

Bring your friends

Travelling with your own posse rocks. Not only are you guaranteed to have friends on the trip but many companies offer discounts for group bookings, too. Expect five to 20 per cent off a trip with four or more people signing up at the same time. Get enough people, sometimes as few as four, and you can even plan a custom trip that fits your group's ability, wants, budget and timeline. And often outfitters will pick the guide most likely to gel with your group—an added bonus.

RECOMMENDED: B.C.-based **Bush Pilot Biking** runs custom mountain-bike trips all over the west. Hotel, camping or back-country guided rides are all possible. (From \$170/day; bushpilotbiking.com)

Bring it yourself

Are you willing to provide your own meals? Or bring your own tent? If so, you could be in for some savings. Consider self-catering. Most outfitters and guides work in at least \$40 a day per person for food. Providing your own tent or boat can also cut costs, or, at least, not add any more. Sometimes these discounts aren't advertised, so ask before you book.



\$945

Hike Vancouver Island

BRITISH COLUMBIA

What Vancouver Island mountains lack in stature they make up for in vertical relief, rising from sea level to 6,000-foot-plus in one go. This traverse benefits from every foot. With the aid of a car shuttle to Paradise Meadows, little time is wasted in the forest. By day two, hikers hit the alpine and leave the treeline and trails behind. For the next five days, your ACMG guide will lead you through alpine meadows, glaciers and jumbled terrain to Comox Glacier, one of the largest icefields on the island, while ocean and mountain views inspire. This trip is a steal, but be warned: You have to provide your own food.

COST: \$945 **LENGTH:** Seven days **WHEN:** June to September **CONTACT:** Island Alpine Guides; (250) 336-2870, islandalpineguides.com

Paddle a fur trade route

SASKATCHEWAN

Some people might say that Saskatchewan's oldest building sits in the middle of nowhere. The Holy Trinity Anglican Church, finished in 1860, is located on the banks of the Churchill River along a canoe route once used by First Nations people, voyageurs and fur traders, and now used by trippers. To reach the church, it's a four-day flatwater canoe from La Ronge, via a maze of channels and islands along Lac La Ronge's north shore and then over a series of centuries-old portages to the Churchill River. A heritage guide, along for the ride, will put every moose pond, trail and legend into historic perspective.

COST: \$925 **LENGTH:** Five days **WHEN:** August 26 to 30 **CONTACT:** CanoeSki Discovery Company; (306) 653-5693, canoeSki.com

\$925



\$875

Kayak the North Shore

QUEBEC

The Charlevoix coast, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, is one of the best places in Canada to sea-kayak with beluga, finback and minke whales during the summer. In fact, more than 15 species of marine mammal have been spotted here. But this kayak trip is more than a safari. Paddlers stroke from the southwest edge of the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park past four-century-old francophone villages, a massive meteor crater and into the estuary of the St. Lawrence River—an area collectively recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. And you ride in a handmade wooden kayak.

COST: \$875 **LENGTH:** Five days **WHEN:** July 9-13, 23-27 and August 6-10 **CONTACT:** Katabatik Sea Kayaking; 1-800-453-4850, katabatik.ca