

# THE PEARLS OF THE WEST

You want to discover the different faces of Western Canada? Here is the itinerary for you! A package which combines the highlights of Alberta and British Columbia: the famous Inside Passage, the inner lands, the snowcapped mountains and the emerald lakes of the Rockies, etc. A perfect harmony between culture, nature and pure happiness!

 Region	Western Canada
 Activity	Self-drive Summer
 Duration	16 days
 Code	AUT-12
 Price	From €1,157
 Level	2/5
 Comfort	3/5

# ITINERARY

## Day 1 Calgary



Pick-up your car and rendez-vous in the burgeoning city of Calgary.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

## Day 2 Banff



Explore legendary Banff National Park. You will also have the opportunity to admire Lake Louise and Moraine or to make an excursion to Johnston Canyon. A ride along the Icefield Parkway is recommended as well. (B in SUP day 2)

Optional activity(ies) (\$):  
Western Lunch on horseback

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

## Day 3 Banff

Continuation of the park discovery. Departure to the Sentinel Pass for an exciting experience. This trail will not fail to astound us with its alpine meadows, glaciers and turquoise lakes.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

## Day 4 Jasper



The drive now leads you towards famous Jasper National Park. Among other things, you will then have the opportunity to make fabulous hikes in the Maligne Lake area.

Optional activity(ies) (\$):  
Mount Edith Cavell, Path Of The Glaciers

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

## Day 5 Jasper

Enjoy one more day in the park

Optional activity(ies) (\$):

The "Sunburst" guided Canoe Adventure

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 6 **Clearwater**



Your destination: Wells Gray Park which is famous for its spectacular falls, its outstanding fauna and its numerous hiking trails. Hiking in the Trophy Mountain sector through alpine meadows scattered with wild and bright-coloured flowers. We continue on ridges, enjoying a fantastic view on the Cariboo's mountain range.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 7 **100 Mile House**



Following the path of the 19th century's gold diggers, you will drive along the famous Cariboo Highway. (B in STD) (B in SUP)

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 8 **Prince George**



Discover the wild forest territories of the Cariboo region. (B in STD)

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 9 **Smithers**



The road towards Smithers will give you a good sample of the amazing landscapes of the North-West.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 10 **Prince Rupert**



You must absolutely make a stop to visit the Native Village of Ksan.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

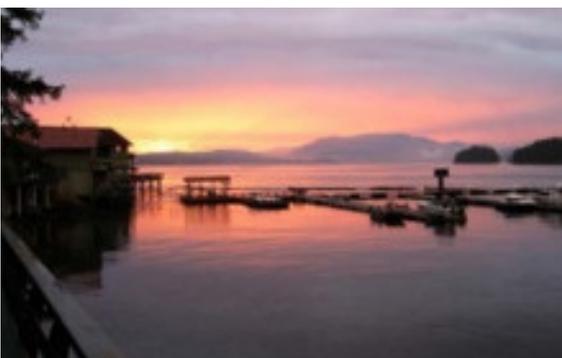
📍 Day 11 **Port Hardy**



Today you will travel the world-famous “Inside Passage”. During the 15-hour-trip, there are good opportunities to watch wildlife: bald eagles, dolphins, sea otters and whales. (B in STD)

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 12 **Campbell River**



Make a stop at Telegraph Cove where you can observe the killer whales in their natural habitat.

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 13 **Victoria**



Rendez-vous in Victoria and discover the British charm of this elegant capital.

Optional activity(ies) (\$):  
Whale Watch Cruise in zodiac

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 14 **Vancouver**



Back on the mainland, continue on towards thrilling Vancouver! Its outstanding location between mountains and ocean definitely makes this city one of the most beautiful in the world. Discover its main attractions and let yourself be immersed by its relaxed west-coast atmosphere. We particularly suggest the visit of Stanley Park, Chinatown and Gastown historical district. (B in STD day 14)

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 15 **Vancouver**



One more day to enjoy Vancouver.

Optional activity(ies) (\$):  
Capilano Bridge Experience  
Admission to Grouse Mountain with Peak Chair

*Accommodation: Hotel or B&B (Depending on the accommodation chosen)*

📍 Day 16 **Return flight**

Drop-off your vehicle.

