



Whistler Hiking from Vancouver Trip Notes **July 25-August 3, 2013**

Summary: Tom and I loved Vancouver in May when I came for the marathon and I was sure that I didn't get enough of it so away I went again: three nights before a hike to the Whistler Mountains region and one night thereafter.

Tourist

I signed up for a guided tour of The Capilano Suspension Bridge and Grouse Mountain on Vancouver's North Shore. Tom didn't particularly care to do these hikes when there in May and we had plenty of other things to do anyway.

The drive over The Lion's Gate Bridge spanning the entrance to Vancouver's port is a start since it was the longest suspension bridge in the world when it was completed offering unparalleled views of the harbor and English Bay beyond. This bridge was built by the Guinness family who was developing land on the north shore and then later sold the bridge back to the city.

Capilano Bridge and the new Cliff Walk (only opened in 2011) is said to be a heart-stopping swinging bridge and cliff-side journey. It does suspend one over and through the rainforest vegetation on a series of unobtrusive cantilevered and suspended walkways jutting out from the granite cliff face above Capilano River. Not for the faint of heart as some turned back, it is high and narrow and, in some sections, glass is all that separates one from the canyon far below.

The Capilano Suspension Bridge was one of Vancouver's first tourist experiences from the 1800s. You walk among the temperate rain forest and towering trees to learn the ways of the local first nations' peoples (that's the politically correct way to say the Indians.) It is the world's longest foot suspension bridge and it crosses the river far below. After going over some little swinging bridges in Peru, it was nothing! But worth going as on the other side you climb to the canopy and hike through the Treetops Adventure walkway well above the canyon floor and the river below.



Grouse Mountain Sky ride saved me from myself. Had I had my own time schedule, I might have tried to skip the 3,700 feet cable car ride and hike up The Grinder. It's a heck of a viewpoint above

the city. Once atop the mountain we were offered a cute Logging Sports show where they allegedly duel it out with axes and chainsaws. There is a grizzly bear preserve where you can get up close with only a thin wire fence and a couple of meters between you and them. There was a raptor's bird show, but best of all was the view, as we were after all on top of a mountain with a view as far as Mount Baker, a volcano in the United States, and Vancouver Island 30 miles off the coast. I missed the Theater in the Sky because I chose to hike up to The Eye of the Wind, a turbine tower of over 200 feet with an elevator to the top and a 360 degree view while walking around a glass floor and glass windows.

Though I'd taken the basic tourist sites in before, it seemed easier to take another tour with a guide and fortunately it was different enough that I learned more and saw some new sights and certainly heard new stories. Our stop in Stanley Park was different, as were the tours of beaches along English Bay. Going through Chinatown and the historic Gastown were familiar but with some new stories. We started at the Library built to look something like Rome's Coliseum and I'd wanted to spend more time there, and then I ended the tour at Granville Island and though it was my third trip there, it too had some new highlights and certainly good eating at the public market sitting bay side.



The Hike

It's summarized on the itinerary below and my daily notes to Tom are included here. Probably enough. Here are photos taken by Peter and Linda. We were certain there would be catalog covers from these photos and especially now that cute little Carole was retiring and there would thus be room for our pictures! Smile.



This was our last day way up in the clouds of Whistler. We had expected an easy day . . . There is Barbara waltzing off into the sunset. Oops, no the clouds. It would be her last hiking day for a couple weeks until she recovered from this hike.



Yes there was a mountain of snow remaining.



Like in the Sound of Music, the mountains were awash in wild flowers and the clouds only served to allow us to focus on them. That's The Black Tusk Mountain peeking through the clouds and it would be the third and final day we would follow its course.



Up on the top we were very cold but didn't mind at all since it had been warm the day prior.



One of the forest hikes was gloriously beautiful with the moss growing on both sides of the trees like in the Northern Cascades but it was hard to focus on it for all the mosquitos that hounded us. Garibaldi Lake was the most delightful hike of the week followed by the 360 degree view hike.





