

Ocean Field School Handbook

Welcome to Ocean Field School.

Over the years it became obvious that some of our most meaningful lived experiences happened outdoors - adventuring, discovering wild ingredients, playing with them around camp, sharing meals and cocktails, and being present long enough for connection to place to deeply sink in.

Ocean Field School was designed to open that door to others. Our hope is that you'll leave with new skills, new confidence, and a deeper appreciation for this remarkable place.

We're looking forward to sharing four days of learning, exploration, good food, and time on the Pacific coast with you. This guide will help you prepare so you can arrive comfortable, confident, and ready to make the most of the experience.

Quick Reference

Location: Ucluelet, British Columbia

Basecamp: Surf Junction Campground, Site 12 (between Ucluelet and Tofino)

Duration: Four days / three nights

Arrival Time: 1pm on Day 1

Departure Time: 1pm on Day 4

Group Size: Maximum six participants

Before arriving:

- ☐ Reserve ferry travel (<https://www.bcferries.com/>)
- ☐ Arrange accommodations before and after the program
- ☐ Prepare personal camping gear and clothing
- ☐ Complete Participant Profile on registration page (www.fromthewild.ca/register)
- ☐ Arrive rested and ready to participate

Program Overview

During Ocean Field School, we will:

- Explore old-growth coastal forests and intertidal ecosystems
- Learn practical wild food identification and harvesting skills
- Prepare meals using local seafood and wild ingredients
- Participate in daily wild mixology sessions
- Explore the coastline by sea kayak while developing confidence and practical paddling skills.
- Work together as a small field team

Ocean Field School is designed around participation. Guests contribute to cooking, camp life, meal preparation, and the shared experience.

The Experience

The Pacific Northwest is an incredibly productive landscape. The goal of Ocean Field School is not simply to identify species, but to understand how those species connect to food, beverage, ecology, and daily camp life.

Throughout the program, we will explore the question:

How can the Pacific Northwest inform how we eat, drink, and come together around food?

Expect a mix of guided instruction, hands-on practice, shared meals, outdoor exploration, and conversations around the fire.

The weather is part of the experience. Rain, wind, and changing conditions are all part of learning to spend meaningful time outdoors.

What We Provide

We provide everything required for the shared field experience except your personal camping equipment and clothing.

Ocean Field School includes:

- Guided field instruction
- Communal campsite during the program
- Group cooking equipment and camp systems
- All program meals
- Daily wild mixology sessions
- Foraging walks
- Sea kayak excursion
- Fishing and crabbing equipment

What You Need To Bring

Camping Gear

Participants are responsible for their own camping setup.

You will need:

- Tent
- Sleeping bag suitable for cool, damp coastal conditions
- Sleeping pad or mattress
- Camp clothing and personal gear

You are staying at a front-country group campsite, not a remote wilderness camp. However, comfort and preparation make a significant difference.

A warm, dry sleeping system is one of the most important pieces of gear you will bring. If you're unsure whether your equipment is suitable, please reach out before the program. We're happy to help.

Clothing & Weather

West coast weather is variable. Expect changing conditions throughout the day.

Expect:

- Rain
- Foggy, damp mornings even on sunny days
- Cool evenings
- Wet conditions

Recommended:

- Waterproof jacket and pants
- Warm insulating layers
- Wool or synthetic clothing
- Warm hat and gloves
- Comfortable hiking footwear
- Extra dry clothing

Cotton is not recommended for wet coastal conditions.

Food & Dietary Information

Meals are a major part of Ocean Field School.

You can expect:

- Local seafood

- Wild ingredients
- Forest-to-table meals
- Collaborative cooking
- Daily wild beverages

Please communicate any dietary restrictions or allergies before arrival.

We are happy to accommodate reasonable dietary needs, but this program is built around exploring wild foods and local ingredients.

Participant Expectations

Ocean Field School is a hands-on, team-based experience.

Participants are expected to:

- Contribute to cooking, cleaning, and camp tasks
- Participate fully in activities
- Work collaboratively with the group
- Bring curiosity and enthusiasm
- Respect the landscape, wildlife, and other participants

Ocean Field School works because everyone participates. Whether preparing a meal, gathering around the fire, or helping with camp, every guest contributes to the experience.

Safety & Conditions

Spending time outdoors involves changing weather, uneven terrain, and natural conditions.

Throughout the program, activities may be adapted based on:

- Weather
- Ocean conditions
- Group comfort and ability
- Safety considerations

Our goal is not simply to complete activities, but to build confidence, awareness, and good judgment outdoors - one of the skills we practice throughout the program.

Travel Logistics

Getting To The West Coast

Travel to Vancouver Island requires planning.

During summer, BC Ferries routes are busy. Reservations are strongly recommended and in some cases required. You're able to make reservations months ahead of time.

Accommodation in the Ucluelet / Tofino region is limited during peak season. Surf Junction Campground reservations *open in January*, and we recommend booking early if you would like additional nights before or after the program.

Plan extra time for:

- Ferry travel
- Driving across Vancouver Island
- Arriving rested before the program begins

Camp Location

Our basecamp is located between Ucluelet and Tofino at Surf Junction Campground.

We will be located at Site 12.

Our camp includes a communal canvas bell tent for gathering, cooking, and shared activities. Participants provide their own tent and personal sleep system.

Daily Rhythm

Day 1 — Arrival & Orientation

The first day begins at our front-country camp between Ucluelet and Tofino at Surf Junction Campground (Site 12).

After setting up your personal tent and sleep system, we will orient ourselves to camp, the landscape, and the days ahead.

The afternoon includes:

- Introductions and group orientation
- Overview of the Pacific Northwest ecosystem
- Camp systems and expectations
- Introduction to wild ingredients and flavours

We'll finish the day with a wild mixology session and a collaborative dinner featuring local seafood.

Optional sauna and hot tub are available each evening.

Day 2 — Forest & Intertidal Exploration

We begin in the coastal forest, exploring old-growth ecosystems and learning key edible plants, trees, and fungi.

From there, we transition to the shoreline and intertidal zone to explore:

- Seaweeds

- Shoreline plants
- Marine ecology

The forest becomes our pantry as we begin connecting species to flavour, ecology, and practical use.

Day 3 — Sea Kayak Excursion

This is our ocean adventure day.

We will launch by sea kayak to experience the coastline from the water. Depending on conditions, activities include:

- Paddling instruction
- Kayak fishing
- Kayak crabbing
- Shore lunch

After returning to camp, we'll process our harvests, prepare dinner, and share stories from the day.

No previous sea kayaking experience is required.

Day 4 — Integration, Applied Cookery & Closing

The final morning is intentionally slower, creating space to reflect on the experience and put the week's learning into practice.

We'll begin with a relaxed morning at camp before moving into an applied cooking and beverage session. Working with the flavours, ingredients, and ideas gathered throughout the program, the group will design and create a celebratory field brunch.

This is an opportunity to experiment, collaborate, and explore how wild ingredients can become part of everyday cooking.

The afternoon includes:

- Guided reflection questions to consolidate learning
- Group conversation around place, food, and future applications
- Final debrief and farewell

The program concludes with a celebration of the skills, connections, and discoveries made throughout our time together.

Final Thoughts

Ocean Field School is an invitation to slow down, pay attention, and build a deeper relationship with place.

Come prepared to learn, participate, get your hands dirty, share meals, and experience the Pacific Northwest through food, landscape, and community.

We're looking forward to welcoming you.