

Paddlers Inn, Broughton Archipelago, Heaven

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Way too much to fit in one sitting, but I will try. MAKE SURE you read the story about the hummingbird near the end, best story ever! as they say...

So the Broughton Archipelago is on the east side of way north Vancouver Island. Some of you may have heard of Telegraph Cove, the start of our adventure. A short 6 and a half hour drive from Victoria, then we jump in a water taxi and another 2 hours with kayaks on racks and gear we head out to the Paddler Inn. As the pics tell, no electricity, unless solar, gas lites, hot showers, thanks gas!! Bears on the beach most mornings, if tide is low, and not a sound but the ravens clucking. The inn is just a half hour paddle from Echo Bay, a bit of a yacht marina and general store, once had 350 residents, now only 6 stay over the winter, and Billy Proctor is the main guy. Billy is in his seventies, was a logger, fisherman, general woodsman. He has lived here all his life, from age 5. He has a museum, with artifacts he has collected off beaches and so forth over may years, and still beach logs today. Last year, he salvaged over 500 logs from around the sound, yeah just like Relic of the Beachcombers, but the REAL thing. Tough as nails, life is not easy here, even in our modern times. Billy has a cel phone, but still heats with wood, hunts for all his meat, and even builds little projects over the long boring winter, like the new trappers shack in the pics below. He took about 2 weeks to build it, from ONE LOG, with an axe and a bag of nails, he did it to show how it was done back then. This man is a living legend. He was once the type of guy just to "blow away" what he saw, as a hunter and logger, this is what you do, sort of...but at one time in his life, he noticed less deer, less fish, fewer whales, and he decided, with some help from friends, to be a steward of the land. He is now good friends and neighbours of Alex Morton, the driving force in this province and all of Canada to get to the bottom of lice on salmon and how fish farms cause damage to the natural state of this wonderful place.

But enuf about the people, even though they are important, more on the place. We stayed at the Paddlers Inn (add .ca to go to the website, a good idea). It is in Little Simoom Sound. Bruce, the owner, squatted here back in the early eighties, in a kayak. So there is indeed magic here, and Bruce is a big part of that. A large float, with a lodge on it, it was an old church, but no more congregation, so it is now a lodge with Bruce. The "Love Shack", is the smallest, built in the very early 1900's, and has been slid from one float to another over the years, as the floats, which are just giant logs tied together, get saturated and no longer float so good...At night, you her nothing, really..... unless you have the propane light on. It is very rustic, but super clean and comfy. We had a small wood stove to warm up at night, and to dry our paddling duds, a great little perk you don't get when camping, unless hot and sunny, which can be rare, even in summer, it is a rainforest, rain first forest next...Speaking of, after our small paddle to Billy's place, and then off to Alex Morton's salmon research center, where we got a tour from Zephyr, a very nice gal, the caretaker and one of the scientists there. They basically count lice on salmon, among many other experiments, as we learned. So far from civilization, but humans push forward.

We took 2 more paddles, one every day. We ended up doing just over 50 kilometers in 3 days, a nice easy pace indeed. Our next trip was to the Burdwood Group of islands, lots of little

hummers, I am waiting for Dan, another paddling partner, who promised to take many more shots, as he is there for the summer to help out Bruce, nice!

Our longest trip was to Insect Island, about 22 clicks. We landed at the shell beach, an old 4000 year old midden, it is over 40 feet high, all tribal garbage from the 150 or so souls who lived here until just a hundred years or so...Living off the land, in tents, in harmony with nature, no disease (until we showed up), for over 4000 years. We walked through the woods, just imagining what life must have been like. Yes there are more trees, and it has changed a bit...but life was simple and pure then, no matter who you were, if you were here. If you want to learn about the real Canadians, you could start here. We did arrive at the Inn July 1, strangely enough.

Bottom line, if you can GO! Even if you do not kayak, but if you do, it is not an overly dangerous place to paddle. The weather was good, we saw 3 pods of dolphins, a few porpoises, a humpback whale, minks, no deer, to many cougars now...you can rent kayaks from the Inn, get all set up and go and see it, all of it!!!