

NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

INSIDE PASSAGE, HAIDA GWAII,
VIA RAIL TO JASPER

12 Days



Aboriginal Culture Rail Travel Glaciers & Wildlife

This trip combines land, sea and rail beginning in Vancouver and travelling to the mystical Queen Charlotte Islands via the spectacular Inside Passage. From Prince Rupert travel east to Jasper by rail through the famous Rocky Mountains. The route continues from Jasper and along the Icefields Parkway – one of the most scenic stretches of road in the world – to Lake Louise, Banff and through to Calgary. Highlights include unbeatable mountain and ocean scenery, the Inside Passage, Haida Gwaii, VIA Rail, the Rocky Mountains, the awe-inspiring Columbia Icefield, glaciers and wildlife as well as the magic of the Aboriginal culture and heritage.

ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

- Vancouver • Port Hardy • Prince Rupert
- BC Ferries • Queen Charlotte Islands
- BC Ferries • Prince Rupert • Via Rail
- Prince George • Jasper • Calgary

DAY 1

Vancouver to Port Hardy:

Fly from Vancouver's South Terminal to Port Hardy on Vancouver Island. (Alternatively, fly direct from Vancouver to Prince Rupert, or to Masset on the Queen Charlotte Islands).

Port Hardy is the largest community of the North Island and is known for its Aboriginal shops and art galleries, particularly on Market Street. Keep your camera handy, as the rugged northern coast of Vancouver Island is a remarkable area teeming with wildlife. Organized grizzly bear viewing trips are available to nearby Knight Inlet.

Overnight Port Hardy.

DAY 2

Port Hardy to Prince Rupert (BC Ferries)

The day starts with an early morning departure travelling up the Inside Passage winding its way through the coastal Great Bear Rainforest. The ferry trip offers comfortable staterooms, a variety of excellent food & beverage options and spectacular scenery. The 15-hour journey north to Prince Rupert leads through a narrow maze of channels and passes, surrounded by snow capped mountains and a rugged coastline. Passengers should keep their eyes peeled for whales or dolphins making their way through the northern waters.

Overnight Prince Rupert.

DAY 3 & 4

Prince Rupert

Prince Rupert is known for sport fishing and great wildlife viewing. It is home to Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, the only sanctuary of its kind in Canada. For dining options, explore Cow Bay – so named because when a dairy opened here in 1909, there was no dock and the cattle had to swim ashore. The dairy didn't last long – but the name Cow Bay survived and the 'cow' theme extends throughout the area which today features shops, restaurants and art galleries, and where most tours can be booked.

Overnight Prince Rupert.

DAY 5

Prince Rupert to Haida Gwaii

(ferry or fly) From Prince Rupert take BC Ferries to Skidegate (6 hours), or float planes fly to Masset daily or Queen Charlotte City several times a week.

Haida Gwaii, "Islands of the People" is a popular destination for travellers seeking beautiful and remote coastal landscapes and Aboriginal culture. These mystical islands are home to some of the world's richest heritage treasures, with more than 500 archeological sites. Explore on your own or take a tour. **Overnight Masset.**

ITINERARY

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DAY 6

Masset to Skidegate:

81 km/49 mi

North Island is known for long sandy white beaches and many visitors head to Naikoon Provincial Park and the Delkatla Wildlife Sanctuary (a migratory stopover for more than 150 species of birds). Tow Hill is a great lookout point and Balance Rock – further down the island – provides fantastic photo opportunities.

The communities of Masset, Old Masset, Port Clements, Queen Charlotte, and Tlell all provide a variety of services and are home to local artists and artisans – if travelling during the summer months, be sure to visit Artisan Row in Tlell where you'll find a number of local carvers, artists and collectors.

South is Skidegate and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay which celebrates the Haida Culture. The centre consists of several longhouse-style buildings, which house the Haida Gwaii Museum, Performing House, Carving Shed, Canoe House, the Bill Reid Teaching Centre, and gift shop.

Overnight Skidegate.

DAY 7

Moresby Island Day Trip

From Skidegate head south to Moresby Island for a day trip with a local operator. Travel by zodiac to explore hot springs, Haida village sites and to areas known for ancient standing totem poles. There are many opportunities to take in longer experiences. A variety of operators take guests to Gwaii Haanas National Park, home to SGAang Gwaii a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Reservations are required, call toll free 1-877-559-8818, Monday to Friday from 8.30a.m. to 4.30p.m.

Overnight Skidegate.

DAY 8

Haida Gwaii to Prince Rupert

Take the ferry or fly from Skidegate to Prince Rupert.

If arriving by plane, take time to soak in the culture of the area, The Museum of Northern BC, housed in a magnificent, northwest coast style longhouse, is a must see. The North Pacific Historic Fishing Village – a National Historic Site – provides insight into life in a traditional cannery village. The original site is one of the last standing canneries on the coast.

Overnight Prince Rupert.

DAY 9

Prince Rupert to Prince George (VIA Rail)

The VIA Rail train leaves early from Prince Rupert, three times a week. Sit back and enjoy the spectacular scenery, wildlife and glacier views through the panorama dome car as you travel through the coastal mountains and up the long rushing rivers that decades ago, sternwheelers used to travel. The train stops overnight in Prince George. **Overnight Prince George.**

DAY 10

Prince George to Jasper (VIA Rail)

Re-board the train to Jasper. The Yellowhead Pass, on the BC/Alberta border is 1,131 metres (3710 feet) and is the highest point on this route. Just before the Yellowhead Pass, look out for Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies.

Overnight Jasper.

DAY 11

Jasper to Lake Louise:

229 km/137 mi

Spend the morning in Jasper. Head south on the Icefields Parkway (Hwy 93). Although the road passes through extremely rugged terrain, it is an easy drive. The route features over 100 glaciers together with turquoise lakes, ice fields, wild flower meadows, wildlife, and of course, the Rocky Mountains. The Columbia Icefield sprawls beneath Mount Columbia – Alberta's highest peak at 3,747 metre (12,290 feet) – and features one of the largest accumulations of ice and snow south of the Arctic. Take a tour on an all-terrain Ice Explorer. Following the tour, continue south on Hwy 93 to Lake Louise.

Overnight Lake Louise.

DAY 12

Lake Louise to Calgary:

130 km/78 mi

Wander around Lake Louise Village and admire the mountain reflections in the aquamarine waters of the famous Lake Louise. Originally called "Emerald Lake", it was later changed to Lake Louise to honour Queen Victoria's daughter. Drive to Banff. Visit the Banff Upper Hot Springs or ride the Banff gondola to the top of Sulphur Mountain for spectacular views of the Rocky Mountains. Stop in at the historic Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel. Continue onto Calgary.

Overnight Calgary.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

April Moi – Industry Development & Travel Trade Specialist
Northern BC Tourism Association – Representative of Destination BC
1274 Fifth Avenue, Prince George, BC V2L3L2
Office: 250-793-0062 Email: april@nbctourism.com

Information provided in this document was accurate at time of printing. Please consider that weather, construction projects, traffic conditions or other events may cause itinerary length to vary.

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