



Great Bear Rainforest

On SV Maple Leaf



A Frommer's "Trip of a Lifetime"



The Inside Passage and British Columbia's central coast is a land of fjords, mountains, rainforests and great river estuaries. It is home to grizzlies, wolves and the mysterious white Spirit Bear.

Journey into one of Earth's greatest wild places. Robert Kennedy Jr. calls it "the last stand of the great North American rainforest". Maple Leaf's trips in 3 seasons (spring, summer, fall) are timed for peak experiences of natural beauty and wildlife.

Fjords and Forests That Humble

The Pacific ocean's eastern edge breaks against BC's western islands and sandy beaches. Then it snakes down glacier-hewn valleys at the foot of the mountains: these are the Great Bear Rainforest's fjords. You'll travel past the fjords' granite flanks, where waterfalls drop hundreds of feet to the sea.

Ancient rainforest of spruce and cedar clings to mountainsides and river valleys. People have described these forests of ethereal green light as "living cathedrals". In the eighteenth century the European explorers had another word: *sublime*.

People of the Rainforest

You'll explore the worlds of several northwest First Nations: the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xaixais, Haisla, Gitga'at and Henaaksiala. Everywhere there is evidence of their civilization. Fish traps, bark-stripped trees and big-house remains give testimony to a life tuned to the rhythm of nature.

You'll visit modern villages and see the ancient art traditions still in place today. Our First Nations guides will not only tell you about their culture, but they'll also chat with you one on one.

The Land of the Great Bears

At the foot of the mountains sprawl vast river estuaries. Here, you'll float in a shore boat or sit in a safe place to watch bears. B.C.'s largest population of grizzly bears visits the estuaries in spring and fall. Watch as a bear with chocolate-brown fur eats sedges and roots. Look for the white Spirit Bear, the continent's rarest bear, and for black bears.

Nature's Peak Spectacles - 3 Seasons

Our experienced crew and naturalist will take you to areas where you'll be able to witness peak wildlife events: spring bird migrations, spring and summer bears on estuaries, mountain goats, porpoises, dense intertidal life. Humpback whales arrive in spring to feast until fall. In fall, witness the return of the salmon to spawn, which draws bears to the estuaries again, along with seals, eagles and elusive wolves. We often visit one of the natural, out-of-the-way hot springs here.



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Great Bear Rainforest

"Better than billed – loved seeing the goats and bears... wonderful caring crew. Thanks for the memories."

- Marion Kerr, Comox, B.C.,
about the Great Bear Rainforest &
Kitlope Spring Supervoyage

[2017 Dates & Prices -
SV Maple Leaf
Vancouver Island & Great
Bear Rainforest
Supervoyage - Spring](#)

[Vancouver Island Inside Passage](#)
Apr 27 - May 4, 7 nights, 8 days
Price: Can \$2800
Depart : Sidney, BC
Return: Campbell River, BC
See separate brochure for itinerary.

[Desolation Sound & Discovery
Islands](#)
May 6 - 10, 4 nights, 5 days
Price: Can \$1890
Depart : Campbell River, BC
Return: Campbell River, BC
See separate brochure for itinerary.

[Spring Vancouver Island
Inside Passage & Great Bear
Rainforest:](#)
May 11 - 19 8 nights, 9 days
Price: Can \$3200
Depart: Campbell River, BC

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Spring in the Great Bear Rainforest

You'll explore here as spring enlivens the coast. Starting with the outer islands of the south, you'll explore the wild edge and beaches of the Great Bear.

As you cruise north through tight passageways and protected seas, the landscape steepens.

In the Great Bear Rainforest, picturesque snow still caps the mountain peaks but green estuaries burst with plant life and migrating birds. Oceanic plankton blooms begin, fuelling a bounty of krill and fish for returning whales. Newly-awakened bears graze on sedges.

You will cruise and walk among it all, often the only humans for hundreds of miles.

You'll also explore the past and present day life of coastal communities -- from First Nations' ancient history here, to more recent homesteaders.

Late spring and early summer are good times for viewing grizzly or brown bears. The earlier spring trips have some chance of bears but the amount depends on whether the spring is early or late in a particular year.

(Note: for those for whom the possibility of seeing a spirit bear is a make or break criterion, we recommend a fall trip. Spring is gorgeous in the Great Bear but it's not a good time for spirit bear viewing.)

Vancouver Island to Great Bear Rainforest

- Day 1 Board at Campbell River. Cruising Quadra Island and Vancouver Island shores. Seymour Narrows, the dividing line between southern and northern climates. Historic Ripple Rock, watch for porpoises. Rainforest walk. Anchorage Port Neville.
- Day 2-3 Johnstone Strait and the steep-sided islands of the Broughton Archipelago. Coastal villages, Alert Bay cultural centre, marine mammals.
- Day 4-6 Sailing Cape Caution, exploring western islands and beaches of southern Great Bear. Entering the mainland inlets and fjords. Likely sea otters, humpback whales, early bears.
- Day 7 Fjordland where waterfalls cascade down granite cliffs. Petroglyphs, hot springs visit, cultural history, bear meadows.
- Day 8 Explore west coast islands as the goose group. West coast beach walks and zodiac excursions.
- Day 9 Cruise to Bella Bella. Wildlife viewing on route.





