



Haida Gwaii Queen Charlotte Islands

A Frommer's "Trip of a Lifetime"



A hundred and thirty islands at the edge of North America.

Rainforests draped with moss. Humpbacks rising from the ocean. The remains of beautiful totems and houses in remote Haida villages. This is the Queen Charlotte Islands, or Haida Gwaii.

The Haida Islands at the Edge of the World

One story goes that long ago, after the ice receded and the floodwaters lowered, Raven walked along a beach in Haida Gwaii, looking for occupation. He found some creatures in a shell and convinced them to come out. These were the first Haida, the first people, and they have lived here ever since.

On your trip to Haida Gwaii, you'll enter the world of the Haida, arguably the most powerful pre-contact culture on the west coast of North America.

You'll travel into Gwaii Haanas, "Place of Wonder", a protected region of 138 islands. Here are some of the greatest First Nations village sites in North America, including the UN World Heritage Site Ninstints (SGang Gwaay). At SGang Gwaay, you'll walk among still-standing poles over 100 years old, carved by the Kunghit Haida.

Our Haida guides will explain the stories of the poles and the people who had them carved. The overall sense of power found in these villages is unforgettable.

The "Canadian Galapagos"

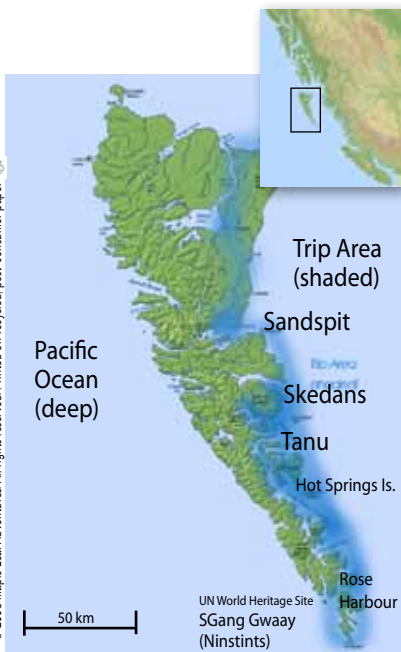
Haida Gwaii lies on the continental shelf. On the west coast, rugged cliffs drop straight into the sea, where it plunges thousands of feet into the Pacific. The east coast lies on a shallow sea at the edge of the continental plate, and the coastline is a convoluted series of islands and anchorages.

Upwellings of nutrients from the Pacific create some

of the densest intertidal life on the planet. You'll see humpback whales, feeding in great numbers beside you, splashing the water with fins up to 15 feet long. Pacific whitesided dolphins may streak along beside you.

You'll be in Haida Gwaii at the right time of year to see hundreds of thousands of nesting seabirds who return to land only for these few months to breed.

The islands' isolation from the mainland has given rise to species that differ from their mainland counterparts. For example, the bears on Haida Gwaii, which you may see turning over beach rocks to find crabs, are larger than other black bears.



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Haida Gwaii – Queen Charlotte Islands



“It was truly the most amazing trip of my life.”

– Wendy Mitchell, B.C.

“Very simply – Just a wonderful experience.”

– John & Lee Campbell, B.C.

2011

May 7-15, May 16-24,

May 25-Jun 2

8 nights, 9 days

C \$4550

Depart: Masset, B.C.

Return: Sandspit, B.C.

Maple Leaf Adventures

PO Box 8845, Stn. Central,
Victoria, B.C., V8W 3Z1 Canada

toll free 1-888-599-5323

local 1-250-386-7245



Explore Rainforests and Hot Springs

You'll enjoy learning about the variety of ecosystems from our on-board naturalist. Walk through forests of enormous trees, some over ten centuries old and thickly draped with mosses. Soak in natural hot springs with a view over the sea to the mountains. Walk secluded beaches looking for shells.

A Rare Opportunity with Experienced Guides

Travelling here is a rare experience. Although the area is listed as the top national park in North America by *National Geographic*, few are permitted to travel here.

Maple Leaf has been operating here since the 1980s and we are one of the founders of the Code of Conduct for the Gwaii Haanas Tour Operators Association.

We know the area intimately and travel with the permission and respect of the Haida and Parks Canada. Whether you are interested in the wildlife, the cultural history or the forests, your trip to Haida Gwaii will be one of the best educational holidays found anywhere.