## PERIOD & BUDGET

### When to travel?

The best period for travelling is during the following months:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Price

From C\$1,629

*The budget is an indication of the price per person, subject to availability. Your local agent will send you a customized quote with the exact price. The price can vary according to availability, level of services, period of travel, number of participants, booking time frame and other items.*

### Included

- Acces to the Inside Passage Ferry from Prince Rupert to Port Hardy including the fees for a standard vehicle
- 15 nights accommodation
- 4 meals in STD, 2 meals in SUP (see abbreviations, please note that continental breakfasts are included in B&B except in Jasper)
- Applicable taxes

### Not included

- The personalized roadbook (Available on request)
- Air transport (Available on request)
- Car rental (Available on request)
- Personal expenses
- Drinks (except tea and coffee for meals included)
- Ferry from Vancouver Island

### International flights

Why would you worry about lots of booking? We can offer your trip under the same roof and we are here in case of a problem. As we have excellent contacts with major airlines in Canada and in the US, we can help you by offering you advantageous prices. All you need to do is to make it clear when you request an estimate in the box "describe precisely your project" in our form we will be pleased to include it in our offer.

### Terms and conditions

To know more about our terms, visit the section Terms and conditions.

### Insurance

It is possible to offer you a medical insurance as well as a trip cancellation protection because we know the importance of being at peace before or during your trip, we can help you. All you need to do is to make it clear when you request an estimate in the box "describe precisely your project" in our form we will be pleased to include it in our offer. Our methods of calculation are simple and don't cost a lot, to know more about it, visit our section insurance.

## PRACTICAL INFO

### **Staff**

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Trip in total freedom, guideless. If you add an optional roadbook, it will consist of :

- A day by day (itinerary) description
- Destination description
- Useful tips on driving
- Cities and parks maps
- Activities description

### **Food**

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It is possible that some meals are included, seek "the price includes" on your estimate, it is however impossible (or even rare) to include all meals during a trip in total freedom.

### **Accommodation**

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Depending on the category of hotel, you will sleep in 2-star or sun (Canadian classification) rated accommodation. When you request an estimate, you can ask to be upgraded in more comfortable accommodation for some days or for all the days of your trip, near national parks or out-of-the-ordinary accommodation such as cabins in the trees, cottages or tent (Huttopia, or ready-to-camp). We offer a wide range of accommodation, from classic to original, all of our trips are flexible and can be adjusted to your desires!

### **Transportation**

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In some cases and depending on your needs, we can offer private or public transfer services such as train, shuttle, ferry or seaplane... We can also include a car rental with very interesting rates. You just have to make it clear in your initial estimate in the box "describe your trip precisely" of our form, we will be pleased to do so.

Driving in Canada :

Autotours by car are perfect to explore the great Canadian landscapes. Our country offers numerous breath-taking roads with panoramic sceneries. Traffic is generally moderate when compared to other countries.

Standard European driving license is valid in Canada. Traffic regulation is no different. The speed limit is 100 Km/h on the highway (110 km/h on certain highways in Alberta and Nova Scotia); 90 km/h on main roads; 50 km/h in urban areas. Highways are free (except for one in the Toronto region), generally well-maintained, they provide rest areas..

Traffic lights are situated on the other side of the streets intersection. There is no priority to the right: priority is indicated by road signs at each intersection. It is generally allowed to turn right when the light is red (if no road sign forbid it) in Canada, except for the Ile de Montréal.

To park your vehicle, pay attention to road signs that indicate authorized days and hours of parking. It is forbidden to park near a fire hydrant. Parking fees are sometimes required by hotels (especially in big cities) and in public parking areas. In Toronto and Montréal, parking fees can rise up to 20\$ per day. In small cities, it is easy to find free parking spaces.

Wearing a seatbelt is mandatory everywhere and at every time, for all the passengers, in the front seat and in the back seat.

Children must sit in a child car seat specially designed, adapted to their weight and height and be appropriately installed until he is tall enough to wear the seatbelt correctly.

It is mandatory to stop at more than five meters from a school bus which flashing lights blink. You can only cross or pass a school bus when its flashing lights are off. You must make sure that this manoeuvre is riskless.

