AS THEIR NAME SUGGESTS, the Discovery Islands are a perfect place for exploration. Whether you’re a visitor or a local, there is always something new to find in this unique group of islands.

The Discovery Islands are located on the west coast of Canada, between Campbell River, on Vancouver Island, and mainland British Columbia. There are about a dozen islands including Quadra Island and Cortes Island and many smaller islets. The less populated islands: Read, Stuart, Maurelle and the Redonda Islands, are known as the ‘Outer Islands’.

Nearby the breathtaking fjords of Bute, Toba and Loughborough Inlets cleave up to 80km between the towering peaks and tumbling glaciers of the Coast Mountains. The temperate climate, spectacular scenery, wildlife, quiet rural lifestyle, rich culture and arts community, close proximity to urban amenities, along with year-round recreation opportunities, parks, beaches and bountiful natural resources all combine to make the Discovery Islands a highly desirable place to live, work and visit.

If you are visiting our community, this magazine will help you get started on your Discovery Islands experience. Included in this guide is information on outdoor recreation, adventure tours, parks, shopping, the arts, events, accommodation, dining, detailed maps of the islands and much more.

And if you live here, we hope this magazine will give you a tinge of pride and help you convince your friends and relatives to visit so you don’t have to leave home any more than necessary!

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The Discovery Islands are at the edge of one of the most remote and spectacular wilderness regions in the world: British Columbia’s Great Bear Rainforest. But despite the frontier location, the islands are served by a modern transportation infrastructure that makes your journey to and from here a breeze.

Travel to the Discovery Islands is through the bustling Vancouver Island city of Campbell River, renowned as Canada’s Salmon Capital. Campbell River is located midway along the east coast of Vancouver Island, 250 kilometres north of the Provincial Capital Victoria.

Campbell River is reached by travelling to central Vancouver Island by air, land and/or sea, typically via Vancouver, British Columbia’s largest city or Victoria.

From mainland British Columbia, ‘the Island’ can be reached by car and passenger ferry from Tsawwassen and Horseshoe Bay (south and north of Vancouver respectively) to both Victoria and Nanaimo; from Powell River on the Sunshine Coast to Comox; or from Prince Rupert on BC’s north coast to the very northern end of Vancouver Island at Port Hardy.

For complete information on ferry schedules and fares, and to make reservations: check in at BC Ferries website: www.bcferries.com

Bus services and highways connect the Tsawwassen and Horseshoe Bay ferry terminals with Vancouver International Airport (YVR). There are also regional airports at Victoria, Nanaimo and Campbell River itself. Rental cars are readily available at these airports.

Driving here from southern Vancouver Island, follow Highway 1 and Island Highway 19 northward. This 4-lane freeway runs all the way up the east side of the Island and takes about 3 hours to reach Campbell River from Victoria and 1.5 hours from Nanaimo. The scenic Oceanside Route on the Old Island Highway 19A, takes a little longer but is worth the time for the quaint seaside towns, beach stops and scenery. Look for signs pointing toward the Oceanside Route between Parksville and Campbell River.

From Port Hardy there is only one main road south, Highway 19 to Campbell River, which takes about 2.5 to 3 hours to drive. Campbell River airport (YBL) is served by regular flights from Vancouver (YVR) and some other B.C. regional airports. WestJet flies routes from across Canada including direct from Calgary and Edmonton to the nearby Comox airport (YQX).

Once in Campbell River be sure to enjoy some of the highlights of this vibrant coastal community before hopping on the scenic 10 minute ferry ride across Discovery Passage to Quadra Island.

TIP: Avoid peak ferry travelling times between 8 and 10am leaving Cortes and Quadra islands, and between 4:30 and 6:15pm departing Campbell River, to avoid long waits; the locals commuting to and from home will also appreciate it. A little planning can save a lot of waiting!
The Campbell River waterfront, bustling harbours and busy downtown shops – with the mountains of Vancouver Island beyond

Seaside City and West Coast Hub

Although Campbell River is a relatively young city, tracing its colonial settlement roots only as far back as the early 1900s, the region has been home to indigenous First Nations people for many thousands of years.

The rich culture that the Kwakw̱aka’wakw, Coast Salish and other First Nations developed through the millennia is a testament to the abundance of the region and a compliment to its magnificence. The abundant resources of food from the ocean and materials for buildings, clothing and transportation, from the towering forests, nurtured a great civilization and remain invaluable to First Nations culture and the local economy to this day.

One of the first Europeans to visit the area was Captain George Vancouver who commanded a flotilla of HMS Discovery and HMS Chatham on a circumnavigation of the island that now bears his name. Vancouver’s expedition heralded the beginning of British colonial expansion onto the west coast of Canada and the region hasn’t been the same since.

As the Hudson’s Bay trading post and settlement at Victoria grew through the 1800s, fishing boats, logging crews and prospectors flocked to the coast. As the 1800s gave way to the 20th century, there were thousands of European and Asian pioneers living and working alongside the local First Nations.

This early industrial activity spread all the way up the British Columbia coast with dozens of bustling salmon canneries, pulp mills for paper making, sawmills and mines.

