

CANADA IS A COUNTRY CUSTOM-BUILT FOR outdoor adventure. Hiking, paddling, mountain biking and sailing — our offerings are endless. In shorter supply are places to find indoor comfort at the end of a day spent burning energy while out of doors. If you think tents are for the circus, read on. These five outfitters and lodges will treat you to bountiful buffets and puffy pillows between days spent on the trail or water.



SEA KAYAKING; THE LORAINE CLUB

Georgian Bay, Ontario
 White Squall, whitesquall.com

The Loraine Club has stood for a century, which seems like a long time until you consider that the rock underneath it took shape about a billion years ago. The low-slung Precambrian granite making up the 30,000 Islands is some of the world's oldest. It's also some of the most interesting to paddle around. Endless inlets and outlets, bays and peninsulas, channels and islands make the northeast corner of Georgian Bay an infinitely interesting place for sea kayakers.

White Squall has been guiding Bay trips for 28 years. For the tent-averse, they use the Loraine Club as a day-trip base camp. The former fishing camp sleeps 18 and sits solitary on a 16-hectare island off the main channel near Byng Inlet. Themed trips broaden the focus from paddling and can include yoga, photography, painting, sketching or geology. Come home from a day of buoyant exploring and settle down on the wraparound screened-in porch to watch the sunset before dining in front of the original stone fireplace. Here, time is on your side.



LODGES of LUXURY

Explore by day, relax by night ~ BY IAN MERRINGER



PHOTOGRAPHY, OPPOSITE PAGE AND THIS PAGE, BOTTOM: THOM MORRISSE; THIS PAGE, ABOVE: LONNY BARR



MOUNTAIN BIKING, HIKING, CANOEING

Rocky Mountains, British Columbia
Sacred Rides, sacredrides.com

Though they look plenty impressive from a distance, the Rockies really deserve a closer look. This multi-sport trip explores the mountains up close and from every angle. Sacred Rides made its well-regarded name leading mountain bike trips to some of the most exotic places on earth, but got its start right where this trip starts, near Fernie, British Columbia.

During gourmet lunches on the deck at Island Lake Lodge, you'll be able to gaze into the lower reaches of the Lizard Range, where your first two days will be split between hiking to waterfalls and mountain biking along intermediate trails among 800-year-old cedars.

Next, it's up the Rocky Mountain Trench toward Kootenay National Park, where Nipika Mountain Resort waits with hot tub bubbling and campfire dancing. After more hiking and biking, add an afternoon spent canoeing on the scenic Kootenay River. And after six Sacred days, you'll never look at the Rockies the same way again.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MIKE BRGIC



YACHT CRUISING

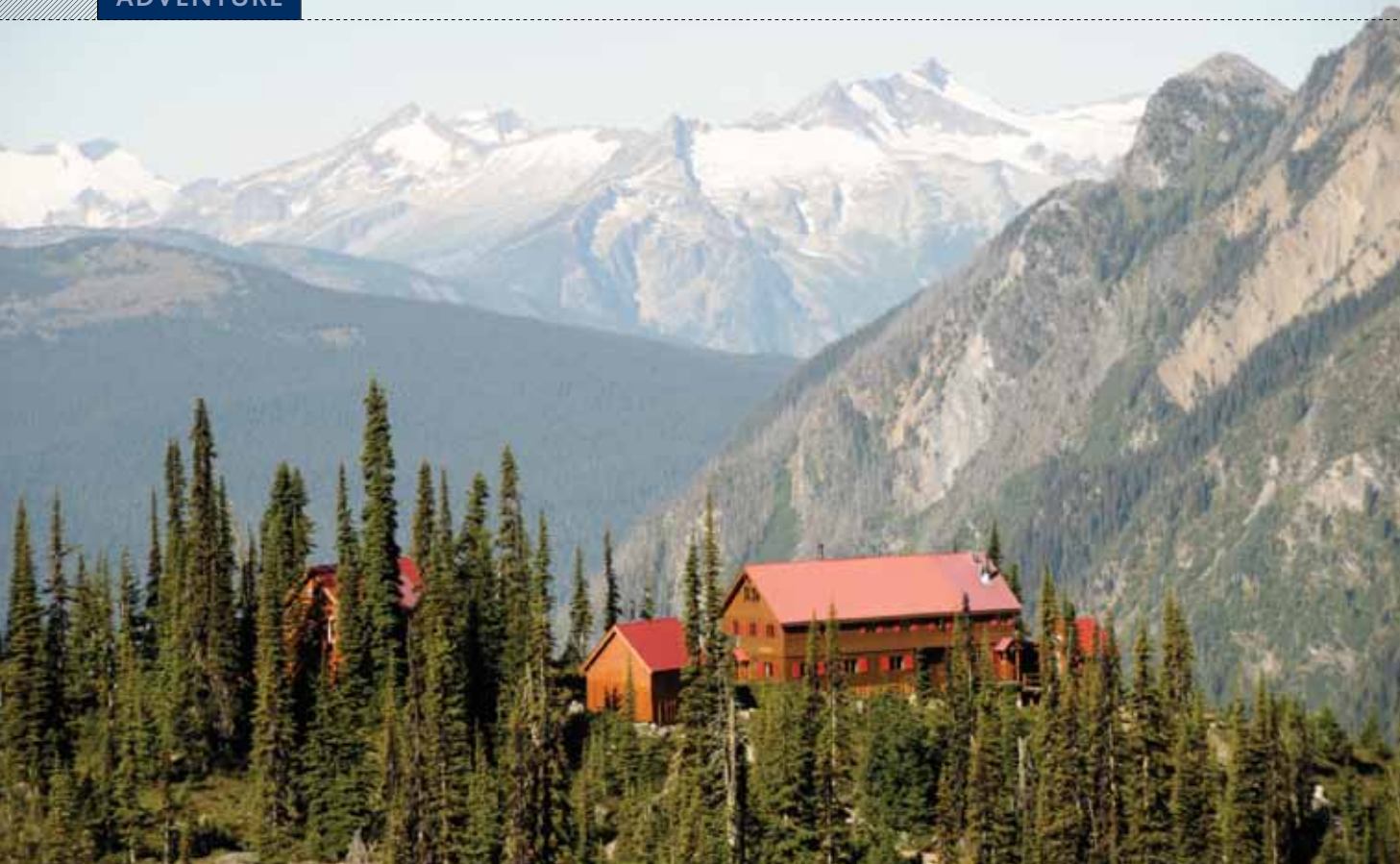
Haida Gwaii, British Columbia
Blue Water Adventures, bluewateradventures.ca

