



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Whales and Grizzlies



Grizzly Bear near the Great Bear Lodge © 2005 Tom Rivest, Great Bear Nature Tours

DAY 1 - Arrive Vancouver.

On arrival at Vancouver International Airport take a taxi (not included) to your centrally-located hotel.

PRIVATE LIMOUSINE TRANSFERS: If you prefer we can arrange for you to be met at Vancouver Airport by a representative of World Discovery and taken by private chauffeur-driven limousine to your hotel

DAY 2 - Vancouver.

Vancouver is arguably Canada's most attractive city, a cosmopolitan metropolis of excellent shops and restaurants, galleries and museums, and some of the finest sea-to-sky vistas of any city in the world. Take a walk around the **Stanley Park Seawall** for some superb mountain and city views, taking in the colourful collection of native totem poles. Explore the historic **Gastown** area with its unique steam clock. Or head to the North Shore to see the **Capilano Suspension Bridge** and take the Skyride to the summit of **Grouse Mountain** for panoramic views across the city.

DAY 3 - Across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver Island.

Pick up your rental car and drive to the ferry terminal for your journey by B. C. Ferries across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver Island. The voyage takes around an hour and 45 minutes and your route takes you through some beautiful scenery, passing between Salt Spring Island and North Pender Island en route to Swartz Bay where you disembark. Drive to **Victoria**, British Columbia's charming provincial capital, and check in at your hotel. In the afternoon you are free to explore the city, with its trademark English colonial buildings, including the venerable Empress Hotel overlooking the pretty Inner Harbour.

DAY 4 - Victoria. Whale-watching excursion.

This morning you will be collected from your hotel for an included Orca whale-watching excursion. There is a choice of vessels, from small cruiser to zodiac boat. The on-board naturalist will give commentary on the marine ecology and can recognize individual orca whales by sight. The waters of Juan de Fuca Strait are best known for their pods of orca whales but grey whales, minke whales, humpback whales, dolphins and porpoise may also be sighted. The cruise lasts approximately 3 hours and the rest of the day is at leisure in Victoria.

DAY 5 - Drive to Tofino.

Leave Victoria for the drive through beautiful Vancouver Island. You might want to stop off at the famous **Butchart Gardens**, located 23km/14 miles from Victoria. Your onward journey takes you to **Cathedral Grove Provincial Park**, designed to protect a Douglas Fir old-growth forest. The wind storms coming off the west coast of Vancouver Island have wreaked havoc on the giant trees of Cathedral Grove over many years; the surviving trees, some of which are over 800 years old, are awe-inspiring. One of the oldest Douglas Fir trees is an amazing 9 metres in diameter. There are well-marked walking trails located on both sides of the highway. In the late afternoon you should reach the west coast of the island and continue to your accommodation in Tofino, close to the **Pacific Rim National Park**.

DAY 6 - Tofino. Whale-watching excursion.

Your second whale-watching trip is included this morning. You will travel partly along the coast to the area where whales are active, primarily Gray whales, but also humpback, minke and killer whales (orcas). Stops are made to explain the rainforest and marine ecosystems of the area, and you should see seals, sea lions, bald eagles, harbour porpoise and black bear. The trip lasts around 2 hours 30 minutes and you have a choice of either a zodiac (appropriate waterproof clothing is provided) or a covered vessel with heated cabin and washroom facilities. The afternoon is free to explore Tofino, with its spectacular setting on Clayoquot Sound, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve).

DAY 7 - Drive to Campbell River.

Return across Vancouver Island to the east coast and head for Campbell River on Discovery Passage, best known for its sport fishing - it is known as the 'Salmon capital of the world' - but also a delightful place just to spend a few days amidst beautiful surroundings.

DAY 8 - Campbell River.

At leisure. Activities available include scuba diving, sea kayaking and white-water rafting. Or you may wish to join another whale-watching excursion to view the orcas that populate the nearby Johnstone Strait.

DAY 9 - Fly to the Great Bear Rainforest.

Drive along the coast to Port Hardy, where you will drop off your rental car. In the afternoon join your small group (maximum size 10 guests) and fly by seaplane across the rich waters of the Queen Charlotte Strait to the isolated Great Bear Lodge, your home for the next 4 days. You will be met by your hosts and shown to your room. In the late afternoon your grizzly bear experience begins. There is a range of different viewing sites, and your guide will choose one where the bears have been most active. Estuary sites are reached by boat, while river sites are reached by bus.

Meals included: dinner.

DAYS 10 AND 11 - Great Bear Rainforest.

Two bear viewing sessions are scheduled each day at the lodge, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The sessions are tailored to the activities of the bears, observing them when they are most active in their chosen habitats. Viewing blinds have been constructed with photographers in mind. They are comfortable and optimal places to shoot from. When the bears move from the river to the estuary, you view them from a boat. Each season offers a unique view into the world of grizzly bears in the Great Bear Rainforest. A wonderful time for photography, **Spring** sees you taken to the estuary to observe the grizzlies as they graze on grasses and sedges and engage in mating behaviour. Birdlife is abundant at this time of the year, and long hours of daylight ensure optimal light for photography. At this time you will view the bears from small boats, watching the bears quietly. During the **Summer** season, the grizzlies move between the various habitats to optimize their feeding. You will find them gorging on berry patches, grazing on estuarine grasslands and scouting for the early salmon. The grizzly bears congregate at the river in **Autumn** to take advantage of the best food source available on the coast: Pacific salmon. Watch as each individual bear demonstrates its own fishing style, from methodically checking under riverbanks with their paws to charging up the river after salmon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

DAY 12 - Return to Port Hardy.

After a final session with the bears you will enjoy a farewell lunch at the Great Bear Lodge, and in the late afternoon you will fly back to Port Hardy by seaplane. Transfer to your hotel for overnight.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 13 - Fly to Vancouver.

In the morning take a scheduled flight to Vancouver and return to your hotel (transfer not included but see the note on DAY 1 above). The rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 14 - Depart for home.

At leisure until you travel to Vancouver International Airport to check in for the return flight.

DAY 15 - Arrive home.

Arrive at London Heathrow in the morning.