Great Bear Rainforest

"A charmed voyage. Better than we'd imagined. Great weather, awe inspiring sea and country, and wondrous wildlife sightings. Many thanks to the crew."

- Cheryl and Roger Moses, AB, Canada



SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Great Bear Rainforest Spring Discovery

Cruise through the fjords and islands as the days lengthen and the wildflower meadows bloom. You'll cruise the coast's fjordlands to spectacular, mountain-ringed anchorages, hot springs, meadows, river valleys and rainforests, as wildlife and new growth rejuvenate the area in spring.

- Day 1 Board your ship in Bella Bella, orientation, cruise into Fjordland viewing spectacular mountains and waterfalls. Rainforest walk.
- Day 2 Visit great Fjordland river estuaries, wild flower meadows. Possible bear viewing.
- Day 3 Visit First Nations community of Klemtu, including guided tour and conversations at big house, example of First Nations artistry, culture and architecture.
- Day 4 Mainland inlet, bear viewing, rainforest walk, waterfalls, inside passage cruising, hot springs visit.
- Day 5 Visit coastal community, sailing down whale channel, viewing of marine mammals including whales and sea lions. Visit remote whale research station and speak with scientists. Cruise to west coast beach and explore.
- Day 6 Sailing the outer coast, exploring remote islands. Intertidal life, whales, seabirds, beaches.
- Day 7 Exploring north coast wolf habitat, cruising from outer coast to inner coast, rainforest walk.
- Day 8 Cruising to Kitimat, wildlife viewing.

Actual trip itineraries vary depending on the interests of the guests, and the actions of weather and wildlife.



Whales & Grizzlies- Great Bear Rainforest Summer

- Day 1 Board Maple Leaf at Kitimaat Village, orientation, cruising into the Great Bear Rainforest, watching for marine mammals and birds. Anchorage at remote hot springs.
- Day 2 Morning exploration ashore, then cruising Whale Channel, an aptly named waterway popular with cetaceans. Visit whale research scientists at remote station. Marine mammal viewing (several species). Anchorage at remote island on west coast. Beachcombing, hike to view, beach fire.
- Day 3 Cruise to spectacular mainland inlet estuary popular with grizzly and black bears. Estuary meadow walk (wildflowers), learning about bear habitat, river exploration, look for bears.
- Day 4 Morning bear viewing in fjordland. Visit First Nations community of Klemtu, including guided tour and conversations at big house, example of First Nations artistry, culture and architecture.
- Day 5 Cruising in fjordland, estuary & rainforest walks. Bear viewing.
- Day 6 Cruise to Bella Bella, wildlife viewing on route.



Photo credits: All photos by Kevin J. Smith except page 1 grizzly bear and ariel view by Ian McAllister, page 2 guests in zodiac and grizzly bear by Greg Shea, Maple Leaf sailing by Greg Shea, wolf by Ian McAllister.

[2017 Dates & Prices - SV Maple Leaf](#)

Great Bear Rainforest Spring

May 20 - 27, 7 nights, 8 days
Price: Can \$4950
Depart: Bella Bella, BC
Return: Kitimat, BC

Whales & Wild Isles-Summer

Aug 13 - 20, 7 nights, 8 days
Price: Can \$4800
Depart: Prince Rupert, BC
Return: Kitimat, BC
See separate brochure for itinerary.

Whales & Grizzlies Great Bear-Summer

Aug 21 - 26, 5 nights, 6 days
Price: Can \$3650
Depart: Kitimat, BC
Return: Bella Bella, BC

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Great Bear Rainforest

"What an extraordinary trip! Sea otters, black bears, spirit bears, humpback whales, magnificent scenery, great shore trips, scrumptious meals, wonderful company with lots of laughter."

- Jean Rissman, Calif, USA, autumn trip

[Autumn 2017 Dates & Prices - SV Maple Leaf](#)

Aug 27 - Sept 4, Sept 5 - 13,
Sept 14 - 22 (Photo Tour)
8 nights, 9 days

Cdn \$5950

Depart: Bella Bella, BC
Return: Bella Bella, BC

Sept 24 - Oct 2
8 nights, 9 days

Cdn \$5950

Depart: Bella Bella, BC
Return: Kitimat, BC

Oct 3 - 11
8 nights, 9 days

Cdn \$5950

Depart: Kitimat, BC
Return: Bella Bella, BC



Autumn Great Bear Rainforest Trips

This fall, witness one of nature's most profound events: the journey of the wild pacific salmon into the rainforest. Follow the magic that unfolds during this important natural event.

