



S K I L S

Zeballos to Tofino Challenge



Program Description

This is an expedition that is designed for the intermediate to advanced paddler who wishes to explore remote locations while receiving quality instruction and feedback along the way. Whether you have received training through Paddle Canada or another organization, or are a motivated paddler with practical experience, this program will allow you to apply and polish your existing skills while deepening your understanding of their tactical applications. Traveling through the remote West Coast of Vancouver Island you will push your skills while exploring the surf beaches and rocky points of this beautiful ocean playground.

With our committed instructors you will take full advantage of this wild place while also having the opportunity to hone your skills. We will delve into topics from expedition management to technical paddling skills that will help to make an already confident paddler a more competent mariner.

Paperwork Checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure you have received and reviewed all the required documentation prior to the program start date:

- ✓ Zeballos to Tofino Challenge Information Package – please review
- ❑ SKILS Waiver – please sign with your instructor at the beginning of the program
- ❑ SKILS Medical Form – please bring a completed copy to your program
- ❑ Policy and Procedures Document – please review
- ❑ SKILS Training Manuals – please review

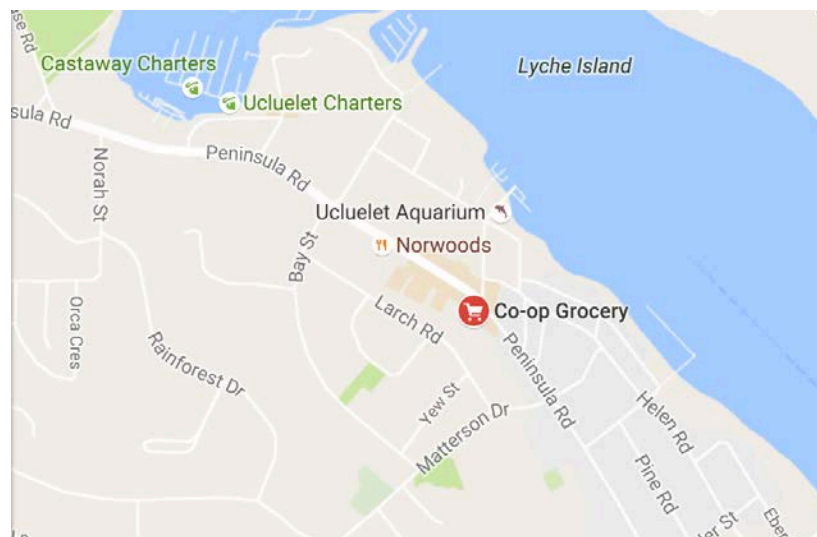
Program Overview

Prerequisites

Interested candidates should have extensive (over 50 days) previous sea kayaking experience and have experience in dynamic waters and surf. Some expedition experience is required. If you do not meet these prerequisites, and are interested in challenging this program, please make arrangements to take appropriate training before this course. Please note that this program is intense as well as mentally and physically demanding.

Program Outline

Following is a general outline for the Zeballos to Tofino Challenge. Depending on weather, group needs, and conditions, the schedule will change. The program will incorporate workshops, travel and exploration as the location and conditions dictate. Please meet at the Ucluelet Co-op Grocery parking lot, Vancouver Island, BC at 4:30pm the day before our trip.

