

Exploring the Sunshine Coast

This is a great region for exploring the outdoors through boating, hiking, biking and golf. If you have time, there is lots to discover...here is a tiny taste....

Pick up Sunshine Coast tourist guide, Visitors' Choice Sunshine Coast, Purple Banner guide and B&B&Cottage guide on the ferry for information & maps.

Some links for Vancouver and Sunshine Coast information:

<http://www.tourismvancouver.com>

<http://www.visitorschoice.com>

<http://www.bigpacific.com>

<http://www.sunshinecoastcanada.com>

Extra days and need accommodation? <http://www.bbsunshinecoast.com>

Towns

Gibsons: Land of the Squamish First Nations and the town founded by George Gibson in 1886, when his boat was blown from Vancouver Island to the Strait of Georgia. Six years later there were already 100 settlers in the area and by the turn of the 20th century many small communities along the coast were connected via the Union Steamship Company which brought news, food supplies and tourists. Lower Gibsons Landing is the historic town. Here is Molly's Reach restaurant, used on the 1980s CBC TV series set of "The Beachcombers". There are some funky little shops along Molly's Lane behind the restaurant, a tea shop or two and just a little farther along the road, Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives where history buffs can be completely filled in about the early days on the coast.

Roberts Creek: Short walk out to the pier or along the mudflats. There is a great organic food restaurant, café and little art gallery at the crossroads of Roberts Creek Road, Lower Road and Beach Avenue. Grab a coffee here and head back on up to the highway going back south less than 2 minutes to the entrance to Cliff Gilker Park...see below.

Wilson Creek: Families would love a stop at the Chapman Creek Hatchery with an education centre about the life cycle of salmon.

Davis Bay: Beach for swimming and kite-flying. Pier and seawall walk. Opposite beach, on other side of highway, is Brookman Park on the edge of Chapman Creek with hiking and children's playground. Native art gallery here too.

Sechelt: You'll go straight through the middle of town. Stop at Wheatberries on the left side of the highway just before you zigzag for coffee, muffins or yummy sandwiches. This is the commercial centre of the Coast – stop here for groceries or any services you may need. Walk the seawall or see the marsh. The heritage of the Shishalh Nation is explored through art at the Tems Awiya Museum/House of Hewhiwus.

Halfmoon Bay: Quaint and tiny with government wharf and a general store. Welcome Woods Market is off Fawn Road. Heritage Store is at end of Redrooffs Road.

Pender Harbour: Really an amalgamation of a few villages – Madeira Park, Kleindale, Garden Bay and Irvine's Landing. Entrance to great water adventures on the sea and warm lakes (swimming anyone?) as well as fishing, hiking, picnic spots in many public parks. Home of Francis Point & Garden Bay Marine Parks. Info on other events here can be found at <http://www.penderharbour.org>

Egmont: Entry to wedded happiness, Skookumchuk Narrows Provincial Park, amazing trails, kayaking, boat cruising up the inlets. Bathgate General Store opened in 1948 and impressively epitomizes its name as a collecting spot for a little bit of just about everything.

Saltery Bay: A great place to see orcas, seals and sea lions. Mermaid Cove has a sunken statue with great scuba diving. Entrance to Duck Lake Trails (48km of scenic hiking).

Powell River: Many park with kayaking, canoeing, climbing, diving. Inland Lake Provincial Park has a 13km trail around the lake that is fully wheelchair accessible and Willingdon Beach trail is good for a stroll. Return sometime to do the 180 km, 10 day Sunshine Coast Trail.

Hiking

There is lots everywhere...here are just a few places that Keith and I have had short jaunts in and are great for a leg stretch or because of views.

Soames Hill Regional Park: between Langdale ferry landing and Gibsons...some hill climbing and stairs but so worth it for the views out over Gibson's Landing and Keats Island (40 mins to top).

Mount Elphinstone: off the B&K Logging Road, here as a school child and girl guide there are a few camps here...because this is a coastal rainforest of old growth cedar, maple and hemlock with hiking, mountain biking and skiing.