The islands at the north end of the Georgia Strait now known as the Discovery Islands were especially busy. These smaller islands such as Quadra (then known as Valdez Island), were by nature easier to encircle with logging crews to harvest the towering trees. As a result much of the immigrant population initially settled in places like Granite Bay and Quathiaski Cove on Quadra Island and Evans Bay on Read Island.

As the timber stands were logged off the surrounding islands, logging camps began to spring up on adjacent Vancouver Island and steadily a settlement took shape around the mouth of the Campbell River.

From simple beginnings the community has grown to a thriving city of over 35,000 residents. While the forest and incoming residents are involved in an increasingly wide variety of fields.

Early recreational visitors to Campbell River were drawn by the legendary salmon fishing in the Tyee Pool at the mouth of the Campbell River, wildlife viewing in and around the town and backcountry adventures amongst the mountains of Strathcona Park, visiting local First Nations galleries, Campbell River’s superb Museum, Maritime Heritage Centre, fine dining, white-water rafting and sea kayaking.

Excellence as the amenities and experiences of Campbell River are, the real jewels of the region lie a short ferry ride across Discovery Passage in the Discovery Islands. So after enjoying the bright lights of this small bustling seaside city, enjoy the charming towns of Quadra Island and Cortes Island for a day, a weekend or more, and truly discover island life at its very best.

A visit to Quadra and Cortes Islands will quickly carry you a-world-away where adventure and discovery begin.

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*For Service Notices & Updates see: bcferries.com*
Located across Discovery Passage from Campbell River, Quadra Island is home to a vibrant community with strong ties to the land and sea. Some islanders continue to make their living in traditional resource-based industries like fishing, shellfish aquaculture, and forestry. Others work as artists, writers, shopkeepers, builders, and in a full complement of professional services. A large number of active, community-minded retirees live on the island. Local events – from annual festivals to world-class cultural performances – largely organized by volunteers add to the energy and vibrancy of the rural lifestyle.

Known for its inspiring natural beauty and relaxed atmosphere, Quadra is an ideal place to live, work and play. For the visitor, memorable experiences await.

The Quadra adventure begins as soon as you board the ferry in Campbell River. During the scenic 10 minute crossing, look out for orcas, humpback-whales, porpoises, seals and bald eagles. Navigating the swift flowing tides of Discovery Passage, the ferry travels the same waters as the island’s namesake, Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, did 200 years ago.

Quadra and Captain George Vancouver were among the first European explorers to make contact with the Coast Salish and Kwakwa̱k̓a̱’wakw First Nations people, who have been living in the area for thousands of years and endure as a vital core of the modern Quadra Island community.

Most of the 2700 full time Quadra residents live on the southern half of the 35km long island, with the three main population centres located at Quathiaski Cove, Heriot Bay and Cape Mudge.

Quathiaski Cove is the commercial centre of Quadra and port of arrival for the ferry to and from Campbell River. Picturessue Heriot Bay is on the east side of Quadra, a 15 minute drive from ‘Q Cove’, and is the harbour from where the ferry to Cortes Island and boat traffic to and from the Outer Islands and Inlets comes and goes from.

Cape Mudge Village (Yaculta) is at the south end of the island, facing westward toward Campbell River, and is home to the Wei-Wai-Kai band of the Kwakwa̱k̓a̱’wakw First Nation.

Further up at the ‘north end’ is the small community of Granite Bay. Granite Bay was once a major settlement, even vying to be the provincial capital! Now things are quieter but Granite Bay is enjoying a resurgence of new residents and recreational property owners.

Clustered around Village Bay Lake and at Bold Point, to the north east, is another rural neighbourhood with a similar mix of residents enjoying a pioneer-like lifestyle alongside recreational homes.

Dispersed though the community is, one and all are served by the Quadra Island Community Centre which is a focal point for residents and visitors alike. The Community Centre provides a wide array of recreational and cultural events year round. Visitors are welcome to participate in Community Centre programs; details can be found online at: www.quadrarec.bc.ca

First Nations Culture

The Indigenous First Nations of the Pacific coast have inhabited the region for thousands of years. Their history and culture is inter-woven to the land and spirit of the natural environment.

Quadra Island and nearby Campbell River is the traditional home of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nation and the Coast Salish people.

There are opportunities for visitors to experience First Nations culture at Cape Mudge village at the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre that preserves treasures and regalia from the Porlatch Collection. Check locally for opening times. Along the beaches around Cape Mudge can also be found petroglyphs, ancient rock carvings.

The Morte Lake Trail System:

Adventure and accessible viewpoints for all hiking abilities – and some great beaches for a swim!
Fairs and Festivals
THE QUADRA CALENDAR IS SPRINKLED WITH wonderful events all year round. May Day has been celebrated on Quadra Island for over 100 years, this traditional, annual event features: May Pole dancers, community picnic and sailing races at Rebecca Spit. It takes place on Saturday, May 25, 2019. Be sure to be at the Spit by 9:30am to catch the parade. The day is usually topped off with a family May Day Dance at the Community Centre in the evening.

The annual Quadra Island Studio Tour offers an inside view into the creative lives of island artists. Take in a weekend of art and island craft June 1 and 2, 2019.

