



Gulf Islands, B.C.

On SV Maple Leaf

A Frommer's "Trip of a Lifetime"



Some people who visit the Gulf Islands think they've stumbled into Paradise.

This group of hundreds of semi-mediterranean islands in a protected sea has drawn people for millennia, with its green and gold slopes, blue ocean and ring of snow-capped peaks.

Islands in the Salish Sea

Step aboard one of our classic ships and enter a world where the most important decision is which place to explore next.

With 200+ islands and islets, some with "dry rain-forests", some with white shell beaches, some with colonies of animals, the options are many.

Maple Leaf's crew knows the area well and while you'll visit some of the larger, well-known islands, you'll also be guided to little-known havens to which most people will never have access. (Ever heard of Cabbage Island? How about Mandarte, Prevost and Wallace?)

The Gulf Islands offer a combination of unique wilderness and eclectic communities. On land, Garry oaks and Douglas fir forests, wildflower meadows and Arbutus (madrone) trees flourish. You'll explore rocky beaches, quiet lagoons and spectacular passages. The islands lie in a rain shadow, so some even support small cacti. Our onboard naturalist unlocks the wonder of even the smallest shells you may find.

Sea Life & Sailing

Fresh spring and fall breezes make for great sailing, and we often get generous portions of sunshine. A stunning variety of sea life is found here - brightly-coloured sea stars, crabs, clams and seaweeds. Seals, otters, dolphins and whales swim the waters between islands.

These trips are a great opportunity to experience the relaxing pace of life aboard a classic ship. In the quiet beauty of these islands, you will feel as if you are thousands of miles from anywhere.

Coast Salish First Nations Culture

The Coast Salish culture has flourished for thousands of years here, and it's easy to see why. The climate is mild, the land is gentle, and natural beauty abounds. Often we are able to meet with elders who can share the original names of the islands, and the way of life here, with our guests.

Explorers and Eclectic Villages

The islands are as diverse as they are beautiful. Most reflect the history of maritime exploration on the Pacific Coast and many, such as Galiano and Valdez, still bear the names of the earliest European explorers.

The natural meadows lured European and Hawaiian settlers to farm here, and later, American draft dodgers and hippies of all kinds came to the islands to escape urban life. Crafts and arts thrive, and the Gulf Islands are now one of the most desirable places to live in Canada. Sit back on deck and explore these idyllic islands. You'll see why they are known as one of the world's best cruising destinations.



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Photo credits: Kevin Smith, Maureen Gordon (dolphin)



Gulf Islands, B.C.

"Thank you for the privilege of being aboard this beautiful ship, experiencing the magical beauty of the islands."

-Elspeth McVeigh,

Vancouver, B.C. & United Kingdom

[2018 Dates & Prices, SV Maple Leaf](#)

Gulf Islands Spring Fling

Apr 15 - 19

4 nights, 5 days Price: Can \$1970

Depart & Return: Sidney, BC

Salish Sea with Canadian Geographic

Apr 20 - 24

4 nights, 5 days Price: Can \$2390

Depart & Return: Sidney, BC

See separate brochure for itinerary

Desolation Sound, Gulf Islands & Salish Sea Supervoyage

Apr 26 - May 4

8 nights, 9 days. C \$3410

Depart: Sidney, BC

Return: Campbell River, BC

See separate brochure for itinerary

Autumn Gulf Island Cruise

Oct 24 - 29

5 nights, 6 days C \$2325

Depart & Return: Sidney, BC



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Spring Fling in the Gulf Islands

There is no better way to celebrate the return of spring than sailing among these eclectic islands in south-western British Columbia.

While the rest of the North is still clothed in a blanket of winter, the Gulf Islands burst with life - from the green flames of new growth to meadows of bright flowers and the exuberant, noisy clamour of seals, whales and birds flocking around fish and krill in the springtime ocean.

Meadows are carpeted with wild flowers...white Easter lilies, pink sea blush, purple camas, Blue-eyed Mary. All shine against an early spring-green palette.

Autumn in the Gulf Islands

Autumn, a time of feasting, comes slowly to the Gulf Islands. But as we drift past the shores, leaves on oaks, dogwood and broadleaf maples will be starting to turn to fall colours. The arbutus splash the coastal woodlands with bunches of ripe, red berries.