Video and pictures of hiking Whistler and Blackcomb: <http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/events-and-activities/summer-activities/peak-2-peak-gondola.aspx?season=summer#prettyPhoto>

Daily Trip Notes to Tom

Sunday from Vancouver to Whistler means a 2 ½ to 3 hour drive over a scenic road said to be one of the top ten in North America. There is a famous train ride that runs alongside the roadway.

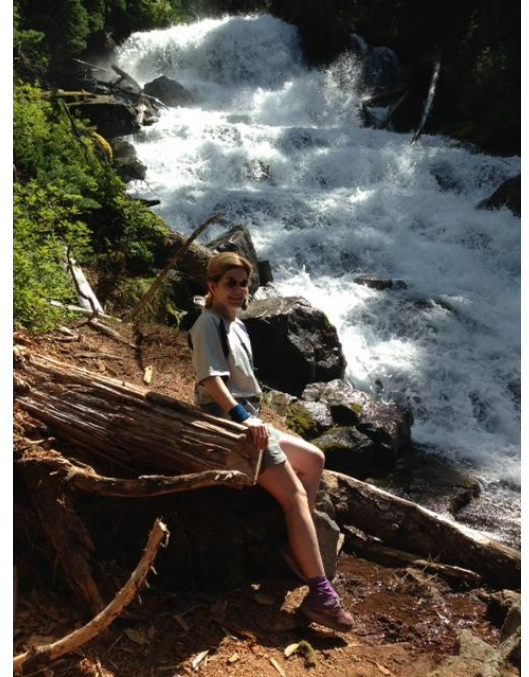
To warm up on our first day we hiked 4-5 miles riverside on the Far Side loop and over a well-supported suspension bridge and stopped for our Subway picnic lunch at Loggers Lake. It was my first experience with black flies that could carry one away.

Dinner at Araxis in downtown which had been one of Tom's favorite and where he's sent friends. It was good but it turned very noisy too.

Monday from Whistler to Pemberton - Meet in Leaders Peter and Linda room to fix lunch at 7:15 then depart by 7:30 with 8am breakfast at Wildwood which is a tennis club. Off to hike 8 miles out and back to what's called "Whistler 360 degree view" where we felt like supermen and where we sat on the upper boulders to indulge in a well-earned picnic lunch. It was a trail road at first with much steepness then into lush forest having given us about 2200" elevation gain plus some up and down. Damn but it was already at 2,400" elevation so we were breathing heavily. We started around 9:30 very close to Whistler with lunch at 12:30 on top. So it took about 3 hours up then 2 hours down. I can really move on the down parts; I huff and puff on the ups. This hike would be treacherous going down in rain. Fabulous view on top.

6:30 dinner in Pemberton at the Pony restaurant with Moules and all sorts of fresh foods eaten outdoors (with the bugs only mildly annoying.) I had local tuna in a Niçoise salad. Great casual place with lots of fun characters but damn we didn't get back to hotel until 9:30!

Tuesday about 25 minutes north of Pemberton near Jaffre where we eventually saw three glacier lakes to include one glacier. First we made lunch at 7:15 then ate a big breakfast at 7:30am before driving to the hike. Elevation gain only 1100' with some steep up and downs including a boulder field where I whined plenty and teetered, obsessing the rest of the day about how I'd get down the boulders but it worked fine and I simply tip toed quickly following some little French kids and found that going faster and not obsessing and thus teetering was the right idea. This hike too started high, well, higher at over 4000' elevation. Total about 7 miles but that took a long time!



Tuesday in Pemberton - So nice to stay in a suites type hotel with kitchen and even washing machine and dryer. We were taken to town for breakfast and what a surprise to find a deli run by a Swiss couple who cooked a real and honest rosti with egg. I voted for going again the next day. Heck, I'd have had dinner there!

Drove about 30 minutes around curvy painful road for the day's hike and surprisingly my stomach made it. Best is the van took us to 4800 feet elevation and then only 1100 feet more of elevation to hike. Sound easy? Took over three hard hours to get to the top lake. Huge boulder field that I had no business on but it was short then just stair-step of roots and rocks via major waterfall. (Oops, this is duplicate?)