Canada Day celebrations on July 1 are planned for this year with some very special events. Quadra Island Festival of Chamber Music: The Ninth Annual Quadra Island Festival of Chamber Music takes place Tuesday, July 23 to Saturday, July 27 at four selected venues on Quadra Island. Artistic Director Philip Hansen will present ‘Home and Away’, a series of four evening performances and an afternoon Family concert. This year’s series features ten musicians performing the music of Brahms, Paganini, Beethoven, Mussorgsky, Bartok, and more. For additional information, visit www.quadrafestival.ca

Quadra Island Music Festival (Quadrapalooza) will take place Friday August 30 to Sunday September 1 on the long weekend, featuring great music from around the islands. The Quilt & Garden Tour and the Quadra Island Fall Fair both run every two years. You’ll have to come back in 2020! TIP: For news about coming events at any time of year, just look online at: www.discoveryislander.ca

Services and Shopping
QUADRA IS A SMALL COMMUNITY but is surprisingly self-sufficient, with many of the services and shops you’d expect to find in any small town. The two main commercial centres on the island are found in the villages of Quathiaski Cove and Heriot Bay. Both have grocery stores (with ATMs), post offices, laundromats, restaurants, and pubs.

There are two medical clinics, both in Quathiaski Cove and a full service pharmacy. Quadra has banking services at the Quathiaski Cove branch of Coastal Community Credit Union with a 24hr ATM. Nearby is a hardware store and gas station (there is no automotive diesel available on the island so be sure to fuel up in Campbell River).

The Tourist Information Booth, located next to the Credit Union in Quathiaski Cove, is open from mid-June until the Labour Day weekend. There is a library in Q Cove and a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in Heriot Bay.
Wildlife Viewing

QUADRA AND THE DISCOVERY ISLANDS are on the doorstep to the Great Bear Rainforest, one of the largest, remaining wilderness areas in the world. This rich and diverse protected ecosystem is home to many of Canada’s most iconic animal species.

Along the shoreline, at most times of the year, keep an eye out for bald eagles, great blue herons, harbour seals, black-tailed deer and a variety of smaller mammals like mink and river otters. Winter is an especially good time of year for bird-watchers as many migratory species of waterfowl visit or over-winter around Quadra Island from their summer breeding grounds much further north.

Plying the waters around the Discovery Islands are Dall’s and harbour porpoise, Pacific white-sided dolphins, orcas, and several types of whale, notably humpback whales whose numbers are increasing every year. These larger marine mammals are unpredictable but sightings are fairly frequent. Keep a watch and you may get a pleasant surprise! Seasonal visitors are California and Stellar sea lions who stop en route to Alaska, some remaining in the area for much of the year.

If you’re hiking on one of the many wonderful forest trails on Quadra there’s a chance you might catch a glimpse of wolves as they warily go about their business. Occasionally, but not often, cougar and black bears are sighted on Quadra. There are no Grizzly bears residing on Quadra although they do live on the adjacent mainland and every few years one may be sighted amongst the islands. Be bear aware but no need to be scared.

Locally kayak and tour boat operators can get you further out to see more of the magnificent west coast wildlife.

Artists and Artisans

QUADRA IS HOME TO MANY talented artisans, some of international renown, and shopping for original art is an enjoyable way to become more familiar with the island and its diverse arts community.

Painters, potters, and carvers open their studios to the public and welcome visitors seasonally and year round. The annual studio tour is June 1 & 2, 2019. A number of retail outlets stock a variety of local art and crafts, including First Nations art. For a very special insight into local First Nations history and culture the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre at Cape Mudge Village is a ‘must see’ for visitors, check locally for opening hours.
Biking: On and Off Road

GET ON YOUR BIKE and explore Quadra Island! Quadra is ideal for cycling, two-wheel transport just fits perfectly with the island’s pace and the distances between most key places. For day trippers coming over from Campbell River cycling is an ideal way to avoid the hassle of traffic and ferry line ups and overloaded sailings; bring a bike over and go straight to the front of the queue! Many of the island’s attractions are within comfortable pedalling distance of Quathiaski Cove or Heriot Bay.

Tour Quadra’s scenic roadways visiting local artists’ studios, craft shops, restaurants and local highlights like Rebecca Spit, the Cape Mudge lighthouse, Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre or the Southfjord Farm Winery. During some of the busiest annual events like May Day or the Fall Fair cycling is a great way to avoid the road congestion and get more enjoyment from the event.

The roads all throughout the southern peninsula have mostly gentle grades and the few steep hills are pretty short. West Road has a marked shoulder between Quathiaski Cove and Heriot Bay but other roads are narrower so be sure to practice safe riding techniques.

Venture further north from Heriot Bay and the roads climb steeper hills and cover greater distances. If you’re looking for it you can get a great workout cycling to the EcoCentre or even to Village Bay Lake where the reward of a swim in warm freshwater awaits. One of the most popular cycling events on the island is the annual New Year’s Eve ride which has route options up to and over 100km visiting the ends of all the main roads.

Off road Quadra Island has a wealth of carefully engineered mountain bike trails and many of the main hiking trails are also suitable for mountain biking and link to the dedicated bike trails. Steadily Quadra has built a reputation for its outstanding rides. There are easy cruisers like those found in Blenkins Park – the Community Centre trails and many challenging single track. Some of the best technical riding can be found around Morte Lake. A few great downhill trails are hidden off the beaten track. Stop in at local bike shops for details and ask for a map to find the best rides. Be sure to check out Dead Fish and Silk Stockings, two local favourites.

