



Tofino – Hot Springs Cove

S K I L S

Program Description

Our Tofino-Hot Springs Cove Expedition is designed for intermediate to advanced paddlers looking to refine their touring skills while undertaking an exciting sea kayaking journey. Leaving from the small surf town of Tofino, and returning to our launch spot via an entirely different route, paddlers will discover new spectacular spaces on each leg of the trip, while also having the opportunity to learn key kayaking skills on an educational paddling adventure. The program is based in Clayoquot Sound which was designated an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2000, and for good reason: the area exemplifies the beautiful, wild, West Coast of BC, with an abundance of whales, sea otters, eagles, sea stars, and other natural wonders. Long, wide, sandy beaches dominate the exposed coastline, while further back from the water's edge, old growth forests and mountainous terrain fill the vistas. Hot Spring Cove itself is a magical place with amazing natural hot springs and trails through old growth rain forest. Kayaking is the best way, and one of the only ways, to visit the area.



To help you prepare for our time together, we have created this program package. Please use this as a skill and equipment checklist, to ensure you are prepared for the program. There is a lot of information, please be sure to review it all.

Paperwork Checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure you have received and reviewed all the required documentation prior to the program start date:

- ✓ Tofino – Hot Spring Cove Expedition Information Package – please review
- SKILS Waiver – please sign with your instructor at the beginning of the program
- SKILS Medical Form – please bring a completed copy to your program

Program Overview

Program Outline

From our kayak launch site we will head out on a 7-day (6 night) kayak camping trip in Clayoquot Sound. During the program, we are keen to help you improve your kayaking and outdoor skills. The incredible environment of the area is an ideal classroom and a wonderful setting for a tour. Depending on the itinerary and weather of the day, we spend between 3 and 6 hours on the water, with plenty of time for snacks and rest stops. Our safety conscious guides are among the most highly trained and versatile on the coast; they are enthusiastic instructors, creative cooks, and great companions.

You will meet your guide(s) and the other participants in Tofino, BC, at 8:30 am on the first day of the trip. Please aim to arrive 10 – 15 minutes early for your tour in case you encounter delays. As our program begins early in the morning, we arranged accommodation for you at Surf Junction Campground the night before your program and the last day of your program. SKILS is paying for this expense.

We will meet at the kayak launch beside the town dock in Tofino. The town dock is located at the base of First Street, and the kayak launch is located to the left of the town dock. Short Term parking is available at the kayak launch to enable you to unload your gear. At the time of writing, long-term overnight parking was available for \$35 for 7 days in a gravel parking lot next to the police station and Tofino Municipal Hall in town. You are responsible for the logistics of parking your vehicle for the duration of the tour. We cannot be responsible for damage to or loss of your personal items, so please ensure valuables are stored securely.

At the launch site you will be given a portion of the group equipment, food, and water to carry in your kayak, as well as instruction on how to pack your boat efficiently if needed. When all participants are ready, we will launch for an enjoyable paddle to our first campsite in Vargas or Flores Island Marine Park in Clayoquot Sound (itinerary may change due to weather conditions).

On the seventh and final day of the program, expect to return to Tofino by 4:30 pm. We caution you that due to unsafe weather conditions or other reasons, our return may be delayed. As such, please do not organize tight connections or other time sensitive travel plans for the evening of your return or the following day; rather, enjoy a relaxing evening in Tofino or a nearby area. Consider purchasing cancellation and trip interruption insurance for any flight tickets if you are arriving from out of town.

Who Should Take This Program

This program is appropriate for experienced kayakers who are interested in undertaking an exciting advanced expedition, learning new skills and gaining experience paddling in the waters of the West Coast of BC. It is best suited to experienced sea kayakers with practiced rescue skills and kayaking strokes. Specifically, you should be able to brace and control your direction without the aid of a rudder. You will be paddling in single kayaks unless you request to use a double kayak, and should be able to paddle at a speed of at least 3 nautical miles per hour. In addition, participants should have previously received instruction on how to correctly capsize a kayak and be rescued. For your safety and enjoyment, and for the safety and enjoyment of others in the program, please enter the program with the prerequisite knowledge, skill, and experience. If you are unsure about your level of experience, send us an email. This program is for ages 16 and up. Participants must feel comfortable in gentle swell of 1 to 2 meters high and in winds of up to 15 knots.

Participation

Packing and unpacking the boats, carrying them to and from the beach, and setting up and breaking camp will be a group effort. The old adage ‘many hands make light work’ holds true as always. There will also be lots of rest and relaxation time. If you’re handy around the kitchen, or would like to learn about cooking on trip, help chopping vegetables and other such preparation for our meals will always be welcome. As well, pitching in to help with cleanup after meals is greatly appreciated. We find that if everyone chips in a little with some of the chores, the tour is more enjoyable and eventful for all, as the guides have more time to do what they do best—guide. That means more time to explore and more time to take in the scenery.



Program Safety

Ocean kayaking and camping are not without risk. Certain sea kayaking rules and camping techniques must be agreed to and observed by all members of the tour to maximize the safety and enjoyment of all participants and minimize our impact on the ecosystem. We will discuss these rules, why they are necessary, and what contingency plans we will use in the event of an emergency, at the beginning of our time together.