Bugs were brutal but in the breeze at top lake they were gone as they were when we kept moving. But we could hardly move any faster than the flies that allegedly travel at 1.2 miles per hour.

Dinner was in town at The Wood Restaurant of Pemberton which was very nice and much classier than expected.

Wednesday morning still in Pemberton - 7:00 fix breakfast, 7:30 be at Swiss restaurant for another rosti having already packed up. This moving of hotels won't be on the next hike, hopefully, as two moves are enough?



Drove thru Whistler again for a hike up Heim or Helm creek which is old forest and alpine meadows that were just lovely and almost like the moss of the Northern Cascades. We started our 2000' climb at 3,000' so this was still huffing and puffing for those of us used to sea level. Add in some descents to river making it at least 11 miles but my calculations (and discomfort) make me certain it was more like 13 miles. Slow slugging miles.

It was unfortunately a one hour drive to trail head which started ok but soon we were covered with black flies. No sprays were effective. I thought I was staggering up the mountain under weight of flies while trying to swat all the time. If I were to fall and not get up, I'd have been one big black mass of flies when found. I was on my own since I kept moving as fast as possible to try to keep the flies at bay. Started hallucinating: that we could call in a helicopter to get us out; maybe needed some road kill to divert the flies. How about sacrificing a leader? Darn leader later claimed they didn't bother her at all. Later I had reason to believe her. It was in fact beautiful old mossy forest but hard to enjoy. In fact impossible. Oddly on the way down the flies were tolerable. When we came into the hotel with only about 40 minutes to move in, clean up and recover, I skipped dinner; they went to town at the Trattoria D'Ambrosio (spelling?). I enjoyed quiet evening eating out of the local grocery store and resupplying my booze.

Thursday out of Whistler to Garibaldi Lake – maybe the highlight hike was Garibaldi if not the “360 degree overlooking Whistler Mountain” hike. Started at 7:00 to fix lunch then 7:30 breakfast at Southside Diner. Wow but Nola had encouraged me to see Garibaldi Lake on my last trip but it didn't happen. It's up to about 6,000' elevation then down to the main lake in view of glacier. Maybe climbed 3,000'. Saw the Black Tusk Mountain from the other side than yesterday.

About 3 1/2 hours up to lakeside islands for lunch then 2 3/4 hour down for total of 12 miles past two lower lakes on easier trail than Wednesday. We were back to hotel by 5pm for 6:10 meet for a 6:30 dinner at Rim Rock. This was the best restaurant (other than the deli for rosti). I had venison with spaetzle. There was even sticky toffee pudding.

Friday up the Whistler gondola - 8:00 Lunch fixing; 8:15 loading bags immediately; 8:30 breakfast at a super lovely and creative restaurant attached to a hotel and called Elements and well worth going back to. Took the gondola up (about \$50 a ticket) to an open chairlift 30 minutes up starting at 10am.

Hike at top is 7 1/2 km and picnic along way with the hike going allegedly down to gondola. Or that's how it was supposed to be but it turned out that this was one hike the leaders hadn't scouted, having trusted that the prior guide HAD, and it was the joke like “The Black Tusk that could only have been traversed with ropes and pick axe.” It was a very strenuous up and down with some wondering if it would ever end and/or if we were even on the right trail. Turned out not only fine but lovely even in the heavy fog which simply made us focus on the trail and huge amount of alpine wildflowers with tops of distant peaks sticking up out of the clouds. We even saw The Black Tusk for the third time sticking out of the clouds.

Having returned down to the Village there wasn't much time left if we were to make it to the airport by 6pm but we managed a bit of time watching some Cirque du Soleil type Yoga show on the mall and were totally fascinated. Our tired bodies were likely cringing at the movements of the couple putting on the dancing-flowing-gymnastic-yoga show.



More on Vancouver available on my May 2013 marathon trip to that city.

Canada's Top Ten List of America's Silliness

10) Only in America ...could politicians talk about the greed of the rich at a \$35,000.00 a plate campaign fund-raising event.