Hiking

HIKING OPPORTUNITIES ARE PLentiful on Quadra Island, whether you fancy a gentle stroll or a more vigorous all-day hike. For the adventurous, one or two night camping treks are also possible. Dedicated islanders volunteer their time to maintain and expand a network of over 200km of trails on the island. Some of the trails date back to the late 1800s, before residents had the benefit of well-maintained roads to visit one another. Other trails now bring new life to abandoned logging roads and rail grades through the maturing second growth forest.

Quadra’s trails traverse a wide range of terrain: beaches, rocky shoreline, broad open meadows, bluffs, mountains, and forests. Such is the diversity and quality of the hiking on Quadra that some visitors come specifically for the exceptional year-round opportunities the island trails provide. Pick up a copy of the Quadra Island Trails Map for detailed descriptions. Proceeds from map sales go to the Quadra Island Recreation Society’s Trails Committee and help fund trail maintenance.

Accommodation

QUADRA OFFERS A RANGE OF accommodation options, including luxury lodges, resorts, bed and breakfasts, retreats and a growing number of rental homes and cabins. Perhaps you’re longing to fall asleep to the sound of a loon beyond your tent door, or to plug in your RV? Tenting and RV campgrounds offer lots of choice. Make sure to book your accommodation well in advance, especially during the summer season. For detailed listings and more information look online www.quadrainland.ca/accommodation

Dining and Entertainment

QUADRA RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS, AND PUBS offer a variety of cuisine from west coast seafood to gourmet pizza. Locally-roasted ‘Aroma’ coffee is a java lover’s delight available at many of the local eateries and on store shelves to take home.

Live music is a regular attraction at island pubs, coffee shops, and resorts, featuring talented local and visiting musicians. Check online at: www.quadrainland.ca or on the local bulletin boards and the Quadra Recreation Society brochure & web site to find out about upcoming cultural performances and events at the Community Centre and across Quadra.

Must See & Do on Quadra Island...

- Rise with the sun on an early morning walk at Rebecca Spit.
- Enjoy locally roasted coffee and breakfast at one of the fine island cafés and restaurants.
- Grab a copy of the ‘Discovery Islander’ news magazine (publishing every second Friday) to read about all the local news and events.
- Browse the Farmer’s Market stalls Saturdays 10am to 2pm beside the Coastal Community Credit Union in Quathiaski Cove.
- Check out the programs and facilities at the Quadra Island Community Centre. There are activities and events all year round with something for all ages and interests. Find the program online at www.quadrarcc.bc.ca
- Take a boat tour through the channels and islands to see wildlife like eagles, seals and bears, if you’re lucky, dolphins, humpbacks or even orcas.
- Cross Sutil Channel on the spectacularly scenic ferry run to Cortes Island. Spend the day on Cortes exploring the charming community and splendid beaches.
- Sample refreshing local wines at the SouthEnd Farm & Vineyards.
- Learn about local ecology at the Quadra Island Salmon Enhancement EcoCentre on Hyacinth Bay Road.
- Wander down to the Cape Mudge lighthouse and explore the beaches along Discovery Passage. Watch for passing wildlife.
- Pay a visit to the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre at Cape Mudge Village to see the magnificent collection of First Nations’ treasures.
- Depart from Heriot Bay or Surfage Narrows Road on an overnight trip by sea kayak to the Octopus Islands. Check local tides and currents or hire a local guide to show the way.
- Play a round of golf at the Quadra Golf Course.
- Pick up a copy of the Quadra Island self guided Studio Tour map and visit some of the local artisans’ galleries and studios.
- Put pedal power to work mountain biking the cruiser trails and single tracks at Morte Lake – or enjoy the quiet rural roads cycling to some of the Island’s landmarks.
- Take a hike on one of Quadra’s great trails: along the shoreline at Shellaligan Pass; enjoy hilltop views from Chinese Mountains; see the rushing tidal rapids at Maud Island and Surfage Narrows.
- Slip into a sea kayak and watch the vivid island sunset above the mountains and sea.
- Relax at your accommodation after a superb evening meal of local or international cuisine.
Rock Climbing

THE HIGH ROCKY CRAGS scattered across Quadra Island’s hillsides, and some of the smaller shoreline cliffs, have some excellent rock climbing and bouldering. From quiet beginnings over several decades, the development of climbing on Quadra has accelerated in the past few years and local climbers have now established over 200 excellent routes. Climbers are travelling from all over to experience the Quadra Crags.

There are two main types of rock: classic granodiorite, granite, like the rock found in Squamish, is found along the shoreline, at Breton Island and the neighbouring Read Island sea cliffs; the higher inland crags where most of the developed routes are found, is mostly a volcanic basalt - andesite.

Both rock types are extremely solid with very high quality climbing. The basalt has few natural cracks though and almost all the climbs are bolt-protected sport routes. These are well-equipped with closely spaced bolts & rappel ring belay anchors. The views from the crags of the ocean and mountains are outstanding which along with the quiet setting and diverse character of the crags makes for one of the most aesthetic climbing areas imaginable. Quadra Island is easily amongst the best climbing destinations in the wider Vancouver Island region.