Rivers are thick with fish burying their eggs in gravel. The spectacle brings bears and wolves to feast on the bounty. Eagles, ravens, harlequin ducks and gulls join in.

Sample Itinerary - Bella Bella to Bella Bella- Autumn

- Day 1 Board Maple Leaf in Bella Bella, BC, orientation, cruising. Island anchorage, river exploration, and learning about the 'salmon forest'.
- Day 2 Beach walk. Cruising into Fjordland. Massive waterfalls, spectacular inlet*, pictographs, estuary exploration and search for bears.
- Day 3 Cruising to one of the leading grizzly bear havens. Extended watching for grizzly bears. Optional evening kayak, fishing, quiet time.
- Day 4 Morning shore walk, visit First Nations village, Klemtu. Big House tour by village guide. Intertidal life. Fjord anchorage.
- Day 5 Exploring coastal river by zodiac. Forest walk. Sea lion and black or grizzly bear viewing. Nature hike. Hot springs.
- Day 6 Spirit bear island anchorage. Shore excursion to spirit bear viewing site with bear stands. Whale Channel, humpback whale watching. Optional kayak.
- Day 7 Sailing down coastal channel, Island anchorage, cultural site visit. Optional evening kayak.
- Day 8 Outer coast beach exploration, sailing and cruising the western waters, whale viewing, shore trips.
- Day 9 Cruising to port in Bella Bella.

Sample Itinerary - Bella Bella to Kitimat- Autumn

- Day 1 Board your ship in Bella Bella, orientation, cruise into Fjordland viewing spectacular mountains and waterfalls. Rainforest walk.
- Day 2 Visit great Fjordland river estuaries, wild salmon spawning. Possible bear viewing.
- Day 3 Visit First Nations community of Klemtu, including guided tour and conversations at big house, example of First Nations artistry, culture and architecture.
- Day 4 Mainland inlet, bear viewing, rainforest walk, waterfalls, inside passage cruising, hot springs visit.
- Day 5 Spirit bear island anchorage. Shore excursion to spirit bear viewing site with bear stands. Whale Channel, humpback whale watching.
- Day 6 Optional kayak, sailing down whale channel, viewing of marine mammals including whales and sea lions. Visit remote whale research station and speak with scientists. Cruise to west coast beach and explore.
- Day 7 Sailing the outer coast, exploring remote islands. Intertidal life, whales, seabirds, beaches.
- Day 8 Exploring north coast wolf habitat, cruising from outer coast to inner coast, rainforest walk.
- Day 9 Cruising to Kitimat, wildlife viewing.

For Kitimat to Bella Bella, reverse this itinerary. Actual trip itineraries vary depending on the interests of the guests, and the actions of weather and wildlife.

Departure Notes

The August trips on SV Maple Leaf have an excellent chance for wildlife including grizzly bears, whales and salmon, but very low chance of spirit bears. The other trips have a higher chance of spirit bears, but please note that spirit bears are rare and while we have an excellent track record, a sighting is never guaranteed. The September & October trips include a full day at a bear stand in spirit bear territory. All trips include wild, completely natural bear viewing opportunities as well, without structures. Ask us about other dates.



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Great Bear Rainforest



"What a wonderful trip on a very special ship- a pleasure to be onboard with a fabulous crew!"

-Diane Bohomis & Allan Seiersen,
Comox, BC

[Dates and Prices - Photo Tour 2017 - SV Maple Leaf](#)

Great Bear Rainforest Photography Trip

Sept 14 - 22, 8 nights, 9 days

Cdn \$5950

Depart: Bella Bella, BC

Return: Bella Bella, BC



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Great Bear Photography Trip

Capture images of wildlife and landscapes on this photo trip in British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, guided by the expert crew of Maple Leaf Adventures.

This trip is designed specifically for photographers who seek images of grizzly bears, rainforest, fjords, and the rare, white Spirit Bear.

Led by a superb nature photographer and instructor, on this photo trip you'll have plenty of time to set up great shots, take advantage of the right light conditions and improve your technique.

Sample Itinerary - Photo Trip

- Day 1 Board ship, orientation, cruising inside passage channels to island anchorage. Evening rainforest photography.
- Day 2 Ashore for morning photography. Cruising fjords. Ashore for evening bear photography.
- Day 3 Morning bear and fjord photography. Short cruise and afternoon/evening meadow, fjord and bear photography.
- Day 4 Inner islands rainforest cruising. Whale photography. Visit village of Klemtu. Village life photography.
- Day 5 Morning seascape photography while cruising. Afternoon / evening bear photography.
- Day 6 Morning bear, and river photography. Evening cruise, hot springs.
- Day 7 All day at spirit bear viewing/ photography site.
- Day 8 Cruising and exploratory photography sessions.
- Day 9 Morning photo session. Cruising to Bella Bella.



Actual trip itineraries vary depending on the interests of the guests, and the actions of weather and wildlife.

**Names of key areas we visit have been left out to protect wildlife from trophy hunting and unprofessional operators.*