The Queen Charlotte Islands might have been awarded a new (old) name, but they remain just as challenging to explore as ever — unless you happen to be on a sailboat, in which case exploration's a breeze. Remote bays and undeveloped islands are all in-bounds for Blue Water Adventures' 20-metre ketch and its fleet of Zodiac tenders. The two-masted boat serves as a floating, mobile hotel with eight private cabins. If you hear a splash over the deck rail, take a closer look — it might be a breaching humpback whale, or an orca, stellar sea lion, harbour porpoise or fin whale. The crew of four includes a full-time chef who will welcome you back from a shore excursion on the Zodiacs with a loaf of freshly-baked bread and maybe a fish that took the bait that afternoon. A naturalist and historian are along to make the sail through this rich archipelago as invigorating as possible.



PHOTOGRAPHY: A. BOVIES (BOAT), VAL SHORE (WHALE), BLUEWATER ADVENTURES (COAST), R. BURKE (TOTEMS)





HIKING; CHIC CHOC MOUNTAINS
Gaspésie (Provincial) National Park, Quebec
 Gîte du Mont-Albert, sepaq.com

Québec's legendary Chic Choc Mountains are rugged, austere and wild — none of which describes the Gîte du Mont-Albert, the four-star, 48-room lodge located in the heart of Gaspésie National Park. Guests can indulge in saunas, fine regional cuisine or cocktails in the solarium. Of course, all of the above will be more enjoyable after a day hiking on the Chic Choc's tabletop mountains that surround the Gîte. This terminal end of the Appalachian Mountains is home to the only herd of woodland caribou south of the St. Lawrence River. Prime viewing habitat is found on the eight-kilometre, round-trip hike to 1,2570-metre Mont Jacques Cartier, the second-highest peak in the province. The peaks here are more like plateaus of alpine tundra, making summit bids gentle and leaving views of the Gulf of St. Lawrence panoramic. Guests can book a park warden naturalist for \$50 an hour, but the trails are well-marked, information panels abound and off-the-clock wardens are frequent sightings on the trails. The park's visitor centre is right beside the Gîte and offers trail information and bus shuttles to destinations like the trailhead for Lac Aux Américains, a stunning lake situated down a gentle 2.6-kilometre trail.



ALPINE HIKING; DURRAND GLACIER
Selkirk Mountains, British Columbia
 Selkirk Mountain Experience, selkirkeexperience.com

There are no roads to the Durrand Glacier Chalet. It sits at almost 2,000 metres, high in the Selkirks east of Revelstoke. Once the helicopter has dropped you off and retreats out of earshot, you are on your own with 19 other guests, a handful of guides and housekeepers, a chef and some 20 resident mountain goats. Step off the porch and into an alpine meadow at the start of Selkirk Mountain Experience's own 80-kilometre network of trails. Two guided hikes leave each day. The more challenging might be gone six hours and cover 15 kilometres; another might take a more leisurely route following streams up to the glacier itself to collect ice for afternoon refreshments back on the porch. Or, wander on your own: there are alpine lakes in every direction. Pick the right trail and you'll find the one lake just warm enough to swim in.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SELKIRK MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE



PHOTOGRAPHY: MATTHEW DUPUIS (LODGE, LAKE), JEAN-PIERRE HUARD (CARIBOUS), STEVE DESCHAMPS (Hiker)