The highest concentration of routes is at Chinese Mountains and Morte Lake where a popular and well-maintained trail system makes reaching the climbs a breeze. A detailed guidebook is available locally detailing the location, nature and grades of all the climbs. Look for a copy at Book Bonanza and the Yak Shack.

For more info, including a sample of climbs and links to mail order a guidebook, check online at www.quadraisland.ca

Scenery and Parks

QUADRA BOASTS A NUMBER OF spectacular provincial parks that protect important ecosystems and provide recreation opportunities in beautiful surroundings.

The jewel in Quadra’s crown is Rebecca Spit Provincial Park which is not only a stunning natural feature but also a focal point for community events and family gatherings throughout the year. The spit features walking trails, swimming beaches, and picnic sites under gnarled, storm battered fir trees.

Main Lake Park contains the largest island freshwater lake system on Canada’s smaller west coast islands and is popular as a canoe tripping circuit. This park has significant wetlands, some rare surviving old growth trees and is home to a variety of wildlife including osprey, salmon, wolves, cougar and blacktailed deer.

Small Inlet, Octopus Islands Marine Parks protect a pair of opposing bays and a strip of maturing forest across a unique isthmus at Quadra’s north end. These parks are popular with boaters but hikers can reach them on the Newton Lake trail. Surge Narrows can be a thrilling sight with rushing tidal rapids pouring through a cluster of pretty islands.

Golf

WITH THAT ‘CAN-DO’ APPROACH that west coasters are famous for, a local group have brought golf greens to Quadra Island.

A 9 hole course, practice green and 240 yard driving range are open for play and Quadra Golf Club welcomes members and visiting golfers alike to try a round.

The range is conveniently located just a few minutes’ drive from ferry terminals. The setting is simply stunning overlooking the Salish Sea and the snow-capped mountains on the British Columbia mainland. There are few golf courses, even in SuperNatural British Columbia, with surroundings as spectacular.

The course is designed to fit the natural landscape and features a challenging and rewarding mix of par 3, 4 and 5 holes.

A free shuttle is available to and from the Quadra or Cortes ferry terminals, island resorts and marinas.

TIP: Visit www.quadragolf.com for information on upcoming tournaments and events.

Happy Holidays

End without torching your destination.
Please respect local fire bans.
No beach fires allowed from May to October
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Each office independently owned and operated

Local climbers have developed over 200 high quality rock climbing routes on the scenic crags of Quadra Island.

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Red Deer
Eldorado Ranch

See 12 on Quadra map

19
Sea Kayaking

FEW ACTIVITIES ARE AS ACCESSIBLE and attractive for such a wide variety of people as sea kayaking, and there are few places to pursue it as ideal as Quadra and the Discovery Islands.

Our sheltered bays, coves, channels and surprising beaches put true magic into exploring the islands by kayak.

Casual and beginner paddlers will find many suitable destinations for short outings and day trips. The best put-ins include: Heriot Bay, Rebecca Spit and April Point. From Heriot Bay and Rebecca Spit: explore Drew Harbour or chart a course for Hyacinthe Bay, Open Bay and the Breton Islands. From April Point the protected water and islets of Gowlawll Harbour are perfect for paddling.

To get a little further out drive up to Granite Bay to the northwest and explore the Chained Islets and Small Inlet Provincial Park. The Hoskyn Channel dock on the northeast side of Quadra gives quick access to the Outer Islands. With the right timing to pass through the tidal currents at Surge Narrows experienced kayakers skilled in more turbulent waters can discover the exquisite Octopus Islands in Okisollo Channel or venture out to the Rendezvous Islands through Whiterock Pass.

The swirling tidal currents and mainland inlets also offer more serious challenges for the experienced kayaker and there are lots of options for overnight kayak camping trips in the maze of channels. Okisollo Channel and Cooper Point are a big draw for kayak surfing when the tides rear up into an impressive standing wave. Whether looking for a quick day trip or a multi-day expedition the Discovery Islands offer stunning scenery, wildlife, experienced local guides and a paddling experience to rival the best in the world. It truly is a paddler’s paradise.

Boating and Fishing

QUADRA’S RICH MARINE ENVIRONMENT and extensive freshwater lakes system provide many choices for boaters and anglers. With full service marinas and safe, scenic anchorages all around the island, Quadra is a popular cruising destination close to the renowned Desolation Sound.

Spring and fall bring stiff winds for boating while summer brings lazy days ideal for kicking back and soaking in the splendid scenery ‘gunk holing’ around the islands.

For the sportfisherman Quadra is surrounded by hot fishing spots, luring many anglers back year after year. While salmon can be caught year round, the fishing heats up during the summer months as they return to spawn in the rivers over the approaching fall.

Diving and Snorkelling

AS THE TIDES EBB AND FLOW through the channels and past the islets around Quadra Island, they bring cold nutrient-rich water in from the open Pacific. This constant flushing feeds a dazzling array of colourful marine life which clings to rock reefs and steep walls. In 1996 the HMCS Columbia was sunk off Quadra’s shoreline near Maud Island, creating an artificial reef. All this combines to make Quadra a mecca for SCUBA divers.

