

# Welcome to Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

Breathe in the fresh, salty air. Feel the warm, west coast sun on your face. Feast your eyes on the beautiful islands surrounding you.

Climb a mountain. Spot a whale. Learn to sail. Discover geocache treasure. Fall asleep to the sound of the waves. Shop at a farmers' market. Sing a campfire song with a park interpreter.

Choose a new adventure each weekend and experience first-hand the distinct culture and lifestyle of each Gulf Island!



## Pender Island

One short ferry ride to Pender Island and you've made the perfect escape. Will it be a guided kayak tour, a challenging hike to the summit of Mount Norman or a rousing game of disc golf? You decide! After you've burned off some energy, check into a resort for some well-deserved pampering.

Prefer to forgo comfort for total immersion? Discover the delight of sleeping in a Douglas fir forest at Prior Centennial campground or by the salty sea at Shingle Bay. For breakfast, indulge in freshly picked strawberries from the Saturday Farmer's Market.



## Mayne Island

Brush up on your birding skills at Georgina Point — an important bird area overlooking Active Pass. Use the high-powered viewscope to get a closer look at Harlequin ducks and black oystercatchers. Don't forget to take a selfie by the light tower.

Hike down the Campbell Point trail through an old-growth forest and enjoy views across to Georgeson Island. Hire a local kayak guide to launch you from Bennett Bay, introducing you to the diversity of wildlife on your journey along the Belle Chain Islets.



## McDonald Campground

Need a quick recharge? Pitch your tent in a campsite surrounded by tall cedars — only 25 minutes from Victoria. McDonald campground makes a perfect stopover base for exploring the Gulf Islands and the Greater Victoria area. Bring your bike and ride the nearby regional cycling trails.

In June, Parks Canada teams up with Mountain Equipment Co-op for an overnight Learn-to-Camp event — ideal for the whole family. This summer, join us for our free weekly Campfire Magic program for songs, stories and more!



## Sidney Island

Spend a day on car-free Sidney Island. Hop on the passenger ferry at Sidney Pier and soon you'll be kicking off your shoes and exploring kilometres of warm sandy beaches. Need longer to unwind? Grab your friends and disappear for the whole weekend at the quaint campground by a peaceful lagoon.

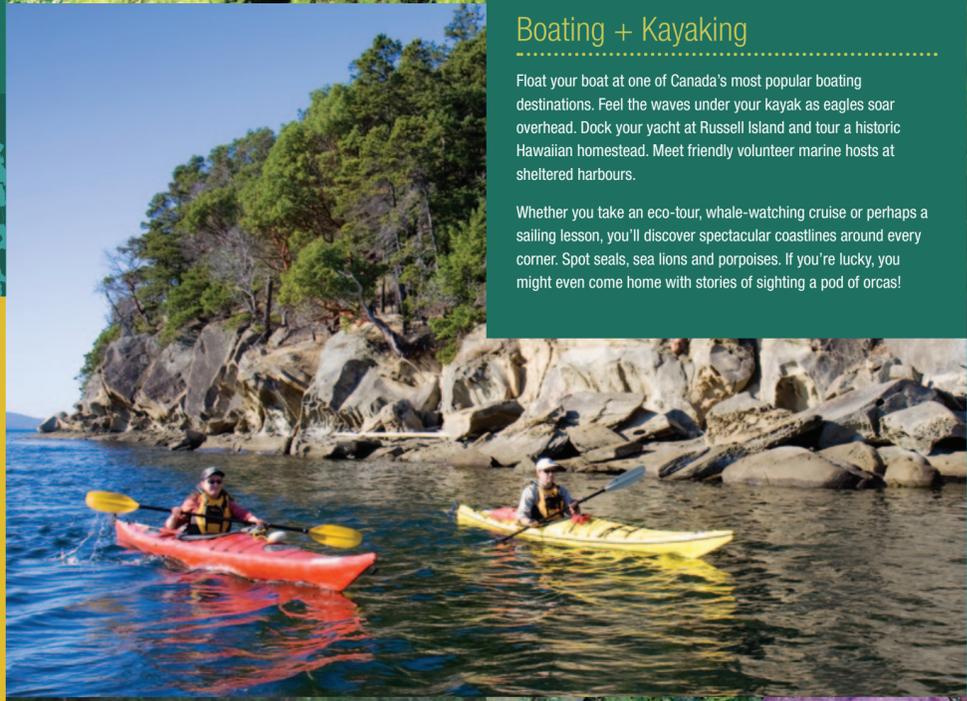
Looking for a boater's paradise? Drop anchor and relax in the sheltered waters off Sidney Spit. If you don't own a boat, treat yourself to a guided eco-tour skippered by a knowledgeable expert.