In Canada, it is forbidden to drive with a blood alcohol level of more than 0.08% (80mg for 100ml of blood). Drivers younger than 25 years old and the ones who have a learner's permit are submitted to the rule of "0 alcohol" which forbids driving after alcohol consumption.

## **Budget & exchange**

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Canadian currency is the Dollar (\$) which is divided in 100 cents. You can find 5\$, 10\$, 20\$, 50\$, 100\$ and 1000\$ bills. Although they are still in circulation, 1\$ and 2\$ bills have been replaced by coins of .05\$, .10\$ and 0.25\$.

To benefit from the best exchange rate, we advise you to exchange your currency in a Canadian bank. Generally, these institutions are open between 10 AM and 3 PM from Monday to Friday (except statutory holiday). You can also exchange your currency in exchange offices. Although the office schedule might be more flexible, exchange rate and service fees could vary considerably from office to office.

Traveler's check in Canadian dollar are accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shops. You can also exchange euros: 1 Euro = 1,57\$CAN (04/04/2018).

Before your arrival in Canada, make sure your credit card is programmed to be used in ATMs. They are open at any time in banks, airports, stations and malls. The most accepted credit cards are Visa, Mastercard and American Express.

## **Tips**

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In the United States and in Canada, service is never included in the prices. In bars, restaurants and all the places where service is provided, it is expected that you tip the waiter/waitress between 15% and 20% of the total sum. Note that a lot of employees working as waiters are paid by tips only. Not giving anything or not giving enough would be poorly received. Even when paying by credit card, you'll indicate the sum you wish to give.

## **Supplied equipment**

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See what is included in your estimate

## **Luggage**

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Depending on the size of the trunk of your rental car, make sure to choose the right size and number of luggage that you will bring.

## **Passport**

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Consular formalities for Europeans and Swiss nationals:

Upon your registration, please transmit your passport information (name, first name, passport number, date of issues and expiration). Currently, to stay as a tourist for less than six months, a visa is not mandatory and a valid passport is sufficient with a validity exceeding by one day your stay in Canada.

Travelers must imperatively have an **electronic travel authorization (eTA) to enter Canada**. You will have to fill the form online and individually (**one application per person**) on <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/ave.asp> It is essential that you have a valid email address. The 7 CAD fees are payable by Visa, Mastercard or American Express credit cards. The eTA is granted in just a few minutes but we advise you to apply for it as soon as your trip is confirmed. The eTA is an electronic document linked to your passport and **stays valid for 5 years or until the expiration of the passport**, depending on the first of these eventualities to occur. You must then travel with the passport used to apply for it.

**CAREFUL:** for French women, the eTA must be filled with your maiden name. Hence, to facilitate the check-in at the airport, we ask travelers in Canada to indicate their maiden name for the booking of their tickets.

### **You travel with children:**

Children and adults are submitted to the same obligations regarding passports and visa described above. Registration of minors on parents' passports is now impossible; children must hold an individual passport. It is compulsory to apply for an eTA for each child individually.

**CAREFUL, from January 15th 2017 onwards, for all French minors traveling abroad alone, an authorization to leave the country is compulsory.**

The child will have to submit the three following documents:

- The minor's valid passport
- A photocopy of the signatory's identity card, valid or expired for less than 5 years and the birth certificate
- The form, signed by one of the legal guardians, available online on <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1359>

Concerning other nationalities, seek the Canadian consular authority of your country.

#### **ARRIVAL IN CANADA VIA A TRANSIT THROUGH THE UNITED STATES :**

CAREFUL, we can exceptionally use American airlines for travels bound for the American continent (North and South).

They stop over in the US: **you must possess an electronic or biometric passport which is still valid 6 months after your departure from the US** (under "passport", a rectangle under a circle meaning a secure symbol).

You must also **apply for an electronic travel authorization (ESTA)** on the official website <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Valid for a duration of two years or until the expiration of the passport, this authorization must be requested at the latest 72h before your departure: we advise you to apply to it as soon as your trip is confirmed. It has to be paid for (14 USD online by credit card). The name you put on the form must be the same as the one that figures on your plane tickets and must of course appears on your passport. If the name used on the ESTA form is different from the one on your tickets, the airline can deny your boarding. Minors must also fill out an ESTA authorization.