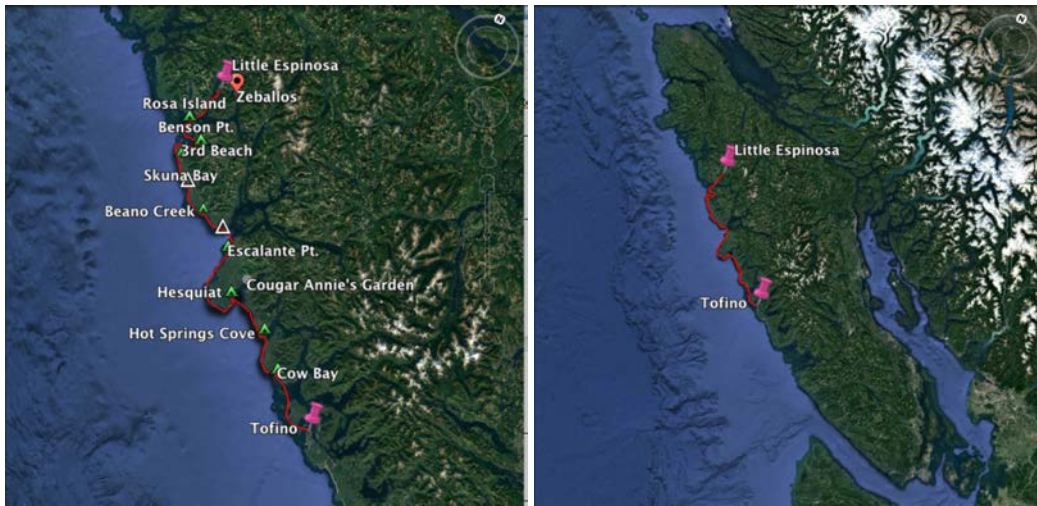


*Map of Ucluelet indicating the location of the Co-op Grocery store, which is where we will meet at 4:30pm the day before our trip begins.

Our Classroom

The West Coast of Vancouver Island stretching from the Zeballos to Tofino will be our classroom. These stretches of coastline are remote and offer a diversity of surf beaches, rocky coastline and exposed waters. There are endless places to explore as we build our skills to become more competent mariners. Not to be

overlooked is the opportunity to see terrestrial and aquatic wildlife on a grand scale as we paddle on the edge of Pacific North West.



*Maps illustrating the trip route for the Zeballos to Tofino Challenge.

Participation

Packing and unpacking the boats, carrying them to and from the beach, and setting up and breaking camp will be a group effort. The old adage 'many hands make light work' holds true as always. There will also be lots of rest and relaxation time. If you're handy around the kitchen, or would like to learn about cooking on trip, help chopping vegetables and other such preparation for our meals will always be welcome. As well, pitching in to help with cleanup after meals is greatly appreciated. We find that if everyone chips in a little with some of the chores, the tour is more enjoyable and eventful for all, as the guides have more time to do what they do best—guide. That means more time to explore and more time to take in the scenery.

Program Safety

Ocean kayaking and camping are not without risk. Certain sea kayaking rules and camping techniques must be agreed to and observed by all members of the tour to maximize the safety and enjoyment of all participants and minimize our impact on the ecosystem. We will discuss these rules, why they are necessary, and what contingency plans we will use in the event of an emergency, at the beginning of our time together.

The Elements

The weather is variable at all times on the West coast; during the expedition we can expect sun, rain and wind in varying amounts. Please come prepared. The water temperature varies from 9 degrees to 17 degrees Celsius. Bring warm clothing and immersion gear. Rubber boots and a good rain jacket and pants are highly recommended.



Your Instructors

SKILS staff members are industry leaders and professionals with extensive guiding and instructional experience and certification. For profiles on each of our staff members, please visit our website at www.skills.ca.

Ratios and Group Size

Our minimum group size is 3 participants and 1 guide; our maximum group size is 8 participants and 2 guides. For your safety and enjoyment, we ensure that 2 experienced guides lead any group with more than 4 participants.

Program Logistics

Accommodation

You will need to make your own accommodation arrangements in Ucluelet for the night before the program starts and optionally after the program finishes. Ucluelet is a popular tourist destination, so make certain you reserve your accommodation well in advance. The following links may help you in finding accommodation in the Tofino area:

- Surf Junction Campground <http://www.surfjunction.com>
- Surf Inn Hostel <http://www.surfsinn.ca>
- Little Beach Resort <http://littlebeachresort.com>
- Pacific Rim Motel <http://pacificrimmotel.com>
- Terrace Beach Resort <http://www.terracebeachresort.ca>
- Ucluelet Campground <http://uclueletcampground.com>

Transportation

You are responsible for transportation to and from Ucluelet, which is the starting location of the tour. Once in Ucluelet, SKILS will provide transportation for you and

your equipment to Zeballos. We paddle back to Tofino, and then SKILS will provide transportation back to Ucluelet.

Vancouver Island is easily accessed by air, ferry, and bus. Air Canada and WestJet offer regularly scheduled flights. BC Ferries offers ferry service from Canadian departure locations, while Washington State Ferries and the M.V. Coho offer ferry services from American departure locations. Once on Vancouver Island, Ucluelet can be accessed by car or the Tofino Bus. Following is a list of links to help you plan your transportation.