The Elements

The weather is variable at all times on the West coast; during the expedition we can expect sun, rain and wind in varying amounts. Please come prepared. The water temperature varies from 9 degrees Celsius in the winter to 17 degrees Celsius in the summer. Bring warm clothing and immersion gear. Rubber boots and a good rain jacket and pants are highly recommended.

Your Instructors

SKILS staff members are industry leaders and professionals with extensive guiding and instructional experience and certification. For profiles on each of our staff members, please visit our website at www.skils.ca.

Ratios and Group Size

Our minimum group size is 3 participants and 1 guide; our maximum group size is 8 participants and 2 guides. For your safety and enjoyment, we ensure that 2 experienced guides lead any group with more than 4 participants.

Program Logistics

Getting to and from the program

You are responsible for transportation to and from the starting location of the tour. Vancouver Island is easily accessed by air, ferry, and bus. Air Canada and WestJet offer regularly scheduled flights. BC Ferries offers ferry service from Canadian departure locations, while Washington State Ferries and the M.V. Coho offer ferry services from American departure locations. Once on Vancouver Island, Tofino can be accessed by car or the bus. Following is a list of links to help you plan your transportation.

- **Air Canada**
 - 1.888.247.2262 (in North America)
 - www.aircanada.com
- **WestJet**
 - 1.888.WESTJET (1.888.937.8538)
 - www.westjet.com
- **BC Ferries**
 - 1.888.BCFERRY (1.888.223.3779)
- **Washington State Ferries**
 - 1.250.386.3431 from outside North America
 - www.bcferries.com
- **Pacific Coastal Airlines**
 - 206.464.6400
 - www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries
- **Island Links Bus**
 - www.pacificcoastal.com
 - 1.866.986.3466
 - www.islandlinkbus.com

Meals

SKILS will provide gourmet meals each day, beginning with lunch on the first day of your trip and finishing with lunch on the final day. Our meals are specially designed to be delicious, nutritious, and transported with us in our kayaks with minimal refrigeration. We will gladly try to accommodate any dietary requirements or allergies; just let us know at least two weeks in advance of the tour.

What SKILS Will Provide

Safety Gear

- First aid equipment
- VHF Marine Radio
- Signaling flares

Cooking Gear

- Large group tarps
- Stoves
- Fuel
- Lighters
- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils
- Cutting boards
- Cups
- Bowls
- Plates
- Cutlery
- Washing basins

- Pot scrubbers
- Dishwashing soap

Food and Water

- Drinking water in portable containers
- Nutritious meals and snacks

Drybags

We will provide each participant with two drybags (one 20 liter and one 5 liter) in order to protect your gear and clothing.

Camping Fees

SKILS will organize and pay for all camping and park fees while touring in Clayoquot Sound.

What You Need to Bring

Following is a list of gear that you will need on the program. Most items are required, however, an * indicates the item is optional. If you need to rent a kayak or any other gear visit <https://skils.ca/rentals/>. Please make your rental reservation at least 7 days before your program starts. Your guides will bring your rentals on the first morning of your program.

Paddling Gear

- Sea kayak
- Paddle
- Sprayskirt
- ULC foam approved PFD (Personal Flotation Device) No inflatable PFD allowed
- Whistle
- Hand pump
- Tow line or throw line (buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters in length)
- Paddle float
- *Spare paddle
- *Sponge for drying out hatches

If you are providing your own kayak and paddling gear for your program, your sea kayak must meet the following requirements: (1) it is suitable for open sea conditions with no leaks; (2) it has positive buoyancy when capsized; (3) it is able to adequately carry gear as required for the program; (4) it has perimeter lines: and it is at least 16.5 feet long. Please note: recreational kayaks that do not meet the above requirements are not suitable for our program. If you have questions about the suitability of your kayak, please contact us. We have many suitable kayaks in our fleet and will be happy to match you up with an appropriate rental for this program if you are concerned about the suitability of your own craft.

Camping Gear - If you are paddling with friends you may choose to share a tent

- Tent
- Sleeping bag – 3 season bag with synthetic insulation
- Sleeping mat
- *Tarp with thin cord
- *Pillow case

- *Biodegradable soap
- *Camp towel
- * Pads and/or Tampons

Toiletries

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Sunscreen and lip balm with high SPF protection (30 +)
- Toilet paper

Immersion Clothing

- Long Jane or Long John wetsuit, or full surfing wetsuit, and paddling jacket or drysuit. You will be paddling in this gear for extended periods of time, so make sure it fits well.
- Neoprene booties or other immersion footwear
- Paddling gloves or poggies

Personal Clothing

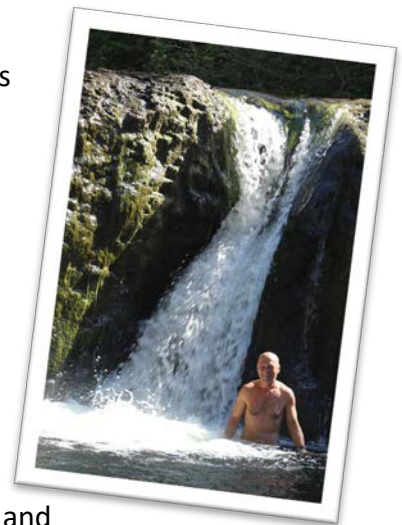
The following is a guideline to assist with your packing; feel free to bring more or less as you feel necessary. Please avoid cotton as it keeps you cold when it's wet. Please wear clothing designed for outdoor use and made from Merino wool, silk or synthetic materials such as Capilene, polyester, polypropylene, or nylon.

