

2018 SALISH SEA TOUR (WASHINGTON & BC)

8 Day Loop Tour (9 Nights Lodging)

July 20-29, 2018



Total Cost: \$1,900 if 18-24 Paid Participants (includes tour souvenir)
Total Cost: \$1,700 if 25 or more Paid Participants (includes tour souvenir)
Single supplement: \$1,000 (due to limited lodging options)
Deposit: \$550 (paid at time of registration)
Final Payment: \$1,350/\$1150 due by April 20, 2018
Rider limit: 30
Tour Leaders: Dean Karlen & Ralph Nussbaum
Tour Rating: Intermediate/Advanced (Read Level of Difficulty below.)

OVERVIEW:

Almost a decade ago, the US and Canada officially recognized the inland salt waters of the Strait of Georgia, Juan de Fuca Strait, and Puget Sound as the Salish Sea. In this tour, starting from Mount Vernon, you will cross the sea four times by ferry, ride alongside its waters, experience the surrounding hills and mountains, and enjoy the tremendous scenery this region has to offer. The first day we ride to Anacortes, optionally climb Mt. Erie, visit Washington Park, and travel by ferry to Sidney, BC, where we stay two nights. The second day is a scenic tour of the Saanich Peninsula including the Highlands hills and the Victoria coastline. On day three we take a short ferry across the Sannich Inlet on way to a wonderful retreat at Honeymoon Bay on Lake Cowichan. The lodge is entirely booked for our group and is the location for our group dinner. The next day we cycle south on the Pacific Marine Road to the fishing village of Port Renfrew and we visit Botany Bay and the Botanical Beach. The fifth day, we ride the undulating Juan de Fuca coast to Victoria, where we spend one night. The day in Victoria is nominally for rest and relaxation, although we will provide a suggested cycling route that includes wineries and the world famous Butchart Gardens. That afternoon we take the Coho Ferry to Port Angeles. Being well rested on day seven, we will ascend Hurricane Ridge (optional) and then follow the Olympic Discovery Trail eastward to Port Hadlock. Finally, on day eight, we cycle to Port Townsend, cross by ferry to Fort Casey and cycle over Deception Pass, on route to Mount Vernon, where we spend the final night. The tour is primarily on low traffic roads, except for short sections of highway, which are unavoidable. There are a few short sections on compacted dirt/gravel paths, so tires 25 mm and wider are recommended. To make the tour accessible and interesting to intermediate and advanced riders alike, some days include optional hill climbs as part of our route. See descriptions below for the distances and elevation climbs for each day, with and without the optional sections.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: The ride is intended for experienced riders with good biking skills. Everyone can ride at their own comfortable pace. Be aware, though, that there is an 80-mile day with over 5,000' climbing. Although the route generally traverses very lightly travelled rural roads, there are occasional short stretches with no shoulder or with significant traffic.

WEATHER: Weather in this region is usually very pleasant in July. Nevertheless, riders should be prepared for rain and chilly conditions. Temperatures along the coast can drop significantly if there is fog.

MEALS: This tour will provide snacks, drinks, and lunch on riding days. Some breakfasts are included and there is one group dinner. The other dinners and most breakfasts are your responsibility.

LODGING: There is a variety of lodging types during this tour, with some unique venues in the smaller towns. In some locations, the rooms are not of equal standard, but we will try to balance this out over the tour. Due to the small size of some of the lodgings, we require a minimum of five couples or roommates willing to share a King bed at some locations, so those indicating a preference or willingness to share a King bed may receive priority in case of an entry lottery.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY: (Mileages & Elevation gains are approximate – route may vary slightly due to unforeseen circumstances.)

DAY ZERO Friday, July 20 – Mount Vernon, WA: We meet the first night at the Mt Vernon Best Western Plus Skagit Valley Inn for an 8:00 PM briefing meeting. Folks may wish to get together for dinner informally beforehand.