9) Only in America ...could people claim that the government still discriminates against black Americans when they have a black President, a black Attorney General, and roughly 20% of the federal workforce is black while only 14% of the population is black. 40+% of all federal entitlements go to black Americans – 3X the rates that go to whites, 5X the rate that goes to Hispanics!

8) Only in America ...could they have had the two people most responsible for our tax code, Timothy Geithner (the head of the Treasury Department) and Charles Rangel (who once ran the Ways and Means Committee), BOTH turn out to be tax cheats who are in favor of higher taxes.

7) Only in America ...can they have terrorists kill people in the name of Allah and have the media primarily react by fretting that Muslims might be harmed by the backlash.

6) Only in America...would they make people who want to legally become American citizens wait for years in their home countries and pay tens of thousands of dollars for the privilege, while they discuss letting anyone who sneaks into the country illegally just 'magically' become American citizens.

5) Only in America ...could the people who believe in balancing the budget and sticking by the country's Constitution be thought of as "extremists."

4) Only in America ...could you need to present a driver's license to cash a check or buy alcohol, but not to vote.

3) Only in America ...could people demand the government investigate whether oil companies are gouging the public because the price of gas went up when the return on equity invested in a major U.S. oil company (Marathon Oil) is less than half of a company making tennis shoes (Nike).

2) Only in America ...could the government collect more tax dollars from the people than any nation in recorded history, still spend a Trillion dollars more than it has per year - for total spending of \$7-Million PER MINUTE, and complain that it doesn't have nearly enough money.

1) Only in America ...could the rich people - who pay 86% of all income taxes - be accused of not paying their "fair share" by people who don't pay any income taxes at all.

Itinerary

Thu Jul 25

1:00pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#1734
2:25pm Arrive Chicago ORD for plane change
3:33pm Depart Chicago ORD via UA#221
6:02pm Arrive Vancouver YVR

Free airport shuttles by both host hotel and Hampton Inn – within 1/3 mile of each

Host Hotel Holiday Inn Express arranged by www.Timbertours.com
9351 Bridgeport Road, Richmond BC (airport area) BC V6X 1S3 Tele: 604-273-8080

Hotel Hampton Inn by Hilton Vancouver-Airport/Richmond – 3 nights
8811 Bridgeport Rd., Richmond, British Columbia, V6X 1R9, Canada
TEL: 1-604-232-5505 FAX: 1-604-232-5508 Conf#84919933

Fri Jul 26

8:15am Pick up from Hampton lobby for tour – prepaid
9am Start of Northshore Tour of Grouse Mountain and Capilano Bridge Tour via
<http://www.vancouverstours.com/north-shore-tour-details>

Sat Jul 27

Free day

Meet Barbara Van Norman who arrives mid-day? Peter and Linda Carey arrive mid-pm.

Sun Jul 28 – Day 1

8:00am Linda or Peter Carey to pick up from Hampton Inn lobby. Lindacarey5@gmail.com
9:00am Start of tour with www.Timbertours.com at host hotel or at 8:30am at airport

Our program assembles mid-afternoon in Whistler with ample time to explore the intriguing base village prior to our orientation dinner. We'll spend our first night in Whistler and van shuttle north for our first hike, a challenging 8.5-mile round-trip trek along Wedgemont Creek to Wedgemont Lake. The lake's setting is all the reward you could ever ask for- it sits at the toe of Wedgemont Glacier at the base of the massive snowfields of Wedge Mountain. This is the setting for the beginning of our Whistler and The Coastal Range of BC Hiking Tour.



