GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST EXPEDITION

Trip Essentials — an 8-day sea kayaking expedition through the Great Bear Rainforest

Camp light on the central coast — the kind of evening that closes out a long day on the water.

Welcome

This guide covers everything you need to know before you paddle with us — how the days run, what's included, how to pack, and what to sort out before you arrive. Give it a full read before booking, then again a couple of weeks before departure.

The Experience

The Great Bear Rainforest is one of the last large intact stretches of temperate rainforest on the planet. This is a true wilderness expedition into a landscape shaped by ocean, rainforest and wildlife — fog-wrapped islands, kelp beds, rocky shorelines and remote beaches where bears and wolves outnumber people.

We launch from Bella Bella and travel through the remote waters of the Great Bear Rainforest, following a route that can take us north or south depending on weather, sea conditions and wildlife. Over eight days, we'll paddle through a constantly changing landscape of islands, inlets, channels and open crossings, moving camp most nights and waking up somewhere new along the way.

This is remote coastal travel at its best. There are few developed services, no roads connecting the islands, and little infrastructure once we leave Bella Bella behind. Our days are spent on the water, exploring the coastline by kayak and looking for the wildlife that makes this place so extraordinary — humpback whales, orcas, Dall's porpoises, Steller sea lions, black bears and wolves are all possible encounters.

Some days can mean 20 km or more of paddling, while others are shaped by weather, wildlife and the places we find along the coast. We travel with everything we need, carrying our homes, food and equipment with us as we move through this wild and remote corner of British Columbia.

Is This Trip Right for You?

This is a demanding trip, it is very similar to our 8-day Southern Trips in Gwaii Haanas. You will experience outer coast conditions like swell, wind, and no support boat — your group carries everything you need. Because of the dynamic environment, remote location, and longer days on the water, we ask that everyone on this route come with prior paddling or backcountry experience. If you have paddled with us in Gwaii Haanas, this trip is for you. If you're not sure whether that's you, contact us — we're happy to talk it through before you book.

Low tide along one of the route's beach camps

Sheltered coves the group explores between crossings

Evening colour over the central coast islands

Quick Facts

Trip type	Expedition (Demanding)
Trip duration	8 days / 7 nights
Group size	8 guests, 2 guides (small group size)
When we go	June – September
Style	Outer-coast sea kayaking, wilderness camping
Experience needed	Previous paddling or backcountry experience required
Starting point	Bella Bella, BC (central coast)

Getting There & Meeting Up

Where we start

Meeting point: Shearwater Resort, Denny Island — a short water-taxi hop from Bella Bella

Day 1 check-in: 8:30 am at the Shearwater Resort dock

Day 8 return: around 2-3:00 pm — please don't book tight onward travel the same day.

The evening before (Day 0)

We hold a welcome meeting at 6:00 pm at Shearwater Resort the evening before departure. You'll meet your guides and the rest of the group, get fitted for drybags, and cover any last questions. Shearwater is reached by a short passenger ferry from the government dock in Bella Bella (cash fare, one way).

What's Included

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
• Expert guides	• Travel to and from Bella Bella
• Kayaks, paddling & camping gear (all inclusive)	• Accommodation before/after the trip
• All meals & snacks, lunch Day 1 through lunch Day 8	• Dinner before and after tour at Shearwater Resort
• Water-taxi transport	• Travel insurance
• Park permits & land-use fees	• Guide gratuity

What to Expect

Kayaking

You'll paddle a mix of double and single fibreglass kayaks, because we choose a smaller group size, you can choose which type of kayak you'd like to be in for the duration of the trip (double or single). There's no support vessel on this route — your group carries everything in the kayaks — so packing light and packing smart matters. Loading, unloading and hauling boats is a team effort every single day; your guides will show you the ropes, but expect to pitch in.

Camping

Every site is a remote wilderness beach with no infrastructure. We use the intertidal flush for our backcountry toilets and burn our toilet paper on the beach. Fresh water is limited on this stretch of, and most people bathe in the cold ocean of the Pacific Northwest.

Food

Meals are cooked camp-style by your guides and are included from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 8. We aim for hearty, simple, genuinely good food, and can work around most dietary needs with enough notice (see Quick Facts).

A FEW GROUND RULES

- Wool, fleece and synthetics stay warm wet — leave the cotton at home.
- Layer everything; the coast swings warmer and colder than the forecast suggests.
- Once something is wet here, it tends to stay that way for the rest of the trip – we are paddling through a temperate coastal rainforest!!
- Everyone helps with boats and camp cleanup — this is a team trip, not a guided walk.

On the Water

There's no fixed script for a route like this — your guides read the weather and tides each morning and plan the day around them. Expect the following rhythm, adjusted as conditions require.

Morning

Guides check the forecast and tides over breakfast, then the group breaks camp and loads the kayaks together — everyone pitches in.

On the water

Most days mean 5–7 hours of paddling and 8–15 nautical miles, with a beach stop for lunch partway through. There are other pee breaks throughout the day as well, as needed.

Evening

Arrival at a new site, camp setup, and a hearty dinner before an early night — the water and weather set tomorrow's schedule.