The Visa Waiver Program allows French nationals to enter the American territory without a visa, either via transit or for a stay of 90 days to the maximum. A visa is nevertheless necessary if you only have an emergency passport. Furthermore, travelers who went to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen or Soudan since March 11th 2011 and people who are national of Iran, Iraq, Syria or Soudan cannot benefit from the Visa Waiver program anymore: more information on <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays/etats-unis/>

#### **ARRIVAL IN THE US OR TRANSIT THROUGH THE US :**

Upon your arrival, the immigration service will take your photo and fingerprints. You'll have to wait behind the yellow line and not cross it unless you're told to, it can take some time. Customs controls will take place at the first access point to the territory (in case of a transit through a Canadian airport, it will be considered as a first access point to the US and the following process must be applied). Once you've been through the immigration service, you'll get your luggage back from the conveyer belt and go to the customs. In case of a continuation of your trip, you'll have to get your luggage back and bring them the baggage conveyer which serves.

### ***Health information & recommendations***

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Canada is one of the safest destination in the world. Its crime rate is low and there aren't much endemic diseases. For a trip to Canada, no vaccination is mandatory but it is advised to be up to date concerning basic vaccinations (Diphtérie, Tétanos, Poliomyélite). Medical infrastructures are excellent but it is strongly advised to purchase medical insurance before your departure.

In case of an emergency, to call the police, firefighters or paramedics, dial 911. The "911" service could sometimes not be reachable in certain regions. You can also dial 0. A receptionist can get you in contact with emergency services.

Canada has a lot of lakes ad forests; there are numerous insects in June and July. Hence, you need to have a repellent cream and strong antihistamine for people suffering from allergies.

During your trip to Canada, you may very well be able to see some wild animals in their natural habitat. It is particularly true in wildlife reserve where originals, caribos, deer and other species are commonly observed.

In Canada, regulation about alcohol consumption can differ from what most of international travelers could expect. Apart from Québec, alcoholic beverages are sold only in specialized places and often under Government control (liquor Stores, beer stores, etc.). It is forbidden to consume alcohol in public areas. Legal age for alcohol consumption is 19 years old in Ontario and Maritime Provinces, 18 years old in Québec, Alberta and Manitoba. If you wish to drink wine or beer in certain restaurants, you have to choose a licensed place. It is possible, in some restaurants, to bring your own wine bottle, but it has to be specified. Throughout Canada, strict regulation exist to counter driving under the influence of alcohol (0.08%).

### ***Weather***

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Spring is a rainy season in the major part of Canada. During the day, temperatures generally get high but nights still cool. The median temperature is 12°C in March, April and the beginning of May. Summer officially starts on June 21st but for most Canadians, July and August are the real summer months. It is warm in most regions of Canada. In the South, they are above 20°C during the day and can sometimes pass 30°C. Autumn starts in September. Temperature gets chillier and leaves change color and fall. This season can be very rainy. In some regions, particularly in the North and in the mountains, it may start to snow towards the end of October. During the day, normal temperatures vary between 10 and 12°C in the major part of the country.

Unlike Europe, seasons are well defined in Canada. Temperatures can get higher than 30°C in summer and down to -30°C in winter. In fact, Canadian climate changes a lot from a region or a season to another. Canada extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and lies at the same latitude as Roma at his southern extreme, where it reaches the Arctic.

To know the current climate and weather conditions by provinces and territories, go to [www.meteo.gc.ca](http://www.meteo.gc.ca) or [www.meteoedia.com](http://www.meteoedia.com)

**Spring :** Spring comes as soon as February on the West Coast. In the rest of Canada, weather gets warmer at the beginning of April and lasts until June.

**Summer :** Summer in Canada bring cool to hot temperatures from the end of June to the end of September. The warmth of summer last from June to August, and July is often the hottest month.

**Autumn :** Autumn brings pleasant and cool temperatures, particularly in September and in October. It is the best time of the year to enjoy the spectacular beauty of Autumn leaves in the East of Canada, to take long walks while breathing fresh air.

**Winter :** A major part of Canada is covered with a white coat during winter, temperatures fall below the freezing point, and snowfalls start at the end of October. However, winters are very cool on the West Coast where the snow doesn't stay long.

