

Travel to Canada (without a Car). It's very green.

Article and photos
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I have never backpacked. It just isn't chic. Then again, chic is overrated. So, why not give it a try? You can't pack as much. And, that's good because the airlines now charge for luggage. My husband is always game, so off we went. I felt 18 years old again...a free spirit in search of adventure. To Canada! Without a car!

We did drive to a Burbank Airport parking structure. Go online and pay in advance to reduce the parking fee 50 percent. That's cheaper than a shuttle, but more expensive than a friend that owes you a favor. We arrived in Seattle. Surprise! It was raining. We bypassed the car rental desk and boarded the Whidbey Sea-Tac Shuttle for \$37 per person (www.seatacshuttle.com). That includes the fare for the Mulikteo Ferry (that takes you across the bay to Whidbey Island). Once on board the sun began to shine. The driver watched our things as we looked at the scenery from out on deck.

On Whidbey Island, the Sea-Tac Shuttle's route will connect you to the free Island Transit Bus (www.islandtransit.org) that will take you to Langley. Everyone seemed so happy in this charming bay side town. Maybe it was the blue sky that day. We walked a few blocks along the cliffs, past coffee houses, art galleries, restaurants and boutique dress shops like "Get Dressed." Soon, we arrived at The Inn at Langley (www.innatlangley.com). We were welcomed by a warm staff, lush flower gardens, fountains and endless vistas out across Tulalip Bay. Our room was comfortable with a cozy fireplace and a private balcony. The Inn's dining room and kitchen share the same space. The gourmet chef, Matt Costello, explains the six-course meal while he is cooking. A hot, gourmet breakfast is included in your stay. Your bakery chef (also named Matt) makes the best scones on the planet.

We left our new friends in Langley and got on the bus to Coupeville. If you ask, the driver will drop you off just about anywhere. We were dropped in the woods on Penn Cove at Captain Whidbey's Inn (www.captainwhidbey.com). Built in 1907, you

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can almost hear the footsteps of ghost travelers that never left. There is a gracious dining room, library, tavern and guest rooms (with a sink but no toilet) that share a bathroom. We chose a cabin overlooking a private wharf for guests who arrive by sea plane or boat. We took a bus to Ft. Casey (a WW I and II fort built on the cliffs and hidden underground) to see the beautiful Admiralty Head Lighthouse. Later, we strolled through the quaint town of Coupeville. That night we had pizza delivered to our cabin, built a fire and watched the moon over the bay.

The next day we left the country. Bus connections will take you from the Captain's over the famous Deception Pass Bridge, to the Anacortes Ferry. It's a 2 ½-hour trip through the San Juan Islands to Sidney, B.C. Canada. On arrival, you first go through customs and then pay two dollars to ride an English double decker bus to Victoria. We had a beautiful top view of the countryside without having to drive in the rain. We went from roughing it to regal.

The bus dropped us off in front of the historic Fairmont Empress Hotel (www.Fairmont.com/Empress). We had the famous Afternoon Tea at the



Captain Whidbey's Inn

hotel and then walked to the Parliament buildings, the BC museum, historic Chinatown, the wharf, and downtown shopping. One day we took a short bus ride out to the spooky Craigdarroch Castle. And, that evening we rode through the park in a romantic horse-driven carriage (www.tallyhotours.com).

It was time to return to beautiful Santa Clarita. We checked out and walked about five minutes to the Victoria Clipper for the two-hour boat trip back to Seattle (www.clippervacations.com). In Seattle we had to walk up a VERY STEEP flight of stairs to reach Downtown. We could have taken a five dollar taxi ride, but why not work off all those crumpets? My husband's backpack was bulging and the weight of it almost toppled him backwards down the hill. We ate some fish and chips at the Public Market and then got on the nearby Link Light Rail Station to Sea-Tac airport.

I loved doing this trip without a car. We saw the countryside, got in shape and saved money. Instead of always getting somewhere, we enjoyed being in the moment. There is so much of America and the world to explore and so many different ways to get there.

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Coupeville Lighthouse