Migrating birds stop on the beaches on their journey south along the Pacific Flyway. Spawning salmon congregate among the islands before running up the mighty Fraser River, and marine mammals including seals, sea lions and orcas feast on the fish.



Sample Itinerary -

Spring/Autumn in the Gulf Islands

Note that, as with all expedition cruises, itineraries vary depending on the interests of the guests, and the actions of weather and wildlife. This sample itinerary is meant to give you an idea of the typical trip.

- Day 1 Orientation, cruising. Seabird island visit, wildlife watching, porpioses. Anchorage Saturna Island.
- Day 2 Morning hike on Saturna Island, forest ecology learning. Cruising, beachcombing a remote island, sea lion and seabird haul out.
- Day 3 Village visit, sailing in Georgia Strait and one of many channels in the area. Anchorage Prevost Island. Exploring the intertidal life at low tide. Hike to view and mariner's light.
- Day 4 Cruising to either Wallace Island, Penelakut Island or other central Island. Historic and First Nations history. Wildflower meadows or mushroom, fall foliage highlights, island anchorage. Optional kayak.
- Day 5 Sailing, Russell Island anchorage, woodland shore walk and Kanaka history.
- Day 6 Cruising to Sidney.

5 day / 4 night itineraries are similar, with one day less activities.



Photos: Kerin Smith

All-Inclusive Highlights

- All accommodations included in your trip, including comfortable, classic ship-board accommodations with fluffy duvets, and local lodges if your trip includes a lodge stay.
- All shore trips, wildlife viewing, and zodiac excursions guided by our expert, knowledgeable crew/guides. All cultural site visits, and all additional local guides.
- All meals and snacks, prepared freshly for you by our chef. Meals feature great variety, and highlight local, fresh specialties.
- All beverages including coffee, tea, juices and sodas, filtered water, wine and craft beer.
- The services of our naturalist and crew both aboard the ship and ashore. These caring, entertaining and knowledgeable people are your hosts for the trip, always available for questions, teaching, or conversation.
- Open wheelhouse. You are welcome to come into the ship's wheelhouse, from which our crew are navigating the ship. On our sailing ships, you are also welcome to take the helm under our crew's guidance, and help sail the ships, if you like.
- Use of gear on board including kayaks, fishing gear, and rubber boots.

Why travelling by water leads you to the best of the Inside Passage and Haida Gwaii

The coastline of British Columbia and Alaska undulates into bays, twists into island archipelagos, and stretches far down fjords that slice through mountain ranges. This is wild geography and there are few roads here. As a result, wildlife and nature thrive. The few coastal communities have a deep connection to the ocean. To experience it at all, and to reach the richest areas, you must travel by water, as people have done here for millennia. On our small ships, you'll reach special areas closed to big ships, and head down passages and make landings there that big ship passengers can only dream of.

By Travelling with Maple Leaf, You Support Local, Conservation-Based Enterprises

By travelling with Maple Leaf, you are part of the important, emerging conservation-based economy on the coast. Our careful, thoughtful approach to our trips, to nature, and to all of the people we visit have earned us a reputation as a model for conservation travel. We are a coast-owned and operated business, and 99% of the money from the trips stays within the coastal economy. We dedicate time and resources to conservation of the coast -- our home that we gladly share with you.



How You'll Travel



Access to the Best Places on the Inside Passage & Haida Gwaii

Maple Leaf Adventures has been awarded special access permits to protected areas, allowing you entrée to worlds most people will never see. Our relationships can also give access to special cultural sites, and scientists in the field.

Our Small Scale: Feel the Coast's Hugeness

The proximity you will feel to the coast's mountains, forest and islands is incomparable with any other form of water travel. Sail with an escort of dolphins. Feel the spray from waterfalls beside us. Walk in ancient forests that are cathedrals of green.

Timed for Peak Wildlife Events, with Plenty of Shore Time

Our trips are timed to coincide with great natural events, ensuring sightings of a fantastic variety of wildlife including bears, whales, dolphins and hundreds of species of birds. There is always lots to do and see. Our shore trips include visits to intertidal areas, beaches, river estuaries, rainforests, and villages. One of the crew is an expert naturalist or fascinating specialist to help you understand the areas we visit.