While the turbulent tides in the ‘hot spots’ require experience and caution to dive safely, there are opportunities in gentler waters for snorkelling and diving to get a peek at the underwater world. Even for a quick dip, a wetsuit will likely be needed on all but the hottest of days.

Sea kayaking on Quadra Island: Sheltered waters surrounded by evergreen forests and snow capped mountains
**Welcome to Cortes!**

The island community is an eclectic mix of First Nations people, pioneer descendants, shellfish aquaculturists, seekers of alternative lifestyles, and retirees. Homes are dotted across the island with clusters and small villages at Whaletown, Gorge Harbour, Smelt Bay, Mansons Landing, and Squirrel Cove where the Klahoose First Nation permanently reside at their traditional winter village site.

Cortes Island is known for its seafood, thriving artistic community, plentiful wildlife and mild climate. The island benefits from a rain shadow created by the Vancouver Island Mountains, resulting in less rain and more than average sunshine for the area.

**Cortes Museum and Visitor Info**

For fascinating exhibits of island settlement and natural history a visit to the Cortes Museum on Beasley Road is a must. New exhibits are installed each year. To answer your questions and provide a variety of visitor services including bookings for nature cruises and island tours the Museum has Cortes Island’s official Tourism / Visitor Information Booth.

**Accommodation**

To truly experience island time, it’s best to stay a few days or more and it’s wise to book ahead. Accommodation options include several bed and breakfasts, rental cabins and waterfront homes, seaside resorts; a motel, and three campgrounds: the provincial park camp site at Smelt Bay, Gorge Harbour Marina, and a few sites at the Squirrel Cove Store.

**Dining and Entertainment**

Cortes has several dining establishments to tempt your palate. At Mansons landing, step in at the Cortes Natural Food Co-op Café, open every day during the summer. For spectacular seaside views check out the Cove Restaurant at Squirrel Cove and the Float House Restaurant at Gorge Harbour Marina. Deli food is on offer at the Cortes Market everyday and evening. Hollyhock welcomes diners to enjoy garden inspired organic cuisine. For summertime fast food Cortes style, there’s Cortes Take Out at the Cortes Market parking lot and the Flying Squirrel at Squirrel Cove. There’s always fun things happening on Cortes from the weekly markets to dances at the Gorge or Mansons Hall.

**Fairs and Festivals**

If you’re fortunate enough to be on Cortes Island for one of the annual events like the Seafood Festival, Cortes Day, or Sandcastle Day, you’re in for a good time. Cortes festivals typically feature delicious seafood, live music, and displays by island craftspeople.

**Seafood Festival** will be held at Gorge Harbour Marina on Saturday, May 18, 2019. It’s the perfect way to welcome spring with a fabulous seafood buffet featuring every type of local seafood imaginable.

The annual tour of Creative Spaces features gardens, studios and workshops! Check local bulletin boards or Cortes Island Museum website www.cortesmuseum.ca for more information.

**Cortes Day** is July 15, 2019 at Smelt Bay, with a dance in the evening at one of the Cortes Halls.

**Sandcastle Day** usually takes place in August at Smelt Bay. Try your hand at crafting a sandy masterpiece and wander the beach to see others’ creative sculptures. Check online or locally for a firm date closer to the time.

Along with the annual festivals, watch out for great live music events throughout the year. Check the local notice boards and publications for up to date information, or look online at: www.cortesisland.com or www.ourcortes.com

**Shopping and the Arts**

Cortes is home to many talented artists, crafts-people, and writers. It’s a perfect place to shop for unique west coast treasures and take a memento of your visit back home.

The Old School House Art Gallery in Whaletown, the Cortes Natural Food Co-op and Cortes Museum Shop in Mansons Landing, the Cortes Craft Shop Co-op in Squirrel Cove, the Hollyhock Gift Shop, and some artists’ studios all welcome visitors.

The Mansons Hall Friday Market is a great spot for local baking, crafts and art – as are summertime Saturday Markets at Gorge Harbour Marina and Sunday Markets at Squirrel Cove.

**Services**

GROCERIES, MOVIE RENTALS, liquor and hardware are available at the island’s general stores – Mansons Landing, Gorge Harbour and Squirrel Cove – with fuel, propane, showers and laundry facilities at both Squirrel Cove and Gorge Harbour.

The Natural Food Co-op at Mansons Landing provides groceries, organic local produce and has a café and bakery with free wifi. Mansons Landing also offers a book and wool shop.

There are ATMs at Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Cortes Market and Squirrel Cove General Store.

Medical, dental and alternative health services and spa treatments are available on the island. Postal outlets are located in Whaletown, Mansons Landing and Squirrel Cove.

**Cortes Craft Shop Co-op**

Visit by local artisans
250-935-6635
Open from mid May to mid September
Located in Squirrel Cove

See 3 on Cortes map

**Cortes Natural Food Co-op**

Local organic produce, meat, dairy, groceries
Bakery & Cafe / 250-935-6505
Food Market / 250-935-8577
Fresh baked bread, espresso, meals & treats

See 8 on Cortes map

**Cortes Museum and Visitor Info**

TO TRULY EXPERIENCE ISLAND TIME, it’s best to stay a few days or more and it’s wise to book ahead. Accommodation options include several bed and breakfasts, rental cabins and waterfront homes, seaside resorts; a motel, and three campgrounds: the provincial park camp site at Smelt Bay, Gorge Harbour Marina, and a few sites at the Squirrel Cove Store.