Trip arc

- Day 0 — Travel to Bella Bella; welcome meeting and gear fitting at Shearwater Resort Bar at 6:00 pm.
- Day 1 — Water taxi to Bella Bella, cultural welcome, guides load up boats while your on your cultural walk, once the walk is complete, we will water taxi to our first campsite, 1-2 hour paddle at first campsite to get use to rudders and boats.
- Days 2–7 — South or North through the Bardswell, Tribal, Admiralty, McMullin & McNaughton island groups into the Hakai Conservancy
- Day 8 — Final morning paddle (sunrise), then water taxi back to Bella Bella and do everything we did one first day in Reverse. Your guides will stay behind in Bella Bella to load kayak trailer and gear, while Frank takes you back to Shearwater.

Good to Know

Weather & conditions

Expect a mix of rain, fog and sun. Days average around 17-19°C, nights closer to 8-10°C, and the sea sits around 12-14°C — pack well-waterproofed rain gear; it rains regularly on this coast all summer.

Connectivity

Once we leave Bella Bella, the group is off-grid for the rest of the trip — no cell service, wifi, or charging. Guides carry a satellite communicator for emergencies; bring spare batteries or a battery bank for your own devices.

Food

All meals and snacks are included, lunch Day 1 through lunch on the final day. We can accommodate most dietary needs with at least 60 days' notice. Please look at our Menu Page on our website for more information.

Low-tide life along the route — the kind of thing you only notice moving at paddling speed.

Pack Like a Local

With the ground rules above in mind, here's the full list, organized by where you'll use it.

On the water

- Full rain gear — jacket & pants (Provided by us)
- 2 long-sleeved synthetic shirts
- 1 quick-dry or synthetic pair of pants
- Water shoes — gumboots, neoprene booties, or sandals with straps **(PLEASE NO FLIP FLOPS)**
- Sun hat
- Sunglasses with a chums strap

Around camp

- 2 shirts, 1 fleece or sweatshirt
- Camp pants (yoga pants or quick-dry)
- 2 pairs long underwear/base layers
- Windbreaker or second rain layer
- 6 pairs warm socks, a mix of underwear
- Toque/beanie, camp shoes

Just in case

- Headlamp & spare batteries
- Sunscreen, bug spray, SPF lip balm
- Ziplocs & garbage bags for extra waterproofing
- **Cash for the Shearwater water taxi ($10 one way) and guide gratuity**
- Personal medication, packed in carry-on if flying

Before You Arrive

- **1.** Read our Terms & Conditions and pay your deposit to confirm.
- **2.** Fill out guest information forms and dietary information
- **3.** Book your own travel to and from Bella Bella.
- **4.** Reserve accommodation for the night before and after — Shearwater Resort fills up fast.
- **5.** Arrange travel insurance
- **6.** Pack, double-check the list above, and get STOKED!
- **7 If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

Resources & Culture

The coastline we travel through is the traditional territory of the **Heiltsuk Nation**. We are fortunate to spend time in a place with a deep and continuing cultural connection to the land and sea.

We encourage you to spend a little time before your trip learning about the **Heiltsuk people, their history, culture and language**, as well as the relationship they have with this coast. Understanding the place we are travelling through adds another layer to the experience and helps us travel through it with greater awareness and respect.

Follow along — this is the coast you'll be paddling.

Questions Before You Go?

We're happy to help you figure out if this trip is the right fit for your experience level.

Email: info@atthewatersedge.ca

Phone: 250-230-4399

Website: www.butterflytours.bc.ca

GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST PACKING LIST

Printable Packing List — 8-Day Great Bear Rainforest Kayaking Expedition

Print this page and check items off as you pack.

ON THE WATER

- ☐ Full rain gear — jacket & pants (rentals available)
- ☐ 2 long-sleeved synthetic shirts
- ☐ 1 quick-dry or synthetic pair of pants
- ☐ Water shoes (gumboots, neoprene booties, sandals w/ straps)
- ☐ Sun hat with secure fit
- ☐ Sunglasses with retainer strap
- ☐ Paddling gloves or pogies (optional)

AROUND CAMP

- ☐ 2 shirts
- ☐ 1 fleece or sweatshirt
- ☐ Camp pants (yoga pants or quick-dry)
- ☐ 2 pairs long underwear / base layers
- ☐ Windbreaker or second rain layer
- ☐ 6 pairs warm socks
- ☐ Underwear (cotton + synthetic mix)
- ☐ Bathing suit
- ☐ Toque/beanie
- ☐ Camp shoes (runners, light hikers, sturdy sandals)

JUST IN CASE

- ☐ Headlamp & spare batteries
- ☐ Personal toiletries (eco-friendly/biodegradable)
- ☐ Quick-dry towel, face cloth & wipes
- ☐ Sunscreen, bug spray & SPF lip balm
- ☐ Ziplocs & garbage bags for extra waterproofing
- ☐ Cash for Shearwater water taxi ($10 one way)
- ☐ Cash for guide gratuity
- ☐ Personal medication (carry-on if flying)

OPTIONAL

- ☐ Binoculars, camera & spare batteries
- ☐ Book, journal, cards or small games
- ☐ Battery bank
- ☐ Buff
- ☐ Waterproof phone case or water camera
- ☐ 2 carabiners
- ☐ Spare glasses & contact lenses

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

- ☐ Read our Terms & Conditions and confirm deposit
- ☐ Fill out guest information forms and dietary
- ☐ Book travel to and from Bella Bella (BC Ferry or Plane)
- ☐ Reserve accommodation before/after at Shearwater -- it fills fast
- ☐ Arrange travel insurance with provider of your choice
- ☐ Pack, double-check this list, and get STOKED!