Gorgeous Classic Ships with Comfortable Finishings

Our ships are beautiful wooden ships, built here, with long histories on the coast. So even as you walk the deck or step into the wheelhouse, you are having a truly coastal experience, connected to more than a century of history.

The Excitement of a Real Journey

Travelling with a small group of guests means that your experience, while carefully planned, is also natural and spontaneous. You will not feel like part of a crowd, and your experience is not limited by barriers and procedures used to manage large groups. Every second, you are on a real journey. We treat each guest as an individual. We notice your interests and help you to do everything you came for. Every Maple Leaf crew member is welcoming and generous - with their time, their knowledge, and their thoughtfulness.

Expert, Local Guides, Crew & Company

Your trips are developed and operated by us -- expert mariners, naturalists, guides and managers who have grown up exploring the coast and who want you to experience the best of the best.

Veterans of local field research, our naturalists share their expertise and abundant knowledge from real experience here. Our relationships on the coast give you access to researchers and local residents to further enrich your trip.

Natural History Exploration Tools

The ships have excellent natural/cultural history libraries, hydrophones for listening to whales underwater, DVDs, small aquariums, fishing gear, GoPro cameras, kayaks, and top-quality shore boats with clean and quiet engines.

Cultural History

Coastal First Nations guides we work with and who share their long history and knowledge of the place with us are from the Gitga'at, Haida, Haisla, Heiltsuk, and Kitasoo-Xai'Xais, nations, and Kwakwaka'wakw of northern Vancouver Island, and Coast Salish of the southern Gulf Islands.

Full But Unhurried Days

Our days are full but our pace is unhurried, giving time to linger with whales, sketch in a Haida village, beachcomb, and walk ancient forests. We go ashore often to experience the entire place, not just the view.

Typical Activities

- Rainforest walks
- Beachcombing
- Exploring by small boat
- Wildlife viewing
- Coastal village visits
- Cultural site visits and experiences
- Photography
- Natural history learning, in all environments, with our naturalist
- Sailing (sailing ships only)
- Kayaking (optional)
- Hiking (optional; possibly one good hike on a trip)
- Cruising
- Fishing (with a licence)
- Foraging (sea asparagus, berries, and other items, some trips only)
- Whale identification for research (on trips with whales)
- Beach campfire and star watching

The Benefits and Approach to Adventure Travel

This is a trip with a true sense of adventure. It's important to realize it's for people with adventurous spirits. The coastal ships are beautiful and comfortable but they are not Las Vegas. If you seek cruise ship amenities, including grand, hotel-room style cabins, this trip may not be for you.

But if you seek to explore in an authentic way, with the camaraderie of expert crew and guides, we look forward to welcoming you aboard.

The Story of Our Company and People

Passionate About Sharing Our Home with You

Maple Leaf Adventures and our trips are run by people who grew up on the islands and coast of the inside passage and Haida Gwaii.

Our lives and perspectives have grown from the rainforest, the beach, the curious gaze of harbour seals, and the channels of blue water that are the pathways of the coast. Our professional lives have honed our skills at hospitality, wildlife guiding, storytelling, navigation, operations, and other aspects of running a world-class company.

As we have come together at Maple Leaf Adventures, we have created a different kind of trip for you, where you can truly experience the best of life on

the coast, as a guest of expert locals and naturalists. Enjoy the friendship of great residents, smell the sweet coniferous forest as you step ashore, feel the rhythm of ship and ocean as you steer under crew's guidance, taste the flavour of huckleberries or freshly caught prawns, and hear a whale's sharp inhalation of breath before it dives.

Our purpose is to give you the best of the coast, while also supporting the conservation of its ecosystems and cultural fabric. Our mission is to show that the best travel delights the mind and senses and can enrich, rather than harm, the places we visit. Care and attention to detail are at the heart of all we do.



Kevin's Story

Kevin Smith, the president of Maple Leaf Adventures, has explored the coast by boat since before he could ride a bike. As a young backcountry and marine park ranger, Kevin witnessed the incredible power and beauty of nature, often alone on his patrol boat. He wanted to share it with others.

