



The Ultimate Vacation

ROCKIES, SUNSHINE COAST & VANCOUVER ISLAND

Enjoy the flexibility of basing yourself in beautiful Western Canada and include sightseeing excursions, self-drive options, and local interest suggestions. Included is the famous Rocky Mountaineer train journey from Jasper to Vancouver, plus two weeks accommodation in beautiful waterfront holiday homes. The holiday is well paced allowing a balance between sightseeing and relaxation.





1/ARRIVE

Arrive in Calgary, Alberta.
Transfer to your hotel.

Overnight in Calgary. Ramada Hotel or similar.

2/CALGARY-BANFF

This morning travel to Banff National Park. As Canada's oldest-- and the world's third oldest national park, Banff is the jewel in the national park system's crown. Banff was founded in 1885 by then-prime minister Sir John A Macdonald. The dedicated site was 10 square miles; today the park is 6641 km² (2564 sq. miles) in area.

Banff, along with its neighbouring parks in Alberta and British Columbia-- Jasper, Yoho and Revelstoke-- is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. As we enter Banff and the Rocky Mountains, look out for wildlife. Banff has a vast array of wild animals: blissfully fearless bighorn sheep, mountain goats, soft-eyed deer, lumbering moose, grizzly bear and black bear, to mention a few.

We arrive in Banff town, which is

alpine-like and cheerful. The town had humble beginnings which were dramatically changed with the introduction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883. The area soon became popular with the well-to-do as a centre for therapeutic relief through the town's natural hot springs. Included today is a gondola ride up Sulphur Mountain. Atop panoramic views command of the Bow Valley below.

Overnight in Banff. Banff Cariboo Lodge or similar.

3/BANFF-LAKE LOUISE

This morning travel along the Bow Valley Parkway to Lake Louise, the park's main attraction. Situated at an elevation of 1731 m (5680 feet) above sea-level, the lake's mainly turquoise to dark green waters is 2 km (1¼ miles) in length. Victoria Glacier, which nearly reaches down to the lake, makes this view one of Canada's most picturesque. You may wish to enjoy a stroll lakeside or perhaps stop for tea in the Château Lake Louise hotel.

This afternoon travel into British Columbia and Yoho National Park and continue through Kicking Horse Pass. As you enter the park you will stop at the Spiral Tunnel viewpoint which provides a good view of the daringly engineered railtrack and see two spiral tunnels. From here, continue on to Emerald Lake before returning to Lake Louise for the evening. Time and weather permitting, you may also visit Takakkaw Falls, Moraine Lake and the Valley of Ten Peaks.

Overnight in Lake Louise. Lake Louise Inn or similar.

4/LAKE LOUISE-JASPER

Today is a full day travelling the Icefield Parkway into Jasper National Park. Jasper is Canada's largest national park at 10, 787 km² (4199 sq. miles.) The parkway is scenic and wildlife abound. Keep an eye out for bighorn sheep, duelling mountain goat, antler-clad elk, and mother bears with their cubs!

You visit the 10 km-long (6 mile-long) Athabasca Glacier, a white tongue of the huge Columbia Icefield that once covered most of Canada. The icefield began retreating over 10,000 years ago, but it still forms the largest accumulation of ice in the Rocky Mountains. You will visit the Athabasca Glacier visitors' centre and then take a "snocoach" ride on the glacier. Expertly driven, your guide will show you some of the fascinating crevasses, moraines and moulins of the terrain.

Continue to Jasper town.

Overnight in Jasper. Marmot Lodge or similar.

5/JASPER-KAMLOOPS

Jasper was an important staging point on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway during the early 1900s. Today the town is the headquarters of the Jasper National Park and a major wilderness destination. This morning you transfer to the Jasper railway station where you board the Rocky Mountaineer service to Vancouver.



6/KAMLOOPS-VANCOUVER
Today you continue your journey by train westward, travelling along the Thompson River to the Fraser Canyon. En route the train will pass Hell's Gate gorge, and then continue into the lush Fraser Valley. Later in the afternoon the train will enter the Greater Vancouver region, arriving in the city centre before dinner.

Overnight in Vancouver. Empire Landmark Hotel or similar.

7/VANCOUVER-GIBSONS
Vancouver is Canada's third largest city, but arguably the country's best situated and most beautiful. Vancouver is a city where mountain meets sea and has unforgettable vistas. Today you visit the fashionable West Side and the University of British Columbia campus. After a brief campus tour you will visit the Museum of Anthropology. Here is the best collection of West Coast aboriginal art in North America and it is housed in an award-winning building reminiscent of a giant traditional longhouse. From here you visit Queen Elizabeth Park, situated in the centre of the city. The park has beautiful views of the city skyline and has beautiful manicured gardens and ponds.

In the afternoon you will tour the city centre taking in Chinatown, Gastown, English Bay, the West End and Robson Street before heading over to world-famous

Stanley Park. This natural wonder is adjacent to the city centre and is 500 ha (1000 acres) with a seawall that wraps around it for 10 km (6½ miles.) The park has formal gardens, nature trails, totem poles, an outdoor theatre, tea house, tennis courts, lawn bowling, cricket oval, and is also home to the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre.

