

West Coast Trail Information

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1 – Overview



What Every Hiker Should Know:

Entrance points: Pachena Bay (north), Nitinat (mid-point) and Gordon River (south).

Exit points: Pachena Bay, Gordon River and Nitinat Lake. Note: There may be additional ferry fees for those exiting at Nitinat Lake.

Entrance or exit at any other point is not permitted unless an evacuation is required.

Group Size: Overnight Use on the West Coast Trail has a maximum group size of 10.

The exceptions: school groups reserving through the West Coast Trail School Group Policy.

Groups reserving under this policy must be associated with a legitimate school; only one group may start per day. **A total of 450 quota spaces are available** to school groups for hike dates between May 7 and June 14th (inclusive) and Sept 7 to 25 (inclusive). Please contact Pacific Rim National Park Reserve at 250-726-3500 or at pacrim.info@pc.gc.ca for more information.



Challenges of the West Coast Trail:

This rugged 75 km (47 mile) hike is not for everyone. Your group's fitness, knowledge and skills must meet the challenges of the area.

All hikers in your group must be prepared:

- For 6-8 days in the backcountry.
- For rugged, uneven ground. It takes a minimum of 2.5 days to travel the southern 22km of the trail between Gordon River and Walbran Creek.
- For slippery conditions on muddy trails, wooden surfaces, boulders and rocky shorelines.
- To wade rivers, negotiate steep slopes, earth, climb ladders, use cable cars and follow an irregular trail.
- For damaged structures. While trail maintenance is a full time effort, wear and tear, storms and other factors may quickly change their condition.
- For a temperate rainforest climate. Rainfall averages 330 cm (130 in.) per year with heavy rainfall possible at any time. Floodwaters can delay hikers for days. Fog is common, especially in July and August. The average summer temperature is 14° Celsius (57° F). Incidents of hypothermia and physical injury increase significantly during prolonged wet period.
- For accidents and injuries. It may take 24 hours or more before help arrives if an accident occurs.

The West Coast Trail is for hikers who are:

- Able to walk long distances through rough terrain with a heavy pack.
- Prepared to have an isolated wilderness experience and adhere to low impact backcountry camping policies.

The West Coast Trail should not be considered by:

- Children under twelve. The park will not issue permits to children six and under.
- Hikers with little experience in multi-day backpacking trips.
- Those with little stamina or recurring knee, back or ankle injuries.

Note: an experienced group leader will not compensate for inexperienced hikers.

Equipment

Musts:

To enjoy your West Coast Trail (WCT) experience you must feel comfortable. Bring appropriate clothing. Aim for quality and lightweight equipment. Your pack should weigh a maximum of 1/4 (women) to 1/3 (men) of your body weight. Reassess the content of your pack if it is heavier than this.

- **Sturdy boots.** High quality hiking boots with good ankle and arch support are required. Rubber soles provide better traction on slippery surfaces than hard Vibram soles. Do not break in new boots on this hike. Sandals or running shoes are good for wearing around camp and for river crossings only.
- **Waterproof rain suit and clothing.** Quality waterproof jacket and pants coupled with a layering system are the most effective. Under-layers should be quick drying and keep you warm even when wet such as wool or fleece. Bring a warm hat and gloves.
- **Lightweight backpacking stove and fuel.**
- **High energy, lightweight, quick-cooking food.**
- **Backpacks require a padded hip belt and should be lined with plastic bags.**
- **A tent with a waterproof fly is absolutely necessary.**
- **Sleeping bag.** Synthetic fills are preferable. (Down bags lose warmth when wet). Pack sleeping bags in waterproof bags and carry them inside packs.
- **Closed-cell foam sleeping pad.**
- **TofinoTide Tables and Waterproof West Coast Trail Map** (both are available at the WCT Info Centres). The tide table is free of charge and the map is provided to hikers who have reserved for the hike, but those who have not made a reservation can purchase the map for \$8.50.
- **A watch is critical for using Tide Tables.**
- **First aid kit that includes treatments for blister and insect stings.**
- 15 meters (50 ft) of synthetic rope per group to hang food, use as clothes-line, etc.

Also consider:

- Emergency signaling device, cash for unexpected emergencies, water container, water purification equipment, toilet paper, zip-lock type plastic bags for keeping permits and other small items dry, lighter or waterproof matches, candles and fire starters, garbage bags to pack out all your refuse, gaiters, sun screen, lip screen, sunglasses, toiletries,

flashlight, weather radio, repair kits for equipment, lightweight shoes for camp, cooking and eating utensils

- Cellular phones work on many of the beaches (Check with your carrier to see if they have coverage in this area) or marine VHF radio
- Some hikers find a hiking staff or collapsible ski pole useful.
- *Do not bring an axe, firearms or pets!*

** Parks Canada staff do not check back pack for weight. Hikers are encouraged to weigh their packs prior to arrival so they can reduce their load most effectively.



