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# VIEW WILD ORCAS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Words: Suzanne Morphet, freelance travel writer

**“Look, look, look,” yells Jake, as a large orca breaches the choppy water of Blackfish Sound.**

Ten heads turn in unison, our eyes glued to a black whale with a distinctive white eye patch that’s steaming towards us.

Seconds later the whale dives, then surfaces on the other side of our motorboat.

“Oh my God, that was fantastic,” sighs Jake’s father, David, in disbelief.

Viewing whales is what brought us all here, including Jake and David from the UK, to what is arguably the best place in British Columbia to view orcas as well as humpback whales.

Wedge between BC’s mainland and Vancouver Island, Blackfish Sound is renowned, and named for, the orcas that frequent this area all year round.

It’s also where Robson Bight Ecological Reserve was established in 1982 as a sanctuary for orcas, although it’s off limits to people and boats.

Perhaps the best way to enjoy the rest of Blackfish Sound is by glamping on Swanson Island, where Spirit of the West Adventures operates a luxury base camp with canvas tents, real beds, linens, duvets... even hot-water bottles.

Swanson Island is accessed by water taxi from Quadra Island, itself a short ferry ride from Campbell River on central Vancouver Island.

The guided tours, which run from mid-June to mid-September, focus on whale watching and kayaking but the whole experience, from eating hearty, made-from-scratch meals to soaking in a wood-fired hot tub, is so enjoyable you’ll wish you could stay longer than four days.



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**CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN:**  
Star Wars characters at  
Disneyland Resort; a wild orca  
breaches at Blackfish Sound.