Torso

- Rain Jacket
- 1-2 fleece or wool sweaters/jackets
- 2 pair long jane/john tops
- 1-2 T-shirts
- 1 wind breaker

Legs

- Rain Pants
- 1-2 pair pants
- 1 pair fleece or wool pants
- 1 pair long john/jane bottoms



- 1 pair shorts

Feet

- 2-3 pair warm socks made with synthetics and/or wool
- 1 pair camp shoes – Sneakers work well
- 1 pair rubber boots
- 1 pair sport sandals or shoes that can get wet
- *2 pair liner socks – Polypropylene or wool are common materials

Miscellaneous Gear

- Headlamp or Flashlight with extra batteries
- Sunglasses with good UV protection with retriever strap
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent
- Small day pack or fanny pack for carrying camera, water bottle, etc. on short hikes.
- Spare garbage bags and zip locks
- Bathing suit
- *Notebook with pencils &/or pens

Head

- 2 wool or fleece caps
- 1 Brimmed hat or baseball cap

Hands

- 1 pair of fleece or wool gloves
- *cycling gloves for paddling to prevent blisters

- *camera
- *Pocket Knife
- *Small personal first aid kit
- *Moist towelettes for a quick cleanup
- *Good Book
- *Binoculars
- *Earplugs for light sleepers
- *Games such as Frisbee or cards
- *Drybags (see below)
- *Buff to protect your face from the sun

Packing your gear

You will need to waterproof at least your clothing and sleeping bag. Depending on how watertight your kayak is, you can pack the rest of your gear loose or in zip locks inside nylon stuff sacks. Here are two packing methods that work well. In fact, we usually use a combination of the two when we pack. Remember to leave room for group gear.

Dry Bag Method

Dry Bags are especially designed for paddle sports and are available at most sporting goods stores. Depending on the closure system they do not always keep all the water out. Test them in the shower before the trip. We suggest two 20 litre bags for your sleeping bag and bulky clothing and 2 or 3, 10 to 15 litre bags for your other clothing and gear. We will provide you one 5 and one 20 litre drybag on the first morning of your trip. Let us know if you need more dry bags.

Stuff Sack with Garbage Bag Liner Method

This is the tried and true method of years gone by. Line a stuff sack with a garbage bag. Pack as normal. Squeeze the air out before twisting the garbage bag top. Don't tie the garbage bag or use twist ties. Simply tuck the twisted end down into the stuff sack before drawing the top closed. This technique is reliable but not durable, so make sure you bring extra bags with you. You can improve the durability of this system by adding a 2nd stuff sack into the garbage bag creating a plastic sandwich. This method takes up less room than dry bags and makes the kayak easier to pack.

A couple of final packing pointers....

- it is easier to pack your kayak with many smaller bags than a few larger ones,
- a large duffel bag or IKEA bag is useful for transporting all your small bags to and from your kayak,
- a large Tupperware/Rubbermaid is good for storing wet gear in your car.

Medication

Please note that you will require a current tetanus shot (a tetanus shot is valid for 10 years). This is very important, as tetanus is a naturally occurring bacterium that lives in the soil. If you do not have up to date tetanus inoculation, you may contract tetanus through a scratch or cut, and require immediate evacuation. A simple tetanus shot, easily accessible at most medical facilities, removes the risk of contracting tetanus.

Please be sure to let us know of any medical conditions of which we should be aware. Please duplicate and separate the quantities of any medications you will need during your program, and give your duplicated medications to your instructor, who will carry them. This will provide an additional source of medications should the primary set become wet, damaged, or lost. If you are prone to any health disturbances, e.g., easily infected cuts or severe migraines, please remember to bring any preventive medications. If you have any questions about medications, contact your doctor. Swell or wind waves can be encountered on the ocean. If seasickness is of concern to you, your doctor or pharmacist may be able to recommend medication to help. Also, anti-nausea (drug-free) Gravol Ginger, candied ginger as well as wristbands work well for many people. Please note that seasickness occurs only rarely in sea kayaking. Be sure to let us know if you anticipate that seasickness will be a problem for you.

Preparing for Your Program

Kayaking requires some upper body strength and endurance. We recommend that you get out kayaking several times prior to your program. If you feel you could use some upper body conditioning before your trip, exercising with light weights can be quite helpful. Concentrate mainly on shoulder strengthening exercises, focusing on endurance rather than strength.



Thank you for enrolling in our
Tofino – Hot Springs Cove
Expedition. If you have
additional questions or concerns,
please contact us. We look
forward to playing on the water
with you!