Park Description

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve consists of 3 units: Long Beach Unit, Broken Group Islands and the West Coast Trail. These units protect the near shore waters and the coastal forests of Vancouver Island's west coast. The traditional territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth First nations encompass this national park reserve.

The Long Beach Unit is located between the towns of Tofino and Ucluelet.

The Broken Group Islands unit is an archipelago of over one hundred islands and islets in Barkley Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The West Coast Trail Unit is a world-famous 75KM (47 mile) backcountry hiking trail between the towns of Bamfield and Port Renfrew on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.



Orientation Session

All overnight users of the West Coast Trail (WCT) must participate in an orientation session. The purpose of the orientation is to:

- Reduce the number of hiker injuries by addressing common safety issues
- Reduce park user's environmental impacts by providing backcountry etiquette information.
- Provide information to hikers about current issues and trail conditions
- Provide a brief history of the West Coast Trail and its place in Canada's heritage.
- Issue the WCT Overnight Use Permits and collect fees

Bring your reservation confirmation information to the orientation.

Hikers with reservations will be issued a Pacific Rim National Park Reserve West Coast Trail Map when they register on the trail. Hikers on stand-by can purchase the map at the trailhead.

Orientation session: All hikers must attend a 60-minute orientation before they are issued a WCT Overnight Use Permit. Orientation sessions are offered at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (PDT) at the Gordon River Information Centre, and the Pachena Bay Information Centre; orientation sessions are also offered at the Nitinat Visitor Centre at 8:00am and 5:00 pm (subject to change). Reservations are required for orientation sessions at Nitinat; hikers should email nitinat.orientation@pc.gc.ca or call the Nitinat visitor centre at 250-745-3999 at least 24 hour in advance to make arrangements. An overnight stay at the Nitinat village may be necessary prior to departing on the 8:30 am water taxi. A water taxi fee of \$62.50 will be collected at the visitor centre.

The orientation process takes about 1 hour.

We strongly recommend hikers start the trail a minimum of 5 hours before sunset to ensure a camping area is reached before nightfall.

Hikers can attend a 2:00 pm orientation the day prior to their hike and leave the next day bright and early. The first ferry to the trail across the Gordon River is at 8:45 a.m.

Hikers cannot attend orientations earlier than 1 day before their departure date, as the conditions of the trail are constantly changing.

Note: All hikers go through the orientation even if they have hiked the trail several times, no exceptions.

Fees



Number of Hikers	Reservation Fee	Overnight Use Fee	Ferry Fees	Total Costs
1	\$24.50	\$127.50	\$32.00	\$184.00
2	\$49.00	\$255.00	\$64.00	\$368.00
3	\$73.50	\$382.50	\$96.00	\$552.00
4	\$98.00	\$510.00	\$128.00	\$736.00
5	\$122.50	\$637.50	\$160.00	\$920.00
6	\$147.00	\$765.00	\$192.00	\$1,104.00
7	\$171.50	\$892.50	\$224.00	\$1,288.00
8	\$196.00	\$1,020.00	\$256.00	\$1,472.00
9	\$220.50	\$1,147.50	\$288.00	\$1,656.00
10	\$245.00	\$1,275.00	\$320.00	\$1,840.00

All people using the WCT unit require a park permit.

Day Users require a Pacific Rim Entry Permit – daily, annual or Discovery Pass (Day Users are persons entering and exiting from the trail on the same day at the same location.).

Overnight Users require a WCT Overnight Use Permit. Permits are issued at the WCT Information Centres.

FEES

An overnight use fee is required of all overnight users of the WCT. Use fees help support the cost of operating the WCT (e.g. rescue services, information services, regular maintenance, construction of ladders, cable cars and bridges).

Ferry fees pay for passage across the Gordon River and Nitinat Narrows, a service provided by the Ditidaht and Pacheedaht First Nations throughout the hiking season.

Ferry fees are paid at the time when the reservation is made. Your proof of payment is your WCT Overnight Use Permit. Be prepared to show this to the ferry operators. Hikers without a valid permit will be denied passage. A reservation fee is applicable when making a reservation.

WCT FEES (as of January 2017)

Reservation Fee \$24.50

WCT Overnight Use Fee \$127.50

Ferry Fee Gordon River \$16.00

Ferry Fee Nitinat Narrows \$16.00

- All fees are listed per person and in Canadian funds.
- For reservations the entire payment is due at the time the reservation is made. Payment can be made by VISA, MasterCard, or American Express.
- For stand-by users, payment can be made at the WCT Information Centre using cash, travelers cheques, VISA, MasterCard, American Express and debit cards. American currency is accepted.
- Visit our website or contact the national park for an up-to-date fees schedule prior to your departure. Fees may change at any time.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- **Ferry Fees:** refunds for unused ferry services are available at the WCT Information Centres.
- **Reservation Fee:** is non-refundable.
- **WCT Overnight Use Fee:** cancellations made 7 days or more before the hike start date are eligible for a refund.



