to explore more of Banff National Park including making a visit to the picture postcard Lake Louise and Moraine Lake. Tom Wilson, the first white Canadian to see Lake Louise, when he was led there by a local native in 1882, wrote 'I never, in all my explorations of these five chains of mountains throughout western Canada, saw such a matchless scene...I felt puny in body, but glorified in spirit and soul.' Despite the increasing number of visitors to the lake it is still possible to experience the same feelings of awe that Tom Wilson had the first time he saw it.



ACCOMMODATION:
Rocky Mountain Ski Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 5 - Drive to Jasper National Park along the Icefields Parkway

We take the drive along one of the world's top scenic highways today. We leave Canmore, travelling along the Icefields Parkway which cuts its way through a mountain wilderness filled with rivers and stunning glacial lakes. Every kilometre of the Parkway is witness to spectacular scenery and we are likely to encounter wildlife along the road itself. We continue northwards and pass alongside the Columbia icefields where we have the chance to stop at the Athabasca Glacier and falls. At Athabasca Glacier there is the option of taking a guided glacier hike or a snowcoach tour onto ancient glacial ice. Jasper, in the shadow of Mount Edith Cavell, lies at the end of today's journey.





ACCOMMODATION:
Pocahontas Cabins (or similar)



Grade: Standard Cabins



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 6 - Search for wildlife in Jasper National Park

We start today by visiting Mount Edith Cavell for a spectacular view, weather permitting (occasionally, during the months of May and June, Edith Cavell remains closed depending on the winter season). We have the full day ahead of us to explore the various highlights of the area around the townsite of Jasper. Keep your eyes peeled for the wildlife that roam freely here - wapiti, elk, moose and bears. You may want to take the Jasper Tramway to the high alpine terrain of Whistlers Mountain (named for the whistling sounds of the marmots that live there), hike the Maligne Canyon, try one of the many great biking trails in the area, or go rafting (optional).

Please note: Participation in canoeing or kayaking, or rafting requires that you are able to swim 25 metres unaided.



ACCOMMODATION:
Pocahontas Cabins (or similar)



Grade: Standard Cabins



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 7 - Head to Clearwater via Mount Robson and Spahats Falls

This morning we head northwest along highway 16 through Mount Robson Provincial Park. We also see Mount Robson itself, 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 hike to the base of Mount Robson up to Kinney Lake before leaving Mount Robson behind and continuing onto Clearwater. This afternoon we head the short distance to Spahats Creek Provincial Park from where we can take an easy walk to the 61m high Spahats Falls. These impressive falls cascade down through layers of pinky-red volcanic rock, and from the observation point we should also have a great view down the Clearwater Valley.



ACCOMMODATION:
Helmcken Falls Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Standard Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 8 - Visit the Wells Gray Provincial Park including Helmcken Falls

This morning we head out to the nearby Wells Gray Provincial Park, home to Helmcken Falls at 127m, higher than Niagara Falls. There are unexpectedly spectacular views from all along the park entrance road and great opportunities for wildlife spotting. We are then free for the rest of the day. The park offers an array of outdoor activities, including hiking and canoeing on amazingly clear lakes (all optional). You can hire a canoe here and feel as if you really are paddling off into the wilderness. Please note: Participation in canoeing or kayaking, or rafting requires that you are able to swim 25 metres unaided. The slower pace of life in these parts is infectious so you may also choose to return to our lodge and relax.



ACCOMMODATION:
Helmcken Falls Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Standard Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 9 - Journey to Whistler

Today we journey south west to Whistler, pausing en route at various places to soak up the wonderful views. We will travel through the mountains of interior British Columbia, through different environments and climate that change the landscape, stopping at several viewpoints such as Seton or Savona lake, where we can do some short walks. This evening in Whistler we can enjoy a meal in one of the many excellent restaurants and, for those that wish, follow it up with a night out on the town.



ACCOMMODATION:
Aava Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 10 - Free day in Whistler; walk or take a cable car ride

Today we have a free day in Whistler to enjoy the variety of activities on offer here, including a cable car ride up one of the nearby peaks and hiking. There will also be the chance to walk on different trails around Whistler where we can walk on a trail either on the mountain or around its peaceful shores.



ACCOMMODATION:
Aava Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 11 - Ferry to Nanaimo, drive to Pacific Rim National Park

This morning we will follow route 99, more famously known as the Sea to Sky Highway, toward the Pacific coast of Vancouver. We will continue to Horseshoe Bay from where we will catch the early ferry across to Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. 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. En route to Pacific Rim National Park we will stop in McMillan Provincial Park where we will take a short walk to the famous Cathedral Grove, a striking group of huge Douglas Firs. Some of these incredible trees reach up to 70m in height, are 2m thick and are estimated to be up to 1000 years old. We then continue on to the Pacific Rim National Park which will undoubtedly be the highlight of our time on the island. The park stretches intermittently for 130km and the mountains, coastal rainforest, wild beaches and unkempt marine landscapes are as diverse as they are beautiful. We will overnight in Ucluelet near Tofino.