## Saturna Island

Escape to this laid-back island where you set the pace. Don't miss the legendary whale watching at East Point — from shore! While you're there, learn about endangered orcas from a park interpreter during the summer months. Soak up island lore at the community museum in the heritage fog alarm building.

Want to get off the beaten track? Cycle off the ferry along a country road to a rustic campsite near the shimmering waters of Narvaez Bay or choose to stay at one of the many island B&Bs.



## Boating + Kayaking

Float your boat at one of Canada's most popular boating destinations. Feel the waves under your kayak as eagles soar overhead. Dock your yacht at Russell Island and tour a historic Hawaiian homestead. Meet friendly volunteer marine hosts at sheltered harbours.

Whether you take an eco-tour, whale-watching cruise or perhaps a sailing lesson, you'll discover spectacular coastlines around every corner. Spot seals, sea lions and porpoises. If you're lucky, you might even come home with stories of sighting a pod of orcas!



## Discovery

Awaken your family's sense of wonder at a summer program with a park interpreter. Share s'mores at Campfire Magic. Touch an owl feather at Sidney Spit Drop-in Saturdays. Listen for seal pups at Sunset Wildlife Watch. Fall in love with a whale at Orca News. Find the clues at Winter Cove Family Sundays. Weave cedar bark at Coast Salish Traditions.

Prefer to go at your own pace? Download an Explora trail guide app or search for geocaches and earn a Parks Canada geocoin or pick up your Xplorers booklet.



Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

# Visitor Guide 2015

## MORE INFORMATION

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## Coast Salish Traditions

The Gulf Islands are part of the homeland of the Coast Salish First Nations. They have lived in this region for thousands of years and their knowledge, culture and oral history have been passed from generation to generation. Since time immemorial, the land and sea have nourished and sustained First Nations communities and their ties to the natural world can be seen in all aspects of their culture. Discover these connections first-hand by participating in a Coast Salish Traditions activity this summer!



## BC Ferries Coastal Naturalist Program

During the summer months, Parks Canada and BC Ferries present the Coastal Naturalist program onboard BC Ferries vessels travelling between Vancouver and Victoria and West Vancouver and Nanaimo. Meet a naturalist on the outer deck to enjoy conversations and short presentations about BC's wildlife, marine life, culture, history, geography and coastal national parks.



For schedules and more information: [bcferries.com](http://bcferries.com)



## Plan Your Visit

**Getting here:** Visit Sidney Island by kayak, private boat or seasonal passenger ferry from the Town of Sidney or set sail to Pender, Saturna and Mayne Islands from BC Ferries terminals near Victoria and Vancouver. Explore backcountry areas of the park reserve by boat, kayak or water taxi.

**Season of Operation:** From May 15 to September 30.  
**Reservations:** To reserve a campsite (McDonald, Sidney Island and Prior Centennial) visit [reservation.parkscanada.gc.ca](http://reservation.parkscanada.gc.ca) or phone 1-877-737-3783

**Programs and Events:** For program times, full itineraries and to plan your trip, visit our website or contact our office. You can also pick up a copy of our Summer Fun Guide or download it online.

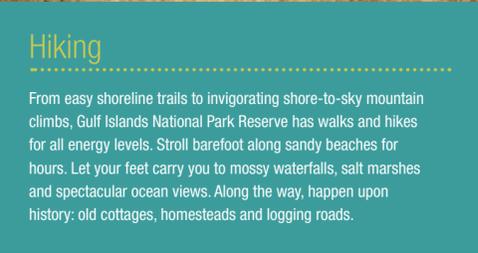


### LEGEND

Moorage	Hiking
Beach Access	View Point
Dinghy Dock	Office
Mooring Buoys	Administration
Anchoring Area	(BC Ferries Coast Naturalist Program during summer months)
Potable Water	Other Ferry Routes
Parking	Main Roads
Camping	Gulf Islands National Park Reserve
Group Camping	Parks Canada Protected Marine Area
Drive-in Campsite	Authorized Access Only
Picnic Area	
Washrooms	



Many adventures await — leave ordinary and your passport behind and discover Parks Canada at Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.



## Camping

Are you new to camping or a seasoned pro? Gulf Islands National Park Reserve offers outdoor overnight experiences for everyone. Pack the car and take the family for a weekend escape to a sun-dappled forest or leave everything behind and cycle, paddle or hike to a rustic campsite near secluded beaches. Add some stars and a few hoots from an owl and you've got the perfect evening!

## Hiking

From easy shoreline trails to invigorating shore-to-sky mountain climbs, Gulf Islands National Park Reserve has walks and hikes for all energy levels. Stroll barefoot along sandy beaches for hours. Let your feet carry you to mossy waterfalls, salt marshes and spectacular ocean views. Along the way, happen upon history: old cottages, homesteads and logging roads.

Visit the website for more information about park reserve trails and campgrounds.