TIP: Looking for something else? Check listings at the Tourist/Visitor Info Booth at the Cortes Museum, or online at www.cortesisland.com and www.discoveryislands.ca

**Hollyhock**

@ hollyhock.ca 250-935-6576
Restaurant  Accommodations  Programs  Store  Massage  Yoga

See 10 on Cortes map
PARKS ON CORTES PROTECT INLETS, lagoons, beaches and forests that are ever changing with the tides and seasons. There are areas of protected temperate rainforest dotted with old-growth trees hundreds of years old. The rain-shadow climate is home to a unique ecology with stands of exotic-looking arbutus trees and manzanita perched on the dry, mossy bluffs found all across the island. The parks also offer some of the very best recreational opportunities with some fantastic hiking and biking trails, boat anchorages, fishing, swimming and more...

Provincial Parks on Cortes include: Mansons Landing with its stunning tidal lagoon, sandy beach, pretty islets and Hague Lake perfect for kayaking and swimming; Smelt Bay which boasts one of the finest white sand beaches in the area and stunning views across the Salish Sea toward Vancouver Island and the snow-capped mountains of Strathcona Park; and Ha’Thayim enclosing most of Von Donop Inlet an intricate inlet and popular anchorage with cruising boats at the north end of the island.

Regional parks, managed by the Strathcona Regional District (local government), include: Kw’as Regional Park, with a network of walking trails around Hague and Gunflint Lakes – its warm lake water and surprising beaches are popular with locals and visitors alike for swimming, relaxing and trying their luck trout fishing; Hank’s Beach has a lovely forest trail leading down to the beach; and Whaletown Commons offers trails through old growth and replanted forest on the slopes above Gorge Harbour. The newest regional park is Whales Rest Park, with a pretty beach and picnic area right next to the Whaletown ferry dock. Waiting for the ferry will never be the same!
Hiking, Cycling, Skateboarding

CORTES HAS A NUMBER of trails for exploration on foot or by mountain bike. You can choose to immerse yourself in the wilderness of the north end forest, or check out the trails around the lakes and beaches on the southern half of the island.

The Green Mountain trail is a short but steep climb up to bluffs overlooking Gorge Harbour, Marina Island and the open water of the Salish Sea. Here you’ll see the red-barked arbutus and exquisite manzanita bushes Cortes is famous for.

While walking around Hague Lake, stop for a refreshing swim in its clean water fringed by natural white sand beaches. You can also spend many pleasant hours walking the ocean shoreline beaches hunting for shells, bird watching and looking for treasures left by the high tide.

Cycling is a good way to explore the island, although be prepared to really pump on some of the island hills! You can choose to immerse yourself in the wilderness of the north end forest, or check out the trails around the lakes and beaches on the southern half of the island.

On the Water

AT THE NORTH END OF THE SALISH SEA the Discovery Islands split the ocean flows into four main channels. Cortes Island guards the entrance to the easternmost waterways including world-famous Desolation Sound.

Because of its strategic location at the doorstep of a maze of inlets and tidal channels Cortes is very popular with boaters, kayakers, sailors, and cruisers. Every summer seafarers gather to enjoy the island’s stunning coastline or cast off from here to explore. There are good kayak put-ins all over Cortes but a few choice spots are Gorge Harbour, Smelt Bay, Squirrel Cove, Mansons Lagoon and Cortes Bay.

Cortes is well equipped to serve boaters with a marina, yacht clubs, government docks, and boat launches. The fishing in this area is world class, and local guides are available to take you to the best spots. Desolation Sound is also a favourite destination of scuba divers. Don’t forget to buy your license for fishing and shell-fish online: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Explore the Outer Islands

BEYOND THE REACH of paved roads and the regular ferry service between Quadra and Cortes islands lies a group of rugged, less accessible islands surrounded by intricate waterways dotted with rocky inlets and turbulent tidal rapids. These are the Outer Discovery Islands and they beckon those seeking escape from the hubbub of the towns and cities to explore their wild and rugged charm.

The Outer Discovery Islands include Read Island, East and West Redonda Islands, Maurelle, Sonora, Stuart, Raza, East and West Thurlow, and the Rendezvous Islands. They are on the frontier between the conveniences of the more populated island communities and the vast wilderness of the Great Bear Rainforest, including the mainland inlets and the dramatic Coast Range mountains.

Amongst the Outer Islands are well visited marine parks anchorages and numerous secluded coves and beaches. All this combines to make the Outer Islands an idyllic and popular cruising or sea kayaking destination.

Local tour operators and outfitters can help you discover this beautiful area in safety while participating in a variety of activities including kayaking, sailing, diving, snorkelling, wildlife viewing and salmon fishing.

Dotted among the Outer Islands are the small communities of Surge Narrows (Read Island), Stuart Island, Refuge Cove (West Redonda) and Blind Channel (West Thurlow Island). Groceries, liquor, post offices and a variety of other services are available at these tiny outposts serving both the alternative lifestyle of residents and visiting boaters. Surge Narrows on Read Island has an elementary school and is home to Canada’s only floating post office.

