



San Juan Outfitters

Multiday Tour Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How far will I be paddling? Is it tiring?

A: Multiday Kayak Tours can cover up to 15 miles in a day. Kayaking is considered a sport and exercise, so it is recommended that you are in good physical condition. Our guides will schedule water and snack breaks while on the water to keep you hydrated and energized. Please note that fully loaded sea kayaks can be heavy, and feeling fatigued and/or sore after a day of sea kayaking is very normal. If you are paddling with a child, please anticipate extra paddling.

Once in camp, there will be ample rest time with a fresh, calorie dense dinner.

Q: How do children fair on multiday tours?

A: We specialize in Family Specific Tours and everything from the menu and route, to extra snacks and breaks, is customized to best fit kids. Picky eater? No problem! We love making mac & cheese as much as fish tacos.

Even parents can be tired after a full day of paddling, so it is important to pick the route that best fits you and your children's abilities. Let us help design an itinerary for your family that is achievable and rewarding!

Q: Are there stops available during the crossings to our campsite?

A: Yes! Your guide plans each day's route to accommodate bathroom, rest, and snack breaks. Channel crossings can sometimes take 2 to 2.5 hours to complete, so paddlers should be comfortable sitting for up to 2.5 hours without the opportunity to get out of the kayak. During channel crossings, you will have the opportunity to stop and rest in kelp forests for snacks and water.

Q: What are the campsites like? Amenities?

A: Campsites are beautiful and rustic; all are located in Washington State or San Juan County Parks. There are park maintained composting toilets available in each campground. With the exception of Point Doughty Park, all camps have potable running water available at spigots. Showers and electricity are not available at any camps.

Many of the campsites have gorgeous water views and lots of space for tents and gear. There is also exploring to be had around the campsite! Check out the beaches and hiking trails that are located near all campsites.

Q: What are the restroom facilities like?

A: All campsite locations have State and County Park maintained composting toilets. Outside of camp, restroom facilities are primitive. The locations you'll visit has privacy provided by trees, bushes, and driftwood, but no outhouse structure is available.

Q: What are the kayaks like that we will be using?

A: All of our guests paddle in [Northwest brand](#) double or triple kayaks. We will use what is called an "expedition kayak". This means that the middle seat of a triple kayak is removed in order to pack larger items such as coolers. The kayak seats are roomy and comfortable.

Please note, that if you are on the taller side (6'2"+) you may need to sit in the front cockpit of the kayak. The rear seat operates the rudder with a foot cable system and it can be uncomfortable to operate if you are taller.

Q: What is the food like? Do I need to bring anything?

A: The food is delicious! We go the extra mile to serve fresh, organic, and local food that is not only tasty and healthy, but also calorie dense to fuel your activity. We are able to accommodate most dietary needs such as vegetarian, lactose free, and gluten free with advance notice.

Our regular menu often includes fish and meat. Breakfasts are always hot and filling and there is plenty of coffee to go around. We provide snacks as well! We can assure you that you will not go home hungry.

Unless you have a special snack that you want to bring, you do not need to bring any food. You are welcome to bring a wine, beer, or spirits, but please avoid glass if possible.

What is the gear like?

A: We use top of the line gear from brands like Mountain Hardware, MSR, and REI. Each person will have a 1.5in inflatable sleeping pad, 30 degree sleeping bag, and compressible travel pillow. All participants are required to use provided sanitized pillow case and sleeping bag liner.

All of our tents are 2-4 person and easy to set up. If you would like to use any of your own personal gear, please let us know. As long as your gear fits into the provided 20 liter drybags, we are happy to accommodate!

Q: Do we go rain or shine? What are temperatures like?

A: We do! Sunny days and rainy days are both beautiful here in the San Juan Islands. Our summer is typically dry, but we do receive occasional rain. Please come prepared with rain gear and watch the weather forecast as your tour approaches. We do paddle in the rain, but would never paddle in unsafe conditions.

During the summer months temperatures typically soar to a beautiful 80 degrees and cool down to the 60s at night.

Q: What if weather shifts quickly and becomes unsafe?

