

Vancouver Island add-on

Our suggestions is that this short trip would make the perfect ending to your holiday following a Western Canada tour; six or more nights to get that feel of the sea and the lives of people who rely on it. For this reason, we are assuming that your tour starts from our recommended campsite in the Vancouver area, Burnaby Cariboo RV Resort.

Ferry crossings

Regarding any ferry crossings: We always recommend you book them on line before you go and always book for our largest motorhome, the 30 footer, even if you have reserved a smaller one with us. If we are able to upgrade you to a larger vehicle, or if force majeure dictates that we must, we want you to have that space on the ferry otherwise we'll all be unhappy!

MOTORHOME ITINERARY

Day 1 > You need to have checked ferry times and booked for the Tsawwassen-Swartz Bay Ferry, which will take you on a ninety minute trip across the Alaska Marine Highway (www.bcferries.com and transcanadahighway.com/BC/Info-Ferries.htm). Allow four hours to get to the Ferry Terminal in case there is traffic and to be in good time to board. The 70 miles drive shouldn't take more than just under two hours but do leave Burnaby Cariboo RV Resort at an appropriate time. Head south for the Transcanada Highway. Head west and come off at Jnc 66 on to Highway 10 South. In just over 20 miles you will turn south on Highway 17 to the Ferry Terminal. Your total journey is 70 miles to this point. You are taking the ferry across to Saanich, in south Vancouver Island. When you are off your boat, West Bay Marine Village is just 20 miles.

The West Bay RV Park is unlike any other in Canada. Situated right on Victoria's harbour it has spectacular views of the city. Open year round it offers full service sites with easy access to the city centre. The closest RV



The Fairmont Empress Hotel, Inner Harbour, Victoria

Photo: Tourism British Columbia

Park to Victoria, all the main attractions are a mere five minutes drive away. If you would prefer to not take your vehicle downtown, this is not a problem. The jaunty Victoria Harbour Ferries can take you straight from the park to the heart of the city. 🗺️ 60 miles to Saanich ★ Visit Victoria. The waterfront, the architecture the seafood and everything else that makes British Columbia's capital city such a magnet for tourism.

Day 2 > Once you leave the urban/suburban areas on today's drive, the highway climbs over the rugged Malahat highlands, made up of volcanic rock covered by 400 year old Douglas fir trees that in colonial days were common all around Victoria. The rivers in this area have gravel beds, left behind from early glaciers and subsequent erosion, and are home to thousands of salmon. The Malahat Summit provides a number of stunning vantage points for viewing the Saanich Inlet, which is a backwards fjord, facing into the direction of the glacial flow. The lowland valleys have lush farmlands (many with two crops a year), tree farms and orchards, and the rivers are home to Steelhead trout of up to a metre in length! Still heading north and overlooking the Straights of Georgia, at Rosewell Creek you may want to turn off Hwy 19 on to 19a, through some of the coastal areas, until you reach Campbell River.

Take the short crossing on the Campbell River-Quadra Island ferry north to Quadra Island and on to Ripple Rock RV Park at Browns Bay Resort. Cruise ships on the Discovery Passage go right past Ripple Rock RV Park on their way to Alaska and back. 🗺️ 177 Miles to Campbell River ★ Visit the wide sandy beaches at Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park.

Day 3 > Located on the northwest tip of Vancouver Island, Port Hardy



Killer whale

Photo: Tourism British Columbia

is "where the highway ends, and adventure begins." You might see killer whale pods and schools of dolphins and porpoises jumping over the cresting waves. Cape Scott Provincial Park, which sits on the northern point of the Island, provides a great opportunity to explore the fourteen mile long beach where seals and sea lions frolic offshore. Beachcombers find old Native trade beads or a glass float that has been swept in on the waves across the Pacific Ocean.

Roads only head back south-east from here so head back on Highway 19 for just over 26 miles. Ten miles off the highway towards the coast, you'll find Beaver Cove and Telegraph Cove beyond it. Your RV Park is open all year with all amenities, ocean views and a marina. 🗺️ 196 miles to Telegraph Cove including the round trip north to Port Hardy ★ Visit Cormorant Channel Provincial Park on the way to your campsite.

Day 4 > You'll still be returning the way you came so, if you missed anything on the way north, this is the opportunity to stop now. Provincial Parks along the way past Campbell River include Morton Lake, Elk Falls and Miracle Beach. You're headed for the Qualicum Bay Resort, by leaving Highway 19 between Qualicum Beach and Fanny Bay. For much of the way between Courtenay and Campbell River the Island Highway runs beside Qualicum Bay, an area rich in seafood. Pullouts beside the road give easy access to the bay's sand and pebble beaches. At several places you can buy fresh seafood, brought to the docks daily from local waters. 🗺️ 183 miles to Qualicum Bay ★ Visit Little Qualicum Falls. You maybe didn't expect waterfalls around here.

Day 5 > It's only a very short drive today to enjoy Vancouver Island's second city. Nanaimo offers natural beauty at every turn, thanks to its location between Mount Benson and the Straight of Georgia. The thriving local arts and music scene has something happening every



Kwagiulth Artist painting a drum
Photo: Tourism British Columbia



Dease Lake

Photo: Kurt Ohlhoff, Travel Writer/Photographer



JOURNEY DETAILS

DURATION > 6 DAYS

DISTANCE > 780 MILES

day. History enthusiasts will enjoy walking through Nanaimo's winding downtown and checking out historic buildings, many which have been transformed into charming shops, restaurants or museums particularly in the Old City Quarter. There are also

abundant shopping opportunities but, for the more energetic, there's bungee jumping, rock climbing walls and much more. After fun, excitement or just shopping, head for your Campground where "The only thing we overlook is the water!" It's fifty-three natural acres of oceanfront, forest and riverside with lots to do. 🗺️ 54 miles to Living Forest in Nanaimo ★ Visit The Bastion, the Hudson Bay Company's old fortress and stop for a drink at the (colourfully) historic Palace Hotel.

Day 6 > The Horseshoe Bay-Departure Bay Ferry (www.bcferries.com) is ten minutes from your campground; You will need to have booked the Early Bird Departure Special with Cruise America so you can return your motorhome in the afternoon today. Alternatively, spend a few nights back at Burnaby Cariboo Campground. Your ferry crossing is about two hours and then from Horseshoe Bay you have a half-hour drive back to Cruise Canada's office in Delta or, back to Burnaby. 🗺️ 20 Miles Nanaimo to Delta plus ferry time/29 miles to Cariboo.