Whistler & The Coastal Range of British Columbia Hiking Tour

Dates:

(6 days, 5 nights;
Sun-Thur)
* 7/28-8/2

Assembly Point: Whistler

(airline service to Vancouver; Timberline van shuttle between Vancouver and Whistler prior to and following tour)

Tour Cost: \$2,200

(includes all lodging, all meals, leaders, tour maps & narratives)

Day 1	Assemble in Vancouver and shuttle to Whistler, explore base of Whistler Mountain	
Day 2	Wedgemont Creek Trail to Wedgemont Lake	8.5 miles
Day 3	Joffre Alpine Trail	7 miles
Day 4	Helm Creek Trail to base of the Black Tusk	10 miles
Day 5	Rubble Creek Trail to Garibaldi Lake	11 miles
Day 6	Tram ride to Whistler Mountain summit, options of hiking trails	

Total Hiking Mileage - 36.5 miles

Hotel Listel Hotel, 4121 Village Green, Whistler BC VON 1B4 – 1 night
 Tele: 604-932-1133 – 1 night then back for nights 4 and 5
<http://www.listelhotel.com/whistler.php> - Free WiFi; coffee service in room

Mon Jul 29 – Day 2

We're headed north to Pemberton in the beautiful Pemberton Valley where we'll spend the next two nights. The quiet dignity of Pemberton provides a fascinating contrast with Whistler Village.

Hotel Pemberton Valley Lodge, 1490 Sea to Sky Hwy, Pemberton, BC VON 2L2 – 2 nights
 Tele: 604-894-2000 <http://www.pembertonvalleylodge.com/amenities/kitchens/>
 Free WiFi; coffee service in all-suite rooms

Tue Jul 30 – Day 3

The following morning, we'll set off on the Joffre Alpine Trail a beautiful 7-mile hike to three magnificent mountain lakes, collectively known as the Joffre Lakes. The trail ultimately climbs to Upper Joffre Lake, around the shore of the lake, and finally to the fringe of Matier Glacier.

Wed Jul 31 – Day 4

Early morning, we'll return to the Whistler area for a visit to adjacent Garibaldi Provincial Park. We're headed for the Helm Creek Trail and its interesting cable-car crossing of the Cheakamus River. The trail climbs from the meadow and emerges into a magnificent meadow revealing spectacular views of the surrounding peaks, including the awesome Black Tusk, a hint of our plans for Day 5. We'll continue on to Helm Lake and more prominent views of the Tusk before returning to the trailhead and another overnight in Whistler.

Hotel Listel Hotel, 4121 Village Green, Whistler BC VON 1B4 Tele: 604-932-1133 – 2 nights
 Free Wi-Fi; coffee service in room

Thu Aug 1 – Day 5

We've seen the Tusk from a distance and the time has come for those prepared for its formidable challenge. An early-morning start is essential and we'll climb steadily to a saddle just east of the Tusk, which hovers as a foreboding vertical wall above. The summit is reached by way of a 330-foot chimney with numerous hand-holds, but is only for the experienced hiker. The views from the summit of the Tusk are unbelievable- Garibaldi Park sprawls below, with Helm, Garibaldi, and Cheakamus

Lakes in clear view surrounded majestically by the glacial spires of the Fitzsimmons and Tantalus Ranges in the distance.

It's back to Whistler's Listel Hotel for a final evening.

Hotel Listel Hotel, 4121 Village Green, Whistler BC VON 1B4 – 2nd of 2 nights
Tele: 604-932-1133

Fri Aug 2 – Day 6

A relaxing tram ride to the summit of Whistler Mountain and a leisurely exploration of the flower-strewn meadows atop the hill. We'll return to the village and conclude our Whistler and The Coastal Range of BC Hiking Tour mid-afternoon.

End of hiking tour after return to Vancouver – anticipate arrival at airport by 6pm

Host Hotel Holiday Inn Express, 9351 Bridgeport Road, Richmond BC Tele: 604-273-8080

Hotel Hampton Inn – as above

Sat Aug 3

Hotel provides free shuttle

7:47am Depart Vancouver YVR via UA#620
1:50pm Arrive Chicago ORD for plane change
5:13pm Depart Chicago ORD via UA#1492
8:29pm Arrive Newark EWR

Participants:

Barbara Van Norman from San Antonio arrives Saturday 7/27 at 11:51am and departs Saturday 8/03 at 11pm (on last year's Beartooths hike)
Chester from Berkeley (on last year's Beartooths hike)
Allison, an attorney from Connecticut
Richard, a professor from Pittsburg
Peter and Linda Carey, leaders – lindacarey5@gmail.com