## **Electricity**

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As everywhere in the US, voltage runs at 110 Volts/60 cycles. New electric devices can be adapted o the current. It's preferable to check whether or not your device is equipped with a current transformer. In general, it is a black box located between the electric plug and your device. If your device isn't compatible with the 110-volt current, you'll need to get a current transformer sold separately. As electrical plugs are flat, you'll also need an adaptor to plug your device in. you'll find it easily on the spot or before departure in a shop specialized in travels. A waterproof Zip Lock bag is a good way to keep your equipment in a dry place.

## **Local time**

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Canada covers six of the twenty fours time zones of the world. From East to West, they are identified as follow: Newfoundland time, Atlantic Time, east Time, Central Time, Mountain Time and Pacific Time. Some provinces and territories cover two time zones.

Ontario and Québec are in the Eastern Time (central European time -6 hours) whereas the maritime provinces are in the Atlantic time (Central European Time -5 hours). Note that the Newfoundland province is ahead of 30 minutes compared to Atlantic hours. In Manitoba, West of Ontario, and in Saskatchewan, the time difference to Europe is -6 hours, -8 hours in Alberta and -9 hours in British Columbia.

From the last Sunday of April to the last Sunday of October, North America goes 1-hour backward to Summer Time.

Concretely, there is an 8-hour time difference between France and Calgary, a 9-hour time difference between France and Vancouver and a 6-hour time difference between France and the East coast of Canada (Toronto and Montréal). For instance, when it's 1.00 pm in Montréal, it is 7.00 pm in Paris.

## **Topography**

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### CANADIAN POPULATION

Canada has a multicultural population of 33 million of inhabitants that spreads throughout 10 provinces and 3 territories.

Ontario and Québec are the major ones from a numerical point of view (with 62.1% of the Canadian population); British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba follow, being the only provinces with more than one million of inhabitants. Territories from the North are sparsely populated.

French and English are the two official languages of Canada. In the 2001 census, English speakers constituted close to 60% of the Canadian population, whereas French speakers constituted the second group with more than 22%. Official languages are unequally spread throughout Canadian provinces. It's in Ontario that you can find the largest group of English speakers (8 million), followed by British Columbia (2.8 million) and Alberta (2.4 million). Apart from Québec (8%) and Nunavut (27.6%), English speakers are majoritarian in all the provinces and territories. French speakers are only majoritarian in Québec as they represent 81.2% of the province.

While waves of immigration of the 19th Century bring to Canada mainly people of British origins, the current immigrant population is of diverse origins. Between 1900 and 1960, immigration in Canada was essentially European (90%). The 2001 census reveals that in the last decade, 58% of the immigrants are Asian (Chinese overcame the 1-million mark) and European (only 20%).

For a certain number of years now, we call "visible minority" the minorities which are not of European origin. 20 years ago, visible minorities accounted for 4.7% of the total population, they now represent 13.4%. They will likely represent one fifth of the Canadian population by 2016.

In 1996, aboriginal populations of Canada reached 799 010, 2.8% of the total Canadian population.

## ***Sustainable tourism***

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Since the outset, Altai works for an eco-tourism and an organization of trips that respects equitable and sustainable principles.

The harmonization of practices assures:

- A fair economical repartition
- The improvement of local teams' working conditions and their awareness of the protection of the environment
- The information of travelers about respecting the local population and environment and the collection of their feelings at their return.

You can also act in favor of an eco-tourism by adopting simple green gestures during your trips:

- Avoid letting waste out, throw it in the trash can or bring it with you
- Use potable water sparingly (take a shower instead of a bath and report any leaks) and avoid wasting it (use biodegradable soap to wash yourself)
- Avoid damaging cultural sites: don't touch the statues, don't move the stones and objects
- Exchange instead of giving (too Important gifts can destabilize the local economic stability of the country depending on their living standards)
- When taking a walk, especially in some fragile ecosystems, observe the fauna from afar, do not go beyond beaten roads, limit stamping and do not bring any souvenirs: give up picking rare flowers picking fossils...
- In some hotels, you can have individual air conditioning. It is advised to systematically switching it off when you're out of the room to avoid energetical overconsumption and greenhouse gas emission.