DAY ONE Saturday, July 21 – Mt Vernon, WA to Sidney, BC - 44 miles, 2,900 ft. (41 miles, 2100 ft.): We leave Mt Vernon on back roads, pass through La Conner and the Swinomish Reservation, enjoy the water views around March Point, and cross Fidalgo Bay on a bike bridge to Anacortes. We next head to Mt. Erie Park, where those who enjoy 20% grades will head to the top. The next stop is Washington Park, where we ride the park loop and have lunch. The lunch will also serve as our “daily” meeting to go over the logistics for the next day. After lunch, we head to the terminal to board the ferry to Sidney. Our hotel is close to the ferry terminal in Sidney.

DAY TWO Sunday, July 22 – Sidney - 78 miles, 3,900 ft. (63 miles, 2,500 ft.): We will explore the entire Saanich Peninsula, starting in the North. We ride through the challenging highlands (optional) and ride the private road to the observatory, which is followed by lunch at Beaver Lake. Continuing south, we travel through the Victoria downtown harbor front, through Beacon Hill Park, and along the south and east coast of the Peninsula back to our hotel in Sidney.

DAY THREE Monday, July 23 – Sidney to Honeymoon Bay - 60 miles, 4,000 ft.: A 10-mile ride takes us to the terminal to catch the small ferry to Mill Bay. We follow country roads to the quaint coastal village of Cowichan Bay, and we have lunch on the shore of Quamichan Lake. We then travel westward through the Cowichan River Park on route to Lake Cowichan. Our destination is the tranquil Honeymoon Bay Retreat. Massage services are available if you need some relief (provided you booked in advance). We will have our group dinner in this lodge, which is booked exclusively for our group that evening.

DAY FOUR Tuesday, July 24 – Honeymoon Bay to Port Renfrew - 42 miles, 2,300 ft.: This is a relatively short day, riding south on the Pacific Marine Road to Port Renfrew. This paved forestry road has very little traffic and there is no cell-phone service. Along the way, you will see the Giant Harris Creek Spruce (40 feet around), a very short walk from our rest stop. Lunch is at the Botanical Beach Provincial Park, and there will be ample time to take the 2-mile hike to see rich tide pools full of life (hopefully at low tide).

DAY FIVE Wednesday, July 25 – Port Renfrew to Victoria - 78 miles, 5,300 ft.: We immediately climb when leaving Port Renfrew, then follow the undulating terrain along the Juan de Fuca coastline. Early morning fog could lower temperatures and visibility. Use your blinking red rear light to be seen by traffic. Traffic will be light until we approach Sooke, at which point we divert to lower traffic roads. Lunch will include a short tour by the Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society. In the afternoon, we will return to Victoria by way of the Esquimalt Lagoon and the Galloping Goose bike trail. Our hotel is in the heart of the town near the harbor.

DAY SIX Thursday, July 26 – REST DAY: Enjoy walking around the Victoria harbor or the coastline, go whale watching, or visit the famous Butchart Gardens. We will provide a suggested bike route for those preferring to explore on two wheels. Later that afternoon, collect your bikes from the hotel and walk a few blocks onto the Coho ferry bound for Port Angeles. The hotel for that evening is a short two-mile ride from the Port Angeles ferry terminal.

DAY SEVEN Friday, July 27 – Port Angeles to Port Hadlock - 95 miles, 8,100 ft. (77 miles, 5,400 ft.): The hotel serves an early breakfast, so this will be a great opportunity to challenge yourself to climb Hurricane Ridge. It is a beautiful road at a steady grade with breathtaking scenery. If your legs are not up for the full climb, then turn around at the viewpoint halfway up where the SAG vehicle will be waiting with refreshments. Skipping the Hurricane altogether brings the day’s numbers down to 56 miles and 2,800 ft. After the Hurricane, we ride along the Olympic Discovery Trail, then along some sections of highway (with shoulder) to ride up the center of Quimper Peninsula to our hotel in Port Hadlock.

DAY EIGHT Saturday, July 28 – Port Hadlock to Mt Vernon - 69 miles, 3,600 ft. climbing: We make our way together to Port Townsend to catch the ferry to Whidbey Island where we travel along its coasts northward to the spectacular Deception Pass. This brings us back to Fidalgo Island, and we cross back to the mainland again at La Conner, returning to Mt Vernon for the evening.

DAY NINE Sunday, July 29 – Mt Vernon: Say farewell to your friends after breakfast and enjoy your trip home!

2018 SALISH SEA TOUR