ACCOMMODATION:
Canadian Princess Resort (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 12 - Free day for optional whale watching or sea kayaking

Today we are free to choose from a variety of different activities. The two most popular excursions are both out to sea. The more energetic may wish to take to kayaks and explore this wild coastline of hidden coves and rocky inlets. Alternatively, there is the chance to go whale watching from one of the coastal villages in the park. There is also the opportunity to go Black Bear watching today from a zodiac boat, or take an optional walk along one of the park's many trails. Our local guide will be on hand to organise these trips and accompany those wishing to choose one of the optional walks.



ACCOMMODATION:
Canadian Princess Resort (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 13 - Drive to Victoria, free time to explore

We head south today, away from the wilderness of the Pacific Rim National Park and towards the much gentler scenery of Victoria. On the way we will make stops to view the totem poles carved by the First Nations of the North West Coast. In 1884 the Federal Government outlawed 'pot latching' and this unique art form nearly died out. Fortunately, in recent times, there has been a revived interest in this proud tradition and the totems that can be found along this stretch of coast are strong reminders of the island's native people. This afternoon we have free time to explore Victoria. We highly recommend visiting the Royal British Columbia Museum or alternatively sit at one of the pavement cafes watching the world pass by.



ACCOMMODATION:
Howard Johnson Victoria (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 14 - Ferry to Vancouver, orientation tour

Vancouver, known as the Jewel of North America and easily one of the most cosmopolitan cities in

Canada, beckons us today in contrast to the wilderness we've been experiencing over the past days. However, this city's setting on the beaches of the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by Mount Seymour, Cypress and Grouse Mountain will remind you that nature looms nearby. During the afternoon, we provide a brief orientation tour, as well as the opportunity to discover Stanley Park (optional). This evening we recommend a visit to Gastown, an attractive area offering many restaurants and bars.



ACCOMMODATION:
Ramada Inn Downtown Vancouver (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 15 - Tour ends Vancouver

The tour ends this morning in Vancouver.



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

Trip information

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.

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

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.

Kananaskis - Helicopter Tour 20 min ride, CAD\$198.50, include a 1 hr wilderness stop for CAD\$69 + 5% taxes.

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

Lake Louise - Canoe rental CAD\$100 per half hour, CAD\$126 per hour

Athabasca Glacier - Snowcoach CAD\$ 104.

Athabasca Glacier - Ice walk £90.00. This must be booked and pre-paid at least 60 days before travel or at time of booking if within 60 days before travel, and is non-refundable.

Jasper - Skytram CAN\$ 50; Maligne boat tour CAD\$ 70; Rafting trip CAD\$ 72-103 (Athabasca River - class 2 rapids or Sunwapta River - class 3 rapids); Bike hire from CAD\$15 (per hr)

Wells Gray - Canoeing CAD\$ 110 (including lunch)

Whistler - Tree Trek - CAD\$ 41; Rafting CAD\$ 95 (\$ 65 for under 16yr olds) (option of class 1 to 2; class 2&3; or class 3&4 rapids); Zip line CAD\$ 109; Gondola CAD\$ 50

Vancouver Island - Whale Watching (3 hours) CAD\$ 109; Wildlife and hot spring (6 hours) CAD\$ 139 + tax (food & drink not included); Sea Kayaking CAD\$ 90 (4 hours); Bear Viewing CAD\$103

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

Clothing

Include some long-sleeved shirts; warm clothing for chilly nights in the mountains is essential as is a good waterproof jacket. Also bring swimwear, sunglasses and a sun hat.

Footwear

Lightweight walking boots with ankle support and sandals or trainers for relaxing. Some footwear that you don't mind getting wet is essential for whitewater rafting or canoeing.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

Luggage is stored in the van or in a trailer attached to the back. With this in mind please keep bags as reasonably sized as possible and preferably soft rather than hard shell.

You will also need a day pack for walking and personal items as your main luggage cannot be accessed during the day.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, torch, sunblock and insect repellent. Binoculars might also be useful.

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.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals**Transport Information**

Ferry, Minibus

Accommodation notes

Accommodation and service levels in Canada are, as would be expected, high. We generally steer clear of the larger hotel chains, although this is not always possible. We use a mixture of hotels and motels, which provide a comfortable base for a night or two but on the whole do not boast additional facilities such as restaurants, pools etc. Meals are normally eaten out at local restaurants and diners.

All of the hotels/motels we use on this tour have private bathrooms. We are in 2 to 3 star hotels, with the exception of Jasper where we use twin or double shared cabins. In Wells Gray we stay at a ranch.

Depending on time of year we might stay in cabins, twin/double shared or in the ranch itself. In Wells Gray Ranch, singles stay in the Ranch, not the cabins and will have to share bathroom facilities.

Hotels/motels are normally located in centre of village or town, but in some exceptions we might be out of the centre. In Victoria and Vancouver we stay in town, but not directly in the centre. We use simple yet comfortable motels in Canmore, Whistler and Ucluelet.

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 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.



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**