



QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS SEA KAYAKING- 2010

The Queen Charlotte Islands are known as “The Canadian Galapagos” due to the fact that this archipelago was isolated during the last ice age; possibly remaining un-glaciated, and as such, supports a unique assemblage of flora and fauna. In addition, the Haida people who were its earliest inhabitants were noted as perhaps the most war-like yet artistic of the native peoples of the Northwest Coast. Their excursions took them as far as the coast of northern California on their slaving raids. Their art stands today as the most valued of the coast, and their culture is alive and well in the Charlottes.

We run our kayak trips on the following dates for several reasons. The weather is statistically as good or better early in the summer as it is later in the season. We see far fewer other people at this time, whereas later the place can become somewhat more traveled. Lastly, the seabirds in the Queen Charlottes are nesting early in the summer, and our opportunities to see Tufted Puffins, Ancient Murrelets, and the raptors including the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon are vastly improved.

Our first trip in 2010, **June 12–19 Tanu to Hotsprings**, we will taxi to Moresby Camp, where we’ll meet the Zodiacs (motorized boats) that will take us south into Gwaii Haanas National Park. Your journey will begin in the vicinity of Tanu Village at the north end of the park. The first stop on our journey south will be a visit to one of the major highlights of any trip to the Queen Charlottes, the long abandoned village of Tanu (*Sea-grass-town*). This moss-covered village has the best-preserved longhouse sites in the North Moresby area, and you can almost feel the ghosts of the Haida people who for thousands of years made this their home. Emily Carr wrote lovingly about her time in this place, and her paintings of Tanu are among her best. From the Tanu area we travel south via Darwin Sound and the Bischof Islands, poking our noses into some of the fjords cut into the side of Moresby Island and getting glimpses through the mist of the San Cristovals towering above us. Our travels will take us to the vicinity of Hotsprings Island at the northern end of Juan Perez Sound. To round out a fantastic week of exploration in the Charlottes we visit Hotsprings Island for a luxurious soak in the hot pools, with the San Cristovals and Juan Perez Sound forming a spectacular backdrop. This experience will convince you that the Queen Charlottes are truly one of the most special places on earth. We will be picked up by Zodiac at the end of our paddle and return to Sandspit via Moresby Camp.

We will repeat this route in the opposite direction on the July 24–30, 2010 Hotsprings to Tanu trip.

Our second trip date in 2010, **June 19- 26 Hotsprings to Skincuttle**, we will either fly in a chartered float plane or ride in Zodiacs from Sandspit to our starting point near Hotsprings Island in Juan Perez Sound. A luxurious soak in the natural outdoor hot pools of Hotsprings Island, with the San Cristoval Mountains forming a spectacular backdrop, will be a fine introduction to the many pleasures of this wonderful part of the world. Next we travel south across Juan Perez Sound, passing through Burnaby Narrows into Skincuttle Inlet. If you are interested in marine biology this is the trip you should consider. The density of marine life in the intertidal zone at Burnaby Narrows (also known as Dolomite Narrows) is probably without equal anywhere in the world. You might have seen photos of this narrow, river-like passageway on Sierra Club calendars: a kayaker suspended in shallow water above a rainbow explosion of colourful marine creatures. Traveling south from Burnaby Island we paddle past several ecological reserve areas protecting the sea bird nesting sites of the Rhinoceros Auklet and Fork Tail Storm Petrel.

We will repeat this route in the opposite direction on the July 17–24, 2010 Skincuttle to Hotsprings trip.

The third trip of 2010, **June 26 – July 3 Skincuttle to Ninstints**, will continue south from Skincuttle Inlet around the eastern tip of Moresby Island, through Houston Stewart Channel past the tiny, isolated community of Rose Harbour, and ends on the southern-most tip of Moresby, from which we can paddle to the abandoned village of Ninstints on remote Anthony Island (SGang Gwaay). The southernmost tip of the Charlottes is quite exposed to the Pacific weather systems and again our itinerary will be strongly influenced by the weather. This trip and the following two trips have the wildest flavor and some of the most wild and beautiful scenery to be found in the Charlottes. We will be paddling in slightly less protected water and the trees have a more humble appearance to them as a result of their exposure to the fierce storms of winter. Because of its inaccessibility the village of Ninstints is the best preserved of all the Haida villages, with the greatest number of standing mortuary and memorial poles, and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The small islets of this area are nesting ground for several types of seabird including the tufted puffin and the ancient murrelet as well as hunting grounds for Peregrine Falcons. We may also see harbour seals and Stellar sea lions hauled out on the rocks enjoying a midday siesta. These waters are also home to number of different species of whales. Bring binoculars. We end our trip around Louscoone Bay on South Moresby Island. Weather permitting, we return to Sandspit by float plane on Saturday afternoon but we strongly suggest that you leave some extra time in your return travel plans to allow for delays due to fog or wind.

We will paddle this route in the opposite direction on the July 12-17, 2010 Ninstints to Skincuttle trip.

On our fourth trip of 2010, the **Kunghit Explorer July 3–12**, we'll spend the week exploring an area at the south end of Gwaii Haanas National Park. A major highlight of our journey will be to visit the long abandoned village of Skaang Gwaii, or Ninstints on Anthony Island. This moss-covered village has the largest number of original standing poles in North America and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a breath taking location for a settlement. Aside from our visit to the village site, the small islets in the surrounding area are home to a number of different species of birds

including the tufted puffin and the ancient murrelet. We may also see seals and sea lions hauled out on the rocks enjoying a midday siesta. This area offers some of the most wild and beautiful scenery to be found in the Charlottes. Our intention is to explore this area and tap into all of the diversity and beauty that it has to offer. Possibilities include fantastic beach combing, stunning intertidal life, a possible visit to the isolated community of Rose Harbour, some of the choicest campsites in the Charlottes and ultimately, the power and majesty of the outer coast. The southernmost tip of the Charlottes is quite exposed to the Pacific weather systems and therefore our itinerary will be strongly influenced by the weather. Weather permitting, we return to Sandspit by float plane on Saturday afternoon but we strongly suggest that you leave some extra time in your return travel plans to allow for delays due to fog or wind.

We have been running trips in the Queen Charlotte Islands for over two decades and firmly believe that it is well worth staying for a second week of paddling if you have the time. It seems to be the unanimous conclusion of the people who have come for two weeks, that they spent the first week just letting go of their jobs, et cetera, before being able to tune in to the peaceful, wild presence that surrounds one in the Charlottes. If you would like to talk to someone who has done two consecutive weeks of paddling with us, please contact us for references. The price for two weeks in the Charlottes varies depending on which weeks you pick, but we are able to offer a significant discount. Contact us for details.

2010 DATES & PRICES:

Queen Charlottes Islands

June 12-19 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Tanu - Hotsprings
June 19-26 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Hotsprings - Skincuttle
June 26-July 3 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Skincuttle - Ninstints
July 3-12 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Kunghit Explorer
July 12-17 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Ninstints - Skincuttle
July 17-24 (Sat-Sat)	\$2095 CAD	Skincuttle - Hotsprings
July 24-30 (Sat-Fri)	\$1895 CAD	Hotsprings - Tanu

Prices include floatplane between Sandspit and tour area, and \$120 Parks Canada user fee.