Maps

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/visit/brochures.aspx>



Dates and Reservations

May 1 - September 30

- To avoid overcrowding, Parks Canada limits the number of hikers during the peak hiking season. Hikers can gain access to the trail by either making a reservation or registering on the standby list.
- **Stand-by List:** Hikers can register on the stand-by list when they arrive at either the Pachena Bay or Gordon River West Coast Trail Information Centre. Usually hikers can get on the within a day of going on the standby list, but occasionally, wait times can be up to two days.
- **Reservations:** We begin accepting reservations for the 2017 operating season online at www.reservation.parkscanada.gc.ca or by phone at 1-877-RESERVE (1-877-737-3783) starting at 8 a.m. PDT on Monday January 9, 2017
 - [*Click here to learn more about the West Coast Trail before you make a reservation.*](#)
- **When making a reservation, have the following ready:**
 - preferred start dates – first choice and alternate dates
 - trailhead you plan to start from; Gordon River, Nitinat or Pachena Bay
 - number of hikers in your group (maximum group size is 10)
 - email address to send confirmation and orientation information to
 - means of payment: Visa, MasterCard or American Express

October 1 - April 30

- Overnight use of trail is closed due to prolonged periods of heavy rain, strong winds, high tides, large waves, and short daylight hours.



Transportation

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/visit/visit4b.aspx>

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE WCT

Parks Canada provides this listing for the convenience of hikers. It is not intended as a testimonial for the services. Hikers make their own arrangements for transportation services. Reservations are recommended.

Vehicles can be left at a number of locations near the trailheads. Ask for details at the WCT Information Centres.

To Pachena Bay Trailhead, 5 km south of Bamfield:

- Drive on gravel logging roads from Port Alberni (2 hrs) or Duncan (3 hrs).
- Bus from Victoria (4 hrs), Nanaimo (3 hrs) with West Coast Trail Express.
- Ferry from Port Alberni (4 hrs) with Alberni Marine Transport Ltd.

Nitinat Narrows to Nitinat Village:

- Ferry usually makes a trip at 5:00 PM from the Narrows to Nitinat Village (The Nitinat Lake Water Taxi). The ferry leaves Nitinat Village at 8:30 AM.

Nitinat Village is a small, remote community: an overnight stay may be required. There are basic tourism services at, or near, this access point. These include accommodations, campgrounds, phones, and some groceries. There are no banking or fuel services in the village of Nitinat.

To Gordon River Trailhead, 5 km north of Port Renfrew:

- Look for road signs to direct you to the Gordon River Trailhead as you enter Port Renfrew.
- Drive from Victoria via Highway 14 (2 hrs).
- Bus from Victoria (2 hrs) with West Coast Trail Express.
- Drive from Duncan (1.5hrs)
- Drive from Nanaimo (2 hrs) via Lake Cowichan

Between Port Renfrew, Nitinat and Bamfield:

- Bus (3 hrs) with West Coast Trail Express.

2 – Regulations, Permits & Prohibited Activities



Pets

Dogs are NOT permitted. Pets can disturb wildlife, interfere with other visitors' enjoyment of the area and can introduce disease to wildlife.



Alcohol

West Coast Trail users are permitted to have alcohol on their campsite, but it is advised against as it is extra weight to carry.



Boat & Engine Standards

The use of personal water craft (Seadoos, Wave Runners, Jet Skis, Super Jet, etc.) are prohibited in all units of park reserve due to the sensitive nesting habitat, important feeding grounds and haul out areas for marine mammals.

WEST COAST TRAIL: Other than for park management purposes, to land any recreational or commercial powered vessel ashore in order to supply or collect equipment or provisions, or to pick up or drop off people in the West coast Trail Unit is a prohibited activity. Please note that the two ferry operators have a contract with Parks Canada to allow them to transport hikers.

3 – Regional Tourism Information



Local Weather

TIDE TABLES: www.Tides.gc.ca

Refer to the Tofino tide table

CLIMATE OVERVIEW: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/visit/visit1.aspx>

CURRENT WEATHER: For current weather in Ucluelet please see Environment Canada's website:
http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/bc-5_metric_e.html



Camping

There is camping at either end of the WCT. This is especially useful for campers on the stand-by list.

- **Bamfield:** Pachena Bay campground.
- **Port Renfrew:** Pacheedaht campground
- **Nitinat Village:** Ditidaht First Nation Campground



Local Amenities

Please see the Chamber of Commerce websites for closest communities:

Tofino: www.tourismtofino.com

Ucluelet : www.uclueletinfo.com

Bamfield: www.bamfieldchamber.com

Port Renfrew: www.portrenfrewchamber.com

Most services are available in the communities of Tofino and Ucluelet