Kevin is a geographer by training, and he knows the best experiences are beyond roads' reach. To truly explore the landscapes, wildlife and culture of the coast, you need to go by water. But not in the traditional manner, with thousands of people on a huge cruise ship. He wanted to share the glory of the coast as he had gotten to know it.

He volunteered for five years on the team that

created British Columbia's ground-breaking land use plan, which preserves large tracts of the Great Bear Rainforest. The process pointed out a needed solution in the area: a conservation-based economy. Kevin realized that his vision of sharing the coast's wonders with others would fit. His business acumen, green ethics, expedition knowledge and love of hosting lead him to a new kind of travel: eco-adventure cruising.

Since 2001, Kevin has built Maple Leaf Adventures into an award-winning company. As the leader, he must spend time in the office. But he (as with all Maple Leaf Adventures staff) stays focussed by donning his GoreTex jacket and operating trips each year. It keeps him in touch with the interesting



guests who join us, and the geography, wildlife and people of the coast. After all, that's the dream that brings us - and you - together.

About Our Company

Maple Leaf Adventures has been operating trips focused on the natural history of B.C.'s west coast and Alaska, and the culture of the First Nations peoples of the areas, since 1986. We have a reputation for quality, professionalism and sensitivity to natural and cultural landscapes.

We are the west-coast expedition cruise partner of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. Our company has been recognized by the Canadian government as a leader in eco-tourism and our trips have been featured internationally in such travel guides as *Frommer's* and *National Geographic Traveler* and on the Oprah Winfrey television show.

We dedicate time and resources to coastal conservation, caring for the coast that gives us our livelihood.



Ocean Wise.  Recommended by the Vancouver Aquarium as an ocean-friendly seafood choice.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is this trip suitable for me?

A. Anyone is eligible so long as they are enthusiastic about participating, amenable to the vagaries of weather, agile enough to clamber in and out of shore vessels in an area where there are no docks, and friendly enough to get along in the relatively close quarters of a yacht. We have had people on board as much as 80 years of age. However, our trips are not suitable for people of failing health or physical disabilities.

Q. What is included in the price?

A. Our price includes all meals, activities and guides throughout your voyage in the region you are visiting. Specifically:

- All meals, snacks and beverages prepared from the freshest ingredients by our superb chef.
- Fine wines featured with the evening meal, and a limited amount of beer included and available throughout the trip. (Liquor is not a large part of our trips, so plan on light consumption).
- Services of our naturalist and professional crew.
- Shore excursions.
- Use of gear on board, including raingear, boots, kayaks and fishing gear (*with fishing licence*).

Not included in our price:

- Transportation to the trip's point of origin.
- Goods and Service Tax (Canadian trips only)
- Crew gratuities
- Sustainability Fee. As a professional ecotourism company, it is at the core of our operating principles to work with local communities, respecting regulations and contributing to local opportunities. Responsible operations cost a little more. We extract from the fare a

percentage of the increased costs that go towards sustainable communities add it to the list price as a 'sustainability fee' of \$100 per trip. Through it we hope our guests share in the pride that a trip with Maple Leaf is a contribution to the sustainability of the whole coast – as well as being a great experience.

Q. Can you accommodate my special diet?

A. Yes. If you advise us in the pre-trip forms we can accommodate most dietary requirements.

Q. Will I be seasick?

A. Sea sickness on our North America trips is rarely a problem as your trip is on a sturdy and sea-kindly ship. We travel short distances in protected waters and go ashore often.

Q. Can I be involved in sailing the ship and performing other duties?

A. In North America, absolutely. We encourage our guests to participate in any aspect of the trip that interests them and to a level they are comfortable with. We are patient instructors (no yelling) and delight in helping people learn. On the other hand, you are not required to sail or perform duties while on your vacation. The choice is yours.

Q. What makes you an eco-tourism company?

- A. • Our trips have low impact (virtually no impact) on the planet and on the places we visit
- We partner with local people. We have protocol agreements either signed or in process with First Nations in territories we visit.
 - Our naturalists – experts in their fields – and other knowledgeable crew members provide a wealth of knowledge on the areas we visit, as do our First Nations guides.

- We work within the regulations of parks and conservation areas, pay the applicable fees and obtain permits for all limited-use areas we visit.
- We dedicate time and resources to preserving the wilderness we travel in.

