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## Witness grizzly bears and whales in B.C. sanctuary on one-day charters from Calgary and Edmonton

**MARK SISSONS**

*Postmedia Content Works*

Only accessible by air and water, the lush, emerald Khutzeymateen Valley located on the remote northern coast of British Columbia is home to an abundance of iconic Canadian wildlife, including the highest concentration of grizzly bears in North America.

More than 50 grizzlies make their home here in the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary, established in 1994 by BC Parks to protect their critical habitat. Each spring, the bears descend from their dens to feed on protein-rich sedge grass along the shoreline of this pristine wilderness. Surrounding them is the largest stand of Sitka spruce remaining anywhere in the world, with some giants reaching up to 100 metres high and 1,000 years old.

"The Khutzeymateen is truly a salmon forest," says Brian Keating, naturalist, and former assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Calgary. He has

led nature-based adventure tours to some of the planet's wildest places for over three decades and is the co-producer of [greatbignature.com](http://greatbignature.com). Keating explains that "the grizzlies here transport the salmon up the inlet, consume it, and leave a large part of the carcasses, fertilizing the earth and allowing the Sitka to grow to monumental heights and age."

Join Keating and other experienced guides for a one-day expedition this June.

"The bears are an amazing main event on this day tour, but the side-show of whales and other marine life make this tour a complete West Coast wildlife adventure that appeals to people of all ages," says Bill Lamberon, president of Classic Canadian Tours. Guests on the Grizzly Bear West Coast Tour fly non-stop on a chartered Boeing 737 from Calgary or Edmonton to Prince Rupert, B.C., then board a 100-passenger, 72-foot catamaran for the tour before returning home on a dinner flight.

"Flying from the Alberta grasslands to the vibrant

green of the West Coast rainforest, then travelling along this incredible shoreline to explore the sacred Khutzeymateen really gives you a feel for the immensity of the landscape," says Keating.

Cruising north from Prince Rupert through Chatham Sound, passengers learn about this region's Indigenous history and marine life, including humpback and orca whales, porpoises, seals, sea lions and bald eagles that sustain its grizzly population.

After entering the Khutzeymateen, guests observe bears feeding on mussels and other sea treats from the safety of the catamaran as it silently glides up the tranquil inlet to get remarkably close to the bears.

"This adventure truly is a wildlife photographer's dream," says Keating. "It's also the most beautiful kind of tourism, where we go in, quietly watch, and leave without disturbing the bears."

For more information, or to book, call 1-866-460-1415 or visit [classiccanadiantours.com](http://classiccanadiantours.com).

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**GRIZZLY BEAR WEST COAST DAY TOURS**  
June departures from Edmonton and Calgary