



WHITE SQUALL

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Island Adventures 2012 Trip Participant Handbook

Welcome to White Squall

Inside you'll find important information and checklists to help you prepare for your trip.

We're looking forward to having you join us. Please take the time to read this information in advance and call or email if you have any questions prior to your departure date.

PRIOR TO YOUR TRIP:

- Discuss the trip prerequisites with us upon registration.
- Have the prerequisite skills and experience needed to participate fully in the trip?
- Consider taking additional training prior to the trip? (You get a 10% discount on any clinics or daytrips you take to prepare for your trip – tell us you're a tripper when you book.)
- Complete and submit the registration form and the "Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk" & "Release and Waiver of Liability" forms?
- Arrange for final payment of the trip balance (due 30 days prior to your departure date.)
- If bringing your own boat:
 - o Have you told us?
 - o Have you discussed its suitability and safety gear with the guide(s)?
 - o Are you aware that others may be asked to paddle it while you take your turn in the tandem?
- Review our cancellation policy and arrange for cancellation insurance (from your insurance agent) if you deem it necessary.
- Do some stretching and strengthening exercises for arms, shoulders, back and abdominal muscles.

A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE YOUR TRIP:

- Have your trip Guides been in touch? If not please call.
- Do you know when and where your trip meets?
- Have you made any necessary accommodation and travel arrangements?

GROUP TRAVELLING

When you sign up, you're paying us to make sure you have a safe, enjoyable trip. This means accepting the importance of honouring decisions made for the benefit of the whole group, not you as an individual. For eg., we may be at a spot where you think it would be great to swim for an hour, yet for weather or other reasons the guides may decide to carry on. If it were your own personal trip, you might choose to hang out there and swim, however, when you're with a group - you need to recognize that there are larger concerns. We need to be each other's keeper - and by doing so, the entire group functions more happily and safely.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

Please meet at our Paddling Centre (unless otherwise noted) - at 8:15 am so that you're ready to go at 8:30 sharp for coffee & intros. There's a lounge and change room, as well as our award-winning outhouses. Kayaking is a wet sport, so check the clothing list and be prepared to have fun and get wet. For trips that require driving to another put-in, we'll ask you to drive your own car or pool with others. Once at the put-in, we'll help to park your vehicle in a safe spot, but it is at your own risk (we've never had any problem). We offer free parking at your risk at our Centre.

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE:

We want you to relax, have fun and learn new things. Our staff are professional outdoor leaders with years of experience. They'll encourage you to learn approved paddling, safety and tripping skills. If you'd like to work on specific skills, we'll gladly help, provided the group agenda isn't compromised. Weather & group needs determine where we go and what we do.

Plan to be on the water for 4 to 6 hours (with lots of breaks!). Some days, we may not travel at all. We expect everyone to help out and be involved in the group. We provide tasty meals beginning with lunch on the first day and finishing with lunch on the last day. Our meals are mostly vegetarian, quite varied and ample, using fresh and whole foods. We're happy to accommodate most dietary restrictions, likes and dislikes, as long as you tell us well in advance. We provide daily snacks to keep you happy. Alcohol has no place on the water, but in moderation at the end of the day, it's a pleasant addition to the trip so we'll occasionally offer wine with some of the evening meals (except youth trips of course!). We ask that you not bring your own supply of alcohol.

We provide all group camping and paddling gear including good quality tents. If you choose to bring your own equipment, please let us know when you register so we can ensure that it's appropriate. If you're bringing your own boat, you should also be aware that we bring a tandem kayak for safety and personal comfort reasons. We'll ask all participants to share in the paddling of the tandem during the trip so it may become necessary for someone else to paddle your boat for a short period. If you aren't willing to allow this, then you should leave your boat at home and use ours.

We bring a library that includes recreational reading, field guides and historic accounts. Safety and rescue gear (including a marine radio & cell phone for emergency communication) accompanies each trip, and our leaders are properly trained in its use.

GEORGIAN BAY WEATHER...

Georgian Bay weather can change rapidly, even in mid-summer. Summer days can be hot (30° C) yet in early summer and fall the nights can drop to 0° C. We can't over-emphasize the need for proper sun and rain protection. Summer weather is usually fair and moderate, but rainy, cold days do occur even in July. The water is comfortable for swimming from early June to early September.

GIVING THE BAY A BREAK

Georgian Bay is one of the last great freshwater systems of the world and it's under increasing stress. Island vegetation is fragile so we try not to leave a big mark. We ask that everyone avoid washing in the Bay and we'll provide large wash buckets and solar showers to wash well up on shore. All soapy water is disposed of inland. Garbage is separated and carried out. Cooking is done on gas stoves. Tents are usually erected on flat rock to avoid ground cover damage and with good sleeping pads, your night's sleep will be fine. Latrines are carefully sited and we have strict protocol in their use.

MEMORIES OF YOUR ADVENTURE

We stock topographic maps & marine charts in both of our shops. These tell wonderful stories and will hold great memories after your trip. Give us a call if you'd like to mail-order and do some armchair wandering.

OK WHAT DO I BRING?