Q. I've never been on a boat before – is that OK?

A: Yes, absolutely. You will be travelling on a large, strong boat run by an expert crew. You are aboard as our guest and we will look after you very well. You don't have to do anything other than enjoy yourself.

Q. Will I go ashore?

A. Yes – usually a few times a day. Each shore trip is usually between 1 and 3 hours in length.

Q. Do you have kayaks?

A. Yes, and you are welcome to go for paddles in the spectacular bays we anchor in.

Q. How long have you been operating?

A. Since 1986.

Q. How many people are typically on a trip?

A: In North America, max ten guests. We have a crew of 4 or 5 including chef and naturalist.

Q. Is there a single supplement?

A. On the Maple Leaf, there is no single supplement. If the trip fills, you will share with another single person of your own sex. On the Swell there is a 50% single supplement.

Q. What are the other guests like?

A. Our guests are people like you, who are interested in high quality experiences and in learning about the natural world, classic ships or culture. They are thoughtful, fun people and a joy to travel with. A large percentage of them return for additional trips.

How to Get to Your Trip



Airport Access

Our BC and Alaska trips originate from ports along the coast that are serviced by regularly scheduled flights. All of these flights except one originate from Vancouver International Airport, in Vancouver, BC. If you are flying from outside the area, and you are wondering where you need to get to in order to connect to your trip, then Vancouver International Airport is the answer.

Note that if your Alaska trip either starts at or ends at a port in Alaska (e.g., Petersburg), then any air travel to or from Alaska goes via Seattle-Tacoma airport, in Washington State, USA. You can connect to Seattle via a short flight to or from Vancouver, BC.

The map above shows the general flight routes.

We provide all of this information plus more detail and guidance in the Welcome Aboard package that you will receive upon booking your place with Maple Leaf. We are also happy to help any time!

Ferries

Ferries transport passengers between Vancouver and Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo, Port Hardy and Prince Rupert, Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii, Seattle and Victoria, and Alaskan ports and Prince Rupert. Travelling by ferry requires careful planning and sometimes a car.

Driving

If you wish to drive to and/or from your trip, you may be able to. It's best to email or phone us or your travel agent for further information.

Staying Beforehand or Afterward

Our Welcome Aboard packages lists some places you may wish to stay at before or after your trip.

Travel Agent

If you would like the assistance of a travel agent, we are happy to provide contact information for one who has worked with our guests.



Wild BC and Alaska - Boutique expedition cruises



Booking and Cancellation Policy

To avoid disappointment, your reservation should be made early. The number of participants in each program is limited, and the demand is high. Our trips sell out early.

Deposit: A deposit of one third of the price of the trip will reserve your space for any trip.

Balance: The balance is due 120 days prior to departure.

Cancellations: If you are unable to participate and cancellation occurs at least 120 days prior to the departure date of your trip, the full amount of your deposit is refundable, minus a \$200 admin fee per person to cover costs we cannot recover. If cancellation occurs less than 120 days prior to the departure date of your trip, the fare is non-refundable.

Group Bookings

For large group bookings, such as a family charter of the entire ship, the booking and cancellation policy may be different - please contact us for information.

Cancellation Insurance

We highly recommend cancellation insurance, which protects you if you have to make a late cancellation in certain cases (such as a medical emergency). There are several kinds available for different cancellation reasons. Cancellation and any needed medical insurance can be purchased through a travel agent. This should be done at the time your booking is nonrefundable.

Pre-Trip Information Package

We will send you a comprehensive Welcome Aboard package. It includes information on how to get to your trip, what to wear and bring, and other tips for your trip. It also includes an emailed questionnaire and a passenger agreement. There is also a reading list, for those who like to do pre-trip reading.

Full Ship Charters

Charter an entire trip for your family and friends. There are two ways to book -- contact us for details.

Note: Full ship charters require advance planning, as the trips are popular and once a trip has bookings, it can no longer be exclusively yours.

Payment Methods

We accept Visa, Master Card, cheque, money order or bank transfer.

How to Book Your Trip

To book, we welcome your call or email. We complete bookings by telephone.

"Thanks for the best vacation ever."

— Carrie Novick, Oregon.

Contact Us

To book a trip or for help with any questions you may have, we welcome your call or email.

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