A: In May through September, it is extremely rare to experience storms that produce unsafe paddling conditions that would prevent a group from completing their tour. In the unlikely event this occurs, we will transport your kayak tour by large motor vessel from the campsite to San Juan Island. We are the only company on San Juan Island with four whale watch vessels 35ft or longer. One of these vessels can be available for a pick-up.

Q: Do I really need to bring everything on the suggested clothing pack list?

A: Yes! We do strongly recommend packing all items on the personal clothing and gear pack list. Each paddler receives one 20 liter and one 5 liter drybag for packing personal items and clothing. While summer weather here in the San Juans are historically warm and dry, nights can be cool and we do occasionally receive rain. Upon arrival to Friday Harbor, if your guide identifies items that can be left behind, we'd be happy to store items securely.

We invite you to contact us with questions about clothing!

Q: What do we do with our luggage while we are on the water?

A: We will securely store your luggage in locked storage while you are on the water. Luggage is stored at our Friday Harbor office, located just steps from the Washington State Ferry Terminal.

Q: Is our equipment transported to our campsite by motor vessel? Do we have to carry it?

A: Great question! All camping equipment, gear, personal items, and food are packed into the kayaks with your group on the morning of your tour departure. This can seem daunting, but your guide takes great care to evenly distribute equipment into kayaks, and match equipment weight with the strength of the paddlers.

Your guide also carries a significant amount of equipment in their kayak, so don't think they are getting off easy!

Q: When should I arrive to San Juan Island?

A: We recommend arriving to San Juan Island the night before your tour departure. This provides you with time to meet your guide at our Friday Harbor office the evening before your tour, where you'll have the opportunity to ask last minute questions, pick-up your drybags, and go over final logistics for the following morning's tour departure.

Get a restful night of sleep at one of our local hotels and be ready for a memorable adventure the following morning!

Q: What time does the overnight tour begin and end?

A: On the morning of your overnight tour departure, our goal is to meet at the launch location no later than 9am and depart no later than 10am. Times can vary due to tides and currents, and a final time will be discussed with your guide the day before your tour. On your return day you will likely arrive to the final destination around 2pm. Please do not make off island travel plans prior to 4:30pm to accommodate any late returns due to weather, tides, or wildlife.

Q: Why doesn't each Itinerary have a set route?

A: Each route within the Itinerary varies based on many factors including weather, tides, group strength, and specific interests and goals. We're flexible and creative, so if you want to paddle more, hike more, or relax more, and can accommodate it!

Q: What are the chances of viewing whales while on this tour?

A: We do often encounter orcas and many other marine mammals on kayak tours, but cannot guarantee any sightings. Orca encounters via kayak are considered a once-in-a-lifetime experience and should not be expected. Orcas travel up to 100 miles a day in a wide area and movements can be unpredictable. However, we have a significant advantage because we are the only kayak operator that also operates four whale watch vessels. Our kayak guides communicate with Captains to get the real-time location of the whales if they are in the area.

Consider scheduling a [Sunset Whale Watch & Wildlife Tour](#) by vessel the night before your tour departure. Boat based whale watch tours have as high as a 98% sighting success rate! Plus, all kayak tour guests receive a 10% discount on their Whale Watch & Wildlife Tour by vessel.

Q: What is our guide like?

A: Our guides are the best in the industry, and are hand selected to join our San Juan Outfitters staff. With over an 80% staff retention rate, our guides are highly trained and have years of experience leading tours in the San Juan Islands. All guides have degrees or backgrounds in biology, ecology, or outdoor recreation. Whether it be creating a home-cooked meal in the field or a delivering a witty joke, our guides can do it!

All of our guides have completed all the necessary kayak and safety trainings and are professional outdoors people. With a love and enthusiasm for the outside world, all of our guides are excited to share the wonders of the Salish Sea with you. [Get to know your guide here!](#)

Q: My guide was excellent! Is it ok to tip our guide?

A: Yes! Your guide works very hard for you. From expert camp chef, to safety and navigation on the water, to positive vibes technician, your guide fills many roles during your tour. Providing your guide with gratuity for exceptional service is customary, but never required or expected. Be assured your guide is appreciative of any gratuity you choose to leave.

More questions? Call or [email](#) us! Our office is open daily. 866-810-1483.