Cliff Gilker Park: On the right of the highway just before reaching Roberts Creek Road. Short and beautiful trails through red cedar trees and babbling creeks (15 mins to 2 hours).

Sechelt Marsh: a wander rather...small sanctuary and breeding ground for birdlife on Wharf Avenue (15 mins).

Smugglers Cove: A half hour family friendly walk with interpretive signage down near the protected cove. It's a provincial marine park with a fascinating history involving rum...

Francis Point: A forested trail to top of peninsula with panoramic view of ocean.

Mount Daniel: 360 degree views, sacred site for Sechelt First Nations. Treat with respect as once used to sight war canoes of neighboring nations and still used for coming-of-age rituals (1 hr to top).

Pender Hill: Short and steep with stunning views over Pender Harbour, the lakes and strait featuring arbutus trees galore (30 mins to top).

Skoomkumchuk Narrows: a little more than an hour amazing hike through tall trees, lots of ferns and moss to the rapids. Best to go at the changing of the tides! Stop at the YUMMY bakery at the entrance first! Great for the whole family.

Water Sports

Scuba Diving: Sechelt Inlet rates in the top 20 recreational divespots...with 9 provincial marine parks. The HMCS Chaudiere was scuttled off Kunechin point and is home to an artificial reef. Giant Pacific octopus in the inlets around Egmont.

Sport Fishing is available!

Canoeing and Kayaking: see links off our website. Lots of lakes and waterways to discover. It's the best way to see Pender Harbour aka Venice of the North.

Biking

Road cycling: look no further than the 70km Highway 101! Scenic ocean, lakes, fir and arbutus trees.

Mountain: Lots of forest service roads and trails at Roberts Creek ("Hwy 103"), West Sechelt (Trout Lake, Wakefield Valley, "Parbac"), Halfmoon Bay (Sargeants Bay/Connor Park, "Pterodactyl") & Pender Harbour("Dry Feet", "Cougar", "Scary Hill Bypass"). Ask at bike shops in towns.

Golf

Playing a round on the same day as riding the ferry? Show your receipt and have the car portion of the ferry trip deducted from the green fees of all visiting foursomes (Monday-Friday).

Sunshine Coast Golf & Country Club: oldest 18 hole course on the Coast - if you need a round shortly after coming off the ferry in Langdale, this is surrounded by the rainforest near Roberts Creek.

Sechelt Golf & Country Club: 18 hole course 2 km from town centre with stunning views. Super grooming and longest at 6550 yards

Pender Harbour Golf Course: 20 minutes south of Egmont - Saturday morning, pre-wedding ceremony 9 holes surrounded by lakes and mountains? Par 72, four different tees to play 18 holes. Signature hole is number 4 – 230 yards uphill and 250 yards downhill, set on a narrow fairway!

Other Activities

Ruby Lake: Near the freshwater lagoon is the Iris Griffith Interpretive Centre with guided hikes, trails, wetlands, bird watching. The centre is a great example of green building practices running on solar etc and has displays on alternative house building, environmental conservation and aquariums filled with local species. The 20 acre reserve is attached to the resort's 99 acre wildlife and bird sanctuary. Lake is warm at summertime temperature of 17 degrees. <http://www.lagoonsociety.com>

Art: artists abound on the Coast and studios plus galleries are often indicated on the highway with a large “A” sign. Pick up a copy of the Purple Banner Art Studio map on the ferry or go online to <http://www.suncoastarts.com>

Princess Louisa Inlet and Chatterbox Falls: you need an extra day for this guided trip...see our website. 90 km north of the Narrows with unbelievable drama...do not go here alone as an inexperienced boater as Jervis Inlet has deep, rough water with forceful winds before you reach calm protected waters. 2100 metre cliffs on the fjord, many waterfalls and finally the 40 metre Chatterbox.

Egmont Heritage Centre: A family friendly centre across from Skookumchuk Park. Built from milled onsite timber, it has interactive displays from local history including old logging and fishing equipment. Demonstrations by local artists, such as totem pole carving, have been known to happen here. <http://www.egmontheritagecentre.com>