Sample Itinerary

Note that, as with all expedition cruises, itineraries vary depending on the interests of the guests, and the actions of weather and wildlife. This sample itinerary is meant to give you an idea of the typical trip.

- Day 1 Tour kickoff, land-based tour of Masset, Old Masset, North Beach, Tow Hill, tour of Graham Island. Dinner and lodge accommodation in Masset area.
- Day 2 Haida Heritage Centre at KAAY LLNAGAAY, Board Maple Leaf, orientation, cruising, whale watching, island anchorage and explore ashore.
- Day 3 Tanu village site, Burnaby Narrows for some of the planet's densest intertidal life, kayaking, cruising.
- Day 4 Sailing southward in Gwaii Haanas, Cape St. James hike (southern tip of Haida Gwaii), Woodruff Bay beach exploration, fishing.
- Day 5 Seabirds viewing, UN World Heritage Site visit (SGang Gwaay or Ninstints Haida village site), Rose Harbour visit.
- Day 6 Cruising, forest walk, estuary walk, possible bear viewing.
- Day 7 Hot Springs Island, sailing, whale watching.
- Day 8 Windy Bay cultural heritage site, whale watching, Skedans/Koona Haida village site.
- Day 9 Cruising to Sandspit.



Photo credits: Kevin Smith, Brian Falconer (forest)



General and Booking Information



Family & Friends Trips

Planning a family reunion? Thinking of spending some special time with friends?

Over the years, a number of extended families or groups of friends have booked a whole charter. They say it provides them quality time in an unhurried, magical atmosphere, allowing them to connect on a deeper level than in our normal “hurly-burly” world. Not to mention that the crew, chef and naturalist take care of the logistics!

If you think this is something you’d like to do, call us to discuss. Advance notice to book an entire trip is required, so let us know as soon as possible so that we can accommodate your plans.



About our company:

Maple Leaf Adventures has been operating trips focused on the natural history of B.C.’s northwest coast and Alaska, and the culture of the First Nations peoples of the areas, since 1986. We have a reputation for quality, professionalism and sensitivity to both the natural and cultural landscapes.

Our institutional clients have included the Royal BC Museum, The Canadian Museum of Civilization and the John G Shedd Aquarium. Our company has been recognized by the Canadian government as a leader in eco-tourism and our trips have been featured internationally in such travel guides as *Frommer’s* and on the Oprah Winfrey television show.

About Our Trips and the Ship

Our trips take place in the best areas and at peak times for natural phenomena; therefore they originate from different places on the coast. Our guests fly, drive, or take a ferry to meet us at trips’ point of origin, which maximizes the amount of time we are able to spend exploring our chosen areas.

A small group of **8 guests** allows us the flexibility to respond to special natural events, weather, and the interests of our group.

Our pace is unhurried, giving us time to linger with whales, paint or sketch in a Haida village, beach comb, or walk ancient forests. We experience the entire environment, not just the view from on board. We go ashore often to experience the magic

of various habitats and the special life that inhabits each area.

Expert naturalists with a variety of backgrounds accompany us on every voyage. Veterans of field research projects in the areas we visit, they share their expertise and abundant knowledge on a very understandable and enjoyable level. They have guided us to some of nature’s most impressive events.

Maple Leaf is a beautiful 92-foot schooner. She and her crew are Coast Guard approved. She has a long and enviable reputation on the coast. Her accommodations are very comfortable. The spacious main cabin is airy and divided by curtains and walls into four “cabins,” providing sleeping accommodations for eight guests. Mahogany and fir line the galley and dining salon and wheelhouse. She has an extensive library.



Contact Us

To book a trip or for help with any questions you may have, we welcome your call or email.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is this trip suitable for me?

A. Anyone is eligible so long as they are enthusiastic about participating, amenable to the vagaries of weather, agile enough to clamber in and out of shore vessels in an area where there are no docks, and friendly enough to get along in the relatively close quarters of a sailing yacht. We have had people on board as much as 80 years of age. However, our trips are not suitable for people of failing health or physical disabilities.

Q. What is included in the price?

A. Our price includes all meals, activities and guides throughout your voyage in the region you are visiting. Specifically included:

- All meals, snacks and beverages prepared from the freshest ingredients by our superb chef.
- Fine wines featured with the evening meal, and a limited amount of beer included and available throughout the trip. (Liquor is not a large part of our trips, so plan on light consumption).
- The services of our naturalist and professional crew.
- Shore excursions (there are several each day).

