Walking tour of SKIDEGATE

Legend
1. Haida Gwaii Museum/Haida Heritage Centre
2. Spirit Lake Trail
3. Bill Reid Pole
4. Skidegate Beach
5. Balance Rock
• Suggested Walking
• Tour Route

Northern British Columbia

Haida Gwaii Museum, Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay 'llnagaay & Gwaii Haanas Park Headquarters
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Skidegate Heights

To Queen Charlotte City

To Tlell, Port Clements, Masset

Skidegate Heights

Skidegate Beach

Bill Reid Pole

Balance Rock

All About U Arts Gallery

The Carving Shed

Dane’s Takeout

Longhouse Gift Shop

Jags’ Beanstalk Cafe & Gifts

Skidegate Band Council

Delmas Coop Gwaii Branch Grocery

Taaw Naay Gas & Convenience Store

Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP)

BC Ferries Route to Prince Rupert

BC Ferries Route to Alliford Bay

To Queen Charlotte City
Skidegate is one of two modern Haida Villages on the Islands and is fast becoming a cultural tourist base for the community. Located on Skidegate Inlet at the south end of Graham Island, Skidegate’s 800+ residents live a strong cultural life that includes food gathering, potlatching, ceremony, song and dance. This way of living, combined with an enthusiasm for moving forward in health, education, careers and economic development makes Skidegate a dynamic place to live and visit.

In the late 1830’s, smallpox came to the islands and all the villages at both the north and south Haida Gwaii were devastated - the Haida population declined to about 500. The people of Rose Spit and Cape Ball villages on the east coast were the first to relocate to Skidegate in 1850. In 1889, the villagers from Cumshewa arrived. By 1893, the families from all the southern villages moved to Skidegate. By the end of the 19th century, Skidegate and Old Massett were the main centres of Haida culture.

Today, there are descendents from most of the southern villages living in Skidegate; all of who are members of clans with their own chiefs, crests, stories and histories. The name Skidegate, is an English version of the Haida word SGIDAGIDS which means child of red chiton. The original name of the village was HLGaagilda.

**Haida Gwaii Museum/Haida Heritage Centre**

The Haida Gwaii Museum is a non-profit organization with a 20 member board of directors representing all Haida Gwaii communities. The museum originally opened to the public in 1976 at Second Beach, Skidegate. In 2008, the newly renovated 17,000 sq ft expanded museum was opened, as part of the new 53,000 sq ft Haida Heritage Centre. The Haida Gwaii Museum primarily focuses on Haida history and contemporary culture in the form of art, objects, knowledge and documentation. In addition, The museum organizes an annual visual arts program of workshops and temporary artist exhibits; educational programs in conjunction with School District #50; and a series of public programs aimed at Haida Gwaii visitors during the visitor season (May to September). Open daily in the summer with reduced hours during the winter. Admission is $15 for adults, $10 for students, $5 for children 6-12, and free for children under 6. Different hours during the winter months.

The Haida Heritage Centre is an award winning cultural heritage centre in a 53,000 square foot cedar multi-complex consisting of five contemporary monumental timber longhouses. The Centre houses the expanded Haida Gwaii Museum, additional temporary exhibition space, two meeting rooms/classrooms, the Performing House, Canoe House, Bill Reid Teaching Centre, the Carving Shed, a gift shop and a small restaurant/cafe. The Haida Gwaii Museum focuses on the Islands Natural History and traditional Haida Culture. ([www.haidaheritagecentre.com](http://www.haidaheritagecentre.com))

**Spirit Lake Trail**

This 3 km circular walking trail winds its way through many different forest types and loops in a series of interconnected trails around two lakes. On route you can see many culturally modified trees — trees that were tested by the Haida to use in houses, poles and weaving. The trailhead is marked by a stunning carved cedar gateway depicting the Wasco sea monster.

**Bill Reid Pole**

Along the waterfront in the Village of Skidegate, a huge cedar longhouse faces the beach and is fronted by the dogfish totem pole carved by Bill Reid. The Bill Reid pole at the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) longhouse was raised in 1978; this pole was the first to be raised in Skidegate in over one hundred years! The longhouse in home to SHIP, which teaches and preserves the Haida language.

**Skidegate Beach**

The beach in front of Skidegate offers an interesting assortment of intertidal treasures and stunning ocean views. At low tide you can look for crabs, moon snails, starfish, clams and mussels. Watch for whales, sea lions, porpoises and watch the seals as they watch you.

**Balance Rock**

A large bolder left behind from the glacial retreat of the ice age that seemingly totters on the peak of another rock below. Defying the strong natural sea and wind forces for many centuries, Balance Rock has come to symbolize the centre of spirituality on the Islands. The best time to view the rock is at low tide. The beach surrounding Balance Rock is very rocky but still it is a place people seek out for snacking, beach combing and some solitude when thinking.

**Accommodation**

- **Becky’s B&B** • 250-559-8969
- **Octopi Ink** • 250-559-8449
- **Skidegate Inlet Accommodation** • 250-559-4273

For more local information, visit: [www.skidegate.ca](http://www.skidegate.ca)

**Emergency Services**

- **Police** • 250-559-4421
- **Ambulance** • 1-888-461-9911
- **Volunteer Fire Department** • 250-559-7897
- **Skidegate Band Council** • 250-559-4496

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**With Many Thanks:**

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