- **Air Canada**
 - 1.888.247.2262 (in North America)
 - www.aircanada.com
- **WestJet**
 - 1.888.WESTJET (1.888.937.8538)
 - www.westjet.com
- **Washington State Ferries**
 - 206.464.6400
 - www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries
- **BC Ferries**
 - 1.888.BCFERRY (1.888.223.3779) from anywhere in North America
 - 1.250.386.3431 from outside North America
 - www.bcferries.com
- **M.V. Coho Ferry**
 - 360.457.4491
 - www.cohoferry.com
- **Vancouver Island Connector**
 - 1.866.986.3466
 - www.viconnector.com

Meals

SKILS will provide nutritious meals each day, beginning with lunch on the first day of your trip and finishing with lunch on the final day. Our meals are specially designed to be delicious, nutritious, and transported with us in our kayaks with minimal refrigeration. We will gladly try to accommodate any dietary requirements or allergies; just let us know at least two weeks in advance of the tour.

What SKILS Will Provide

The cost of the program includes highly experienced and certified guides, Wilderness First Responder certified first aid, nutritious food and expedition kitchen, repair kits, shuttle transport from Ucluelet to Zeballos, and camping fees. *Renting a Kayak and associated safety gear is available upon request.



Cooking Gear

- Large group tarps
- Stoves
- Fuel
- Lighters
- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils
- Cutting boards
- Cups
- Bowls
- Plates
- Cutlery
- Washing basins
- Pot scrubbers

- Dishwashing soap

Safety Gear

- First aid equipment
- VHF Marine Radio
- Signaling flares

Food and Water

- Drinking water in portable containers
- Nutritious meals and snacks

Drybags

We will provide each participant with one 20 liter and one 5 liter drybag in order to protect your gear and clothing.

What You Need to Bring

Following is a list of gear that you will need on the course. Most items are required, however, an * indicates the item is optional.

Paddling Gear

- Sea kayak
- Paddle
- Sprayskirt
- ULC approved PFD (Personal Flotation Device)
- Whistle
- Hand pump
- Tow line or throw line (buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters in length)
- Paddle float
- *Spare paddle
- *Sponge for drying out hatches

If you are providing your own kayak and paddling gear for your program, your sea kayak must meet the following requirements: (1) it is suitable for open sea conditions; (2) it has positive buoyancy when capsized; (3) it is able to adequately carry gear as required for the program; (4) it has perimeter lines; (5) and it is at least 17 feet long. Please note: recreational kayaks that do not meet the above requirements are not suitable for our program. If you have questions about the suitability of your kayak, please contact us. We have many suitable kayaks in our fleet and will be happy to match you up with an appropriate rental for this program if you are concerned about the suitability of your own craft.

Camping Gear - If you are paddling with friends you may choose to share a tent

- Tent

- Sleeping bag – 3 season bag with synthetic insulation
- Sleeping mat
- *Tarp with thin cord

- *Pillow case

Toiletries

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Sunscreen and lip balm with high SPF protection (30 +)

Immersion Clothing

- Wet suit and paddling jacket or dry suit. You will be paddling in this gear for extended periods of time, so make sure it fits well.
- Neoprene booties or other immersion footwear
- Paddling gloves or poggies

Personal Clothing

The following is a guideline to assist with your packing; feel free to bring more or less as you feel necessary. Please avoid cotton as it keeps you cold when it's wet. Please wear clothing designed for outdoor use and made from Merino wool, silk or synthetic materials such as Capilene, polyester, polypropylene, or nylon.

Torso

- Rain Jacket
- 1-2 fleece or wool sweaters/jackets
- 2 pair long jane/john tops
- 1-2 T-shirts
- 1 wind breaker

Legs

- Rain Pants

Feet

- 2-3 pair warm sock made with synthetics and/or wool
- 1 pair camp shoes – Sneakers work well
- 1 pair rubber boots
- 1 pair sport sandals or shoes that can get wet
- *2 pair liner socks – Polypropylene or wool are common materials

- Toilet paper
- *Biodegradable soap
- *Camp towel
- * Pads and/or Tampons



- 1-2 pair pants – At least one should be made of nylon
- 1 pair fleece or wool pants
- 1 pair long john/jane bottoms
- 1 pair shorts

Head

- 2 wool or fleece caps
- 1 Brimmed hat or baseball cap

Hands

- 1 pair of fleece or wool gloves
- *cycling gloves for paddling to prevent blisters