- Use of all gear available on board, including raingear, sea boots, kayaks and fishing gear.

Not included in our price:

- Transportation to the trip's point of origin.
- Goods and Service Tax (Canadian trips only)
- Crew gratuities
- Sustainability Fee. As a professional ecotourism company, it is at the core of our operating principles to work with local communities, respecting regulations and contributing to local opportunities. Responsible operations cost a little more. We extract from the fare a percentage of the increased costs that go towards sustainable communities add it to the list price as a 'sustainability fee' of \$100 per trip. Through it we hope our guests share in the pride that a trip with Maple Leaf is a contribution to the sustainability of the whole coast – as well as being the experience of a lifetime!

Q. Can you accommodate my special diet?

A. Yes. If you advise us in the pre-trip questionnaire we can accommodate most special dietary requirements.

Q. Will I be seasick?

A. Sea sickness is rarely a problem as Maple Leaf is a sturdy and sea-kindly ship. We travel short distances in protected waters and go ashore often.

Q. Can I be involved in sailing the ship and performing other duties?

A. Absolutely yes. We encourage our guests to participate in any aspect of the trip that interests them and to whatever level they are comfortable with. We are patient instructors (no yelling) and delight in helping people learn. On the other hand, you are not required to sail or perform duties while on your vacation. The choice is yours.

Q: What makes you an eco-tourism company?

- A:
- Our trips have low impact (virtually no impact) on the planet and on the places we visit.
 - We partner with local people. We have protocol agreements either signed or in process with First Nations in territories we visit.
 - Our naturalists – experts in their fields – and other knowledgeable crew members provide a wealth of knowledge on the areas we visit, as do our First Nations guides.
 - We work within the regulations of parks and conservation areas, pay the applicable fees and obtain permits for all limited-use areas we visit.
 - We dedicate time and resources to preserving the wilderness we travel in.



Wild BC and Alaska Tours by Sail



"Thanks for the best vacation ever."

– Carrie Novick, Oregon.

Contact Us

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www.MapleLeafAdventures.com

Booking and Cancellation Policy

To avoid disappointment, your reservation should be made early. The number of participants in each program is limited, and the demand is high. Our trips sell out early.

North America Trips

Deposit: A deposit of one third of the price of the trip will reserve your space for any trip.

Balance: The balance is due 120 days prior to departure.

Cancellations: If you are unable to participate and cancellation occurs at least 120 days prior to the departure date of your trip, the full amount of your deposit is refundable, minus a \$200 admin fee. If cancellation occurs less than 120 days prior to the departure date of your trip, we will do our best to try to fill your space on the trip, however no money will be refunded unless all the spaces on your trip are filled.

Galapagos Islands Trips

Deposit: A nonrefundable deposit of US \$1000 reserves a place on the trip. On payment of the deposit you will receive: receipt/invoice, medical information form, agreement and release from liability form, itinerary and additional information covering packing lists, visa requirements, health issues, etc.

Balance: The balance is due 3 months prior to departure date. On payment of the balance you will receive: receipt, final trip bulletin including participant list and rendezvous instructions.

Single Supplement: Accommodations are based on double occupancy. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodation, we will try to assign you a roommate. If there

is no one with whom you can share, or if you prefer single accommodation, you will be requested to pay a Single Supplement, as listed for each trip.

Cancellation Policy: At the time we receive written notice of your wish to cancel your trip, the following fees will apply: * 90 days+ from departure date: 100% of deposit; * 89 to 60 days from departure date: 50% of Land Cost; * 59 days or less from departure date: 100% of Land Cost

Group Bookings

For large group bookings, such as a family charter of the entire ship, the booking and cancellation policy may be different - please do contact us for information.

Cancellation Insurance

We highly recommend cancellation insurance, which protects you if you have to make a late cancellation in certain cases (such as a medical emergency). Travel insurance can be purchased through your travel agency or through our travel agent (contact us for info). This must be done at the time your booking is confirmed.

Pre-Trip Information Package

A comprehensive pre-trip information package will welcome you "aboard" at the time of booking. It includes information on clothing and other items to bring, how to get to your trip, insurance, visa requirements, etc.

Getting to & from the Ship

Our office staff can help you with these questions and arrangements - call or email any time.

Design: www.LotusDesign.ca