Later, you pick up your car and drive to the Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal for a short ferry ride to Langdale (about 45 minutes.) From the Langdale terminal, Imagine Eagle's Perch is a short 10 minute drive into the village of Gibsons. *Overnight in Gibsons at Imagine Eagle's Perch.*

8/WHISTLER

This morning depart for Langdale and walk-on the ferry for Horseshoe Bay. At the Horseshoe Bay terminal your coach will be waiting to take you to Whistler. You will travel the scenic Sea-to-Sky Highway along Howe Sound. Further along, at the town of Squamish, the highway turns inland and cuts through the Cheakamus Canyon to the resort municipality of Whistler, the number one ski resort in North America. Whistler has over 200 varied runs which cover its two mountains-- Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain. Blackcomb provides 1,600 m (5,284 feet) of continuous skiing-- the highest rise served by lifts in North America. Whistler has become a year-round resort and offers hiking, biking, sailing, golfing, sunning and relaxing in the summertime. The whole area is alive with activity and abounds with shops,

restaurants, nightspots and galleries. In Whistler you will enjoy a tour of the area, visiting Lost Lake, Emerald Lake and the village. Whistler, in conjunction with Vancouver hopes to secure the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Later you return to Horseshoe Bay, walk on the Langdale ferry and pick up your car at the Langdale terminal. Return to Imagine Eagle's Perch.

Overnight in Gibsons at Imagine Eagle's Perch.

9-13/GIBSONS

Free days in Gibsons and the Sunshine Coast area. Please refer to our suggested local interest options for further information of sights and activities in the Sunshine Coast area.

Overnights in Gibsons at Imagine Eagle's Perch

14/BOWSER

Travel today by ferry from Langdale to Horseshoe Bay, and connect with the Naniamo (Departure Bay) ferry. From Naniamo, travel northward on the old Coast Highway through Qualicum Beach and Parksville to the community of Bowser.

Overnight in Bowser at Imagine Beach Getaway.

15-17/BOWSER

Bowser is in the Oceanside region of Vancouver Island. The region is a cluster of fascinating, colourful communities and has many of the



Code: UV-UV1
Calgary-Vancouver

What's Included:

Accommodation in hotels in Calgary, Banff, Jasper, Vancouver and Victoria

Private villa accommodation in Gibsons (Sunshine Coast) and Bowser (Vancouver Island)

RedLeaf rail service between Jasper and Vancouver

Mid-size car from Vancouver onward

Ferry reservations (fare not included)

Meals onboard the Rocky Mountaineer

Organised sightseeing in Banff, Jasper, and Vancouver

Organised excursions to Whistler, Tofino and Victoria

Suggested options for Gibsons and Bowser

island's best beaches. The sheltered eastern region of Vancouver Island offers magnificent views of the mainland and often you can see marine wildlife.

Free days in Bowser at Imagine Beach Getaway.

Overnights in Bowser at Imagine Beach Getaway.

18/TOFINO

Today we suggest that you drive to Tofino on the west coast of Vancouver Island. En route stop at Cathedral Grove and walk amongst an indescribable area of first-growth forest. At Long Beach, near Tofino, huge waves crash into smooth hard-packed sand. Long Beach is a narrow 11 km (7 mile) strip of land framed by mountains.

At Tofino we will have arranged for you a whale watching expedition into the Pacific Ocean. You can get close up views of some of the 20,000 whales that annually migrate past Tofino (season permitting.) Later, you can walk along the seemingly endless stretch of log-strewn beach, watching for sea lions, seals and porpoises in the water and starfish, sponges and anemones left behind by the tide. We also recommend you take advantage of the natural hot springs in Tofino. Return to Bowser.

Overnight in Bowser at Imagine Beach Getaway.

19/BOWSER-VICTORIA

Travel today along the Coast Highway to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. In Canada's most temperate city you will see red double-decker buses, Tudor-style

homes, manicured lawns, tea houses, pubs and antique shops. Founded in the 1840s as the new western headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, Victoria grew and boomed during the 1858 Gold Rush in the Cariboo region of British Columbia.

Today we suggest you visit the Royal British Columbia Museum. You can walk among prehistoric native tribe artefacts and extinct animals. You can see the full-scale replica of Captain George Vancouver's HMS Discovery, and discover the array of marine which live in British Columbia's waters.

Later we suggest you tour the Legislative Assembly, have tea at the Empress Hotel, stroll down Government Street to Chinatown or visit Craigdarroch Castle.

Overnight in Victoria. Executive Hotel or similar.

20/VICTORIA-VANCOUVER

Travel today from the Victoria ferry terminal at Swartz Bay to Vancouver's second ferry terminal at Tsawwassen, south of the city. The balance of your day is free in Vancouver.

Overnight in Vancouver. Empire Landmark Hotel or similar.

21/DEPARTURE

Return your rental vehicle to the airport before your departure from Vancouver.