- lip balm, sunscreen (waterproof)
- broad-brimmed sun hat, sunglasses
- bandana, bathing suit, towel
- full rainsuit
- windbreaker or paddling jacket
- warm hat, mitts/gloves (evenings can be chilly at times!)
- shoes that can get wet (we insist on footwear at all times)
- extra shoes or boots (for in camp)
- sleeping bag & pad (thermarest, ensolite, etc.)
- camp chair (like Crazy Creek or Thermarest'r)
- headlamp or flashlight, spare batteries & bulb
- insect repellent (DEET free preferably)
- water bottle
- t-shirt, shorts
- light, long-sleeved cotton shirt for sun
- full extra set of clothes
- long underwear (synthetic or wool)
- paddling gloves (optional)
- sweater or fleece top, long pants
- toiletries
- personal medications
- pocketknife
- camp mug

OTHER HANDY STUFF

- small roll duct tape
- 5 metres of light cord
- 2 extra garbage bags
- candle & matches
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FUN STUFF (optional)

- books, journal, pen/pencil
- kite, fishing gear
- mask, snorkel
- binoculars, camera
- compass
- small musical instrument

CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS?

For cold, the best materials are those which retain heat even when wet, don't absorb water and wick moisture from the skin. Denim jeans are not good - wool, nylon, fleece, polypropylene and silk are best. Paddling jackets are really nice to have but a simple windproof shell really helps to retain heat. For hot midday paddling, we find a light-coloured, long-sleeved, cotton shirt or fleece top is great. T-shirts are OK but they don't give much sun protection. Having a warm sweater and pants for the evening is essential. Specialized paddling clothes/gear add to your comfort, but are not necessary unless you intend to take up the sport for the long haul! If you do want well-designed camp gear or clothing, please give us a call or check out one of our shops. Our two shops are full of stuff that we use ourselves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Will we have campfires out on trip?

Most of us love campfires, and if we are camped on a heavily wooded island and the fire hazard rating is low, it may be possible - but don't count on it. The islands are very fragile with little soil cover and sparse wood supply so fires can have a big impact.

Will I have to cook and do dishes?

Yes - a White Squall trip is very much a travelling community where everyone is expected to pitch in where needed. The guides will co-ordinate and coach everyone, and the tasks are simple ones. Often, only a few helpers are needed, so then the rest can go and relax - and help out next time!

How do we wash dishes out there?

We'll have three containers set up for wash, rinse and disinfect along with a pre-rinse where needed. We will usually air dry using mesh bags hung in trees (actually cleaner than towel drying).

What kind of footwear is best - and do I have to wear them all the time?

We ask everyone to wear something on their feet all the time for the simple reason that a foot injury can really mess up a trip, yet it's easily preventable. This is especially important while swimming as zebra mussels can cut a foot very easily. Sandals or water shoes are great. For cooler times around camp, some warm socks and running shoes work well.

How do I pack everything?

Loading a kayak requires using every nook and cranny so use several smaller bags rather than one or two big ones. We suggest dry bags no larger than 15 litres - one for your sleeping bag and one for your clothes. Smaller drybags for wash kit, spare shoes and raingear. Another way to waterproof is to use two strong garbage bags inside a nylon stuff sack. All your stuff is best tucked into a big duffle bag or mesh bag that you can use to carry gear back and forth from the boat. Everyone's bags will look similar so tag or tape them to identify them as yours.

Can I drink the water?

Though it's likely just fine, to be safe we ask everyone to drink only filtered water. The guides will carry water filters with them and you can pump and fill up your water bottle frequently while paddling during the day. If you want to bring your own water filter, that's fine too.

How do I go to the bathroom?

For peeing en route or in camp, you can simply go off into the bushes. For the big stuff, while en route, we will have a kit with trowel handy and we'll ask you to dig a small cathole well away from the water. In camp, we'll establish a proper latrine that we'll give you a tour of once we're there. It's the guides' most favourite thing to do! Yup, you'll be able to use toilet paper (we'll supply it). That and feces are the only things to be composted, and the system we'll show you works well. (Tim - silly person that he is - has dug up previous ones and they've composted back into good soil quite quickly.) Sanitary napkins need to be double-bagged and carried out. Hand washing afterwards is mandatory - and we will have water and soap available for you along with hand sanitizer while en route.

Why do you have duct tape, cord, matches/lighter, candles, etc. on the equipment list?

You would be amazed how many times we get asked that, and the guides usually shrug and say "dunno, Tim wants it there!" My point is that these are very handy items for you to get in the habit of always bringing on any trip. There have occasionally been times when we've needed all of the above - the rest of the time they'll just sit there in your pack!

Why isn't food hung in trees at night?

Usually, we are on islands where there just isn't a tree big enough. We've stored food successfully in kayak hatches for 20 years, and there is the odd raccoon who has evolved enough to open them, but for the most part - we're lucky! We occasionally have to deal with a migrant bear - and our normal strategy is to exit stage left.

Why can't I use biodegradable soap in the Bay?

Even the supposed bio soaps do not break down well in the cold, sterile conditions of the Bay, and there is nothing worse than getting some sudsy water at the shore for morning coffee!!

Why would we occasionally not paddle straight to our destination?

Sometimes, a beeline is a more exposed option due to wind and waves. Also, there is a lot more to see and explore closer to shore, as well as being safer.

Can I be contacted when out on trip?

Consider yourself out in the wilderness, but, in case of an emergency at home your friends/family can call us at (705) 342-5324 and we'll attempt to get the message to you.

OUR NAMESAKE

The late Stan Rogers wrote a powerful song called "*White Squall*" some years ago. It is a beautiful, sweet water ballad with a lingering reminder:

"... and I tell these kids a hundred times don't take the Lakes for granted ..."

We hope we never will. Thanks for listening.