Juxtaposed with the hardy locals and their frontier way of life are luxury homes, resorts and adventure/sportfishing lodges. The east side of Sonora Island and adjacent Dent, Stuart and Rendezvous islands have a number of these developments providing local employment and giving visitors a place to experience supernatural British Columbia in fine style.

For those seeking a more authentic experience there is a variety of rustic, but equally stylish, sea kayaking lodges from which day tours and multi-day expeditions depart. Inquire with participating advertisers for more information on accommodation, trips and rentals.

To the south, and readily accessible from the Discovery Islands, are the unique destinations of Mitlenatch and Savary Islands. Mitlenatch is a Provincial Marine Park notable for its burgeoning colonies of nesting sea birds, visiting sea lions and springtime wildflowers. Savary is a holiday paradise well known for vacation homes and the stunning white sand beach which encircles the entire island — a taste of the tropics in Canada.

The Outer Islands are one of the few places in the world where true wilderness is at the doorstep of modern comfort, and should be a part of your Discovery Islands experience.

Cortes Calendar 2019

May Cortes Island Spring Bird Count 9 am-4pm
May 18 Seafood Festival - Gorge Harbour Marina 11:30-4pm
June Creative Spaces Tour - check locally for 2019 details
July 15 Cortes Day at Smelt Bay Provincial Park 10:30-3pm
August Sandcastle Day at Smelt Bay - check locally for 2019 details

Don’t Miss Out - Advertise Next Year! info@discoveryislands.ca www.discoveryislands.ca/advertising
Mainland Inlets

**ALL ALONG THE EASTERN SKYLINE** as seen from the Discovery Islands are the jagged, steep-sided mountains of the British Columbia Coast Range. The Coast Mountains are one of the world’s greatest wilderness mountain ranges and run from the Cascades in Washington State, USA all the way up the length of the British Columbia coast to Alaska. Between the peaks and glaciers of the high alpine are huge fjords, or inlets, carved out by the once immense ice-age glaciers. Running inland from the fjords are a maze of forested river valleys where black bears, grizzly bears and wolves roam, feeding each other from the glacial slabs they carry down from the mountains each summer. The rivers spill into the deep fjordal waters of the mainland inlets turning the ocean water vivid hues of turquoise and green.

The largest and most spectacular of the inlets adjacent to the Discovery Islands is Bute Inlet which cleaves its way 80 kilometres (50 miles) through 8000-foot high mountains to its head at the Homathko and Southgate River estuaries. Other inlets in the region include Toba and Loughborough Inlets along with Ramsay, Frederick and Phillips Arms. At the outer edge of the mainland is Desolation Sound which arcs southward from Toba Inlet toward the Sunshine Coast.

The inlets have many attractions for the comfort seeking visitor with both rustic and luxury lodges providing accommodation and amenities. Tour boats ply the waters on thrilling rides through rushing tidal rapids en route to view wildlife and the stunning scenery. Eagles, bears, seals, dolphins and even orca are occasionally sighted from the water or shoreline. Some of the finest salmon fishing in the region may be found in the inlet waters. Inquire locally with listed advertisers for information about grizzly bear and whale watching tours and sportfishing charters, accommodation and all-inclusive packages.

Locals earn a livelihood harvesting timber from the expansive forests and fishing the waters of the inlets. Buzzing work camps and fish farms dot the rugged shorelines throughout the channels and inlets, supplied and serviced by air and sea. This is BC’s working coast.

Adventures seek the waters and explore the surrounding mountain wilderness. The inlets are a gateway for hikers, mountaineers, and skiers entering the vast expanses of the Coast Mountains including the renowned Mt. Waddington, one of BC’s highest peaks.

 Experienced sea kayakers venture through the inlets to admire the high peaks, glaciers and cascading waterfalls from the relative comfort of sea level.

Inquiries about advertising & distribution: Call Philip Stone 250.285.2234 or email: info@discoveryislands.ca
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services/Shopping</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cortes Natural Food Co-op</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am-7pm</td>
<td>The Co-op brings Cortes Island farmers, fishermen and food producers to your table! The Co-op offers a full selection of organic produce, local and imported products, a wide range of fresh seafood, as well as a full selection of gluten-free, dairy-free and other allergen-free products. The Co-op also has a large selection of fresh flowers, local honey and preserves. Please check website for hours and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Islander</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am-7pm</td>
<td>Community news and events, serving Quadra Island, Cortes Island and the Outer Discovery Islands. Also publishes this Guide to the Discovery Islands. Please check website for hours and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renée Stone - RE/MAX Check Realty</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
<td>Discover how to make your home search easy! Put the RE/MAX advantage to work for you to find your very own piece of paradise on Quadra, Cortes and the Discovery Islands. Local, resident REALTOR connecting buyers and sellers from the area and around the Island. Please check website for hours and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work of H’Art</td>
<td>Tue-Thur 10am-7pm, Fri-Sat 10am-7pm, Sun 12pm-5pm</td>
<td>Experience the art and creations of over 75 West Coast artists in a magical gallery/gift shop setting! Treasures from around the world for your home decor. A feast for the eye... sustenance for the heart. Please check website for hours and location.</td>
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