

Tofino Trip April 7-10, 2023
SD73 International Student Program



Thirty students and chaperones left Kamloops at 7am on April 7, 2023. Our large bus turned south on the Coquihalla Highway and headed towards the Tsawwassen ferry terminal on the way to our 3 night/4 day trip to Tofino. Many logistics came together so that we were able to board our 12:45pm reserved spot on a ferry to Duke Point (Nanaimo). The ferry was on time and we sailed over to Vancouver Island without incident. We enjoyed sunshine for most of the time on the ferry and many of the students enjoyed some time on the top deck.



A stop at a food truck between Kamloops and the ferry. A Harbour Seal photographed from the ferry.



Students on the top deck of the ferry enjoying the sunshine on the trip to Vancouver Island

After arriving at our hostel in Tofino, we went grocery shopping and made supper.



Because of the weather prediction, we moved both the bear and whale watching expeditions of our trip to the same day, which resulted in an early start to the first morning in Tofino. We were at Remote Passages Marine Excursions by 7:30am to gear up for our two adventures on their boats. The bear watching portion takes place on inland waters, so the boat ride is not rough at all. Unfortunately, we couldn't find any bears on this trip but did see lots of Bald Eagles, Seals, and Sea Birds. On a positive note, we did not get rained on as much as we thought was going to happen that morning. Students in their beautiful float and rain suits below.



A Bald Eagle nest

A wet Bald Eagle drying out on a rock



After our inland tour, we were served tea and crackers before venturing out to the open ocean in search of whales. The recent wind and rain storm resulted in large waves and it was difficult to get out to the areas where the whales would be migrating along the coast. Because of this we mostly stayed in calmer waters and were not able to locate any whales but we did see many Sea Otters, Harbour Seals, and Sea Birds, and some Sea Lions.



Clockwise from top left: Black Oystercatcher, two of the zodiacs, the entire group outside Remote Passages after both excursions, A Sea Otter with a baby on its chest, a large raft of Sea Otters, a Harbour Seal.

Following being out on the ocean from 8am to 2 pm, students went back to the hostel to get some food, relax, grocery shop, or check out the town of Tofino. The rain that late afternoon and evening kept us indoors so played cards, billiards, cooked, and/or went to a restaurant for supper.



Rain persisted the following morning, so we slept in a bit before heading south to the town of Ucluelet. Easter eggs magically appeared outside each of our doors that morning as well! There is a small indoor aquarium in Ucluelet that is fun to look through if the weather isn't favourable outdoors. We looked around there for an hour and then had lunch at local restaurants. On the way back to Tofino, we stopped for a hike through the rainforest and at Long Beach. At Long Beach, many of the students could not resist the urge to run into the very cold Pacific Ocean.







Due to the weather improving and how much fun the students had at Long Beach, we decided to change plans and head for another beach after an earlier supper. We went to Mackenzie Beach where the students splashed around in the surf, hiked to the end of a headland, and hung out taking photos.





Back at the hostel, one of the chaperones had prepared Easter fudge for the trip so we all had some of that! Other activities there included finding the north star using our hands and the big dipper. The following morning we were on the road by 7:00am. We made one stop at Coombs Old Country Market – Goats on the Roof, which is as difficult to describe in words as the name suggests. We rolled into the ferry terminal on time for our reserved sailing at 12:45pm. In line beside us was a group of RCMP on motorcycles. They were all too happy to let the students sit on their bikes for photos. Another highlight was eating Nanaimo bars in Nanaimo while we waited to board. The rest of the trip went smoothly.





Eating Nanaimo Bars in Nanaimo. An Anna's Hummingbird photographed at the ferry terminal.
Random photos from the ferry below.



Students on this trip were from: Belgium, Italy, Chile, Japan, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, and Switzerland.

Thompson Valley Charters, Whalers on the Point Hostel (Hi Hostel), and Remote Passages Marine Excursions were used on this trip.

Favourite Moment On The Trip

Hannah – in the boats looking for whales.

Gigi – going back to the bus after swimming in the ocean.

Chloe – Running into the ocean at Long Beach.

Rodrigo – Going into the ocean the second time at Mackenzie Beach.

Igor – Mint Tea and crackers after the bear watching trip.

Natalia M – When everyone was trying to be quiet and we started to laugh in the hostel.

Lucas – Staying in the hostel with my friends and enjoying our time together.

Rebecca – swimming in the ocean at Long Beach.

Edith – The second zodiac trip and the hike.

Pilar – the big waves during the whale watching trip and when we came back to the hostel after Long Beach.

Natalia B – When we were coming back to the hostel after Mackenzie Beach because it was fun listening to music with friends from around the world connecting in one language.

Achille – When we were at Long Beach because we were all together laughing a lot.

Lina – Running into the water in our clothes at Long Beach because it was unexpected and spontaneous.

Karlotta – At Long Beach because everyone was happy.

Natascha – At Long Beach because I didn't plan on going into the ocean but, in the end, I did.

Joana – When we went swimming the first time because it was really cold and everyone decided to hold hands and run into the ocean.

Nicole – Mackenzie Beach because we were from all over the world swimming in that freezing water. We knew this was a once in a life time experience.

Nolann – Playing music in the bus and in the kitchen after looking for whales.

Eve – Mackenzie Beach because it was the only moment during the trip that there was sunshine and everyone went into the water

Julie – When we went to Mackenzie Beach because everyone went into the freezing cold water. It was a challenge to go in, but everyone did it.

Hinako – The boat ride because we got to see some birds and animals.

Koyomi – When we went to Mackenzie beach because the sunset was so beautiful.

Yui – Hiking in the forest because I've never seen such a big tree before.

Miku – Hiking in the rain forest because I learned how bears hibernate.

Manon – hiking in the rainforest because it was my first time in a rainforest ever.

Pauline – Riding on the zodiacs because I was on the best boat with the best teacher (my teacher may have added that last part).

Tsutae – The ocean is very beautiful and I can take many pictures and touch nature.

One Thing I Learned On The Trip

Hannah – British accents exist in British Columbia.

Gigi – If you are a terrible chef, it is possible to even ruin mac and cheese.

Chloe – it rains more in Tofino than Kamloops.

Rodrigo – Chicken and Beef Ramen mixed together is a master combination.

Igor – The ocean here is as cold as Chile.

Natalia – It is possible to go to the beach in the rain.

Lucas – Going to the beach In British Columbia in April is torture.

Rebecca – I discovered that I like hiking in the rain.

Edith – Bears will eat salmon only before hibernating.

Pilar – That Nolann is not French.

Natalia B – I need to learn how to cook because Mac and Cheese will not save my life forever.

Achille – Rodrigo can be an excellent chef.

Lina – There are a lot of world travelers that stay in Tofino.

Karlotta – Sea Otters hold hands so they don't get lost.

Natascha – Twilight was filmed at Long Beach.

Joana – How to find north using your hand and looking at the stars.

Nicole – It is difficult to find whales and bears in Tofino but it was worth it to go there.

Nolann – Coming to Canada was one of the best things in my life because I have met a lot of amazing people.

Eve – We don't need sunshine to have a good time!

Julie – How to find the north with my hand and the stars.

Hinako – Starfish are squishy.

Koyomi – Pronunciation is so important when you order food.

Yui – Heavy rain is a usual thing in Tofino and I hope I can go there again on a sunny day.

Miku – Nature makes me feel better.

Manon – I'm really bad at playing pool.

Pauline – There are raccoons in Tofino and we must watch for them.

Tsutae – I can communicate with people from other countries in Canada.