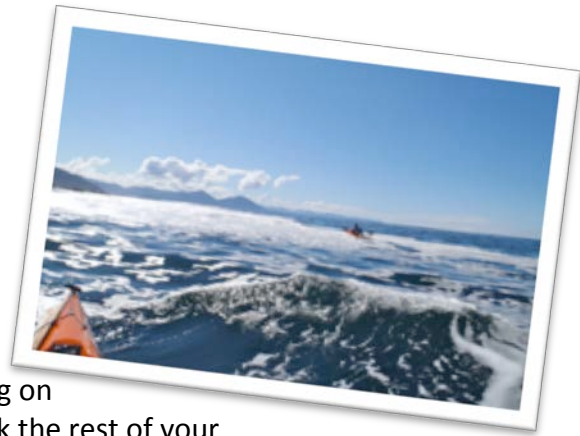
Miscellaneous Gear

- Headlamp or Flashlight with extra batteries
- Sunglasses with good UV protection with retriever strap
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent
- Small day pack or fanny pack for carrying camera, water bottle, etc. on short hikes.
- Spare garbage bags and zip locks
- Bathing suit
- *Notebook with pencils &/or pens
- *camera
- *Pocket Knife
- *Small personal first aid kit
- *Moist towelettes for a quick cleanup
- *Good Book
- *Binoculars
- *Earplugs for light sleepers
- *Games such as Frisbee or cards

If you need to rent gear such as kayaks, kayaking gear, tents, sleeping bags, or sleeping pads, you can make arrangements with SKILS; please contact our office at info@skills.ca.

Packing your gear

You will need to waterproof at least your clothing and sleeping bag. Depending on how watertight your kayak is, you can pack the rest of your gear loose or in zip locks inside nylon stuff sacks. Here are two packing methods that work well. In fact, we usually use a combination of the two when we pack. Remember to leave room for group gear.



Dry Bag Method

Dry Bags are especially designed for paddle sports and are available at most sporting goods stores. Depending on the closure system they do not always keep all the water out. Test them in the shower before the trip. You will need two 20 litre bags for your sleeping bag and bulky clothing and 2 or 3 10 to 15 litre bags for your other clothing and gear. We will provide you one 5 and one 20 litre drybag on the first morning of your trip. Let us know if you need more dry bags.

Stuff Sack with Garbage Bag Liner Method

This is the tried and true method of years gone by. Line a stuff sack with a garbage bag. Pack as normal. Squeeze the air out before twisting the garbage bag top. Don't tie the garbage bag or use twist ties. Simply tuck the twisted end down into the stuff sack before drawing the top closed. This technique is reliable but not durable, so make sure you bring extra bags with you. You can improve the durability of this system by adding a 2nd stuff sack into the garbage bag creating a plastic sandwich. This method takes up less room than dry bags and makes the kayak easier to pack.

A couple of final packing pointers....

- it is easier to pack your kayak with many smaller bags than a few larger ones,
- a large duffel bag or IKEA bag is useful for transporting all your small bags to and from your kayak,
- a large Tupperware/Rubbermaid is good for storing wet gear in your car.

Medication

Please note that you will require a current tetanus shot (a tetanus shot is valid for 10 years). This is very important, as tetanus is a naturally occurring bacterium that lives in the soil. If you do not have up to date tetanus inoculation, you may contract tetanus through a scratch or cut, and require immediate evacuation. A simple tetanus shot, easily accessible at most medical facilities, removes the risk of contracting tetanus.

Please be sure to let us know of any medical conditions of which we should be aware. Please duplicate and separate the quantities of any medications you will need during your program, and give your duplicated medications to your instructor, who will carry them. This will provide an additional source of medications should the primary set become wet, damaged, or lost. If you are prone to any health disturbances, e.g., easily infected cuts or severe migraines, please remember to bring any preventive medications. If you have any questions about medications, contact your doctor. Swell or wind waves can be encountered on the ocean. If seasickness is of concern to you, your doctor or pharmacist may be able to recommend medication to help. Also, anti-nausea (drug-free) Gravol Ginger, candied ginger as well as wristbands work well for many people. Please note that seasickness occurs only rarely in sea kayaking. Be sure to let us know if you anticipate that seasickness will be a problem for you.

Preparing for Your Program

Kayaking requires some upper body strength and endurance. We recommend that you get out kayaking several times prior to your program. If you feel you could use some upper body conditioning before your trip, exercising with light weights can be quite helpful. Concentrate mainly on shoulder strengthening exercises, focusing on endurance rather than strength.



Thank you for enrolling in our Zeballos to Tofino Challenge. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us. We look forward to playing on the water with you!