

HEALTH & FITNESS RETREAT

Coastal Trek



Forbidden Plateau, Courtenay, BC
T+1 (1)250-897 8735
www.coastaltrekresort.com
From US\$3150 per person per week

Coastal Trek is based at a remote lodge nestled against the side of Mount Beecher on Vancouver Island, in an area covered in hiking trails. Guides Andrea and Shayne Stuchbery love the outdoor lifestyle and their enthusiasm is infectious. Your stay is a blend of fresh air and exercise, fitness training, morning stretching, and food preparation classes, supported by like-minded people, relaxing therapies, and meals designed to satisfy and educate.

Andrea is intuitive about balancing guests wishes and needs, and is generous with her time. Hikes start small and increase in length during your stay, passing ancient forests, alpine meadows dotted with flowers, waterfalls, lakes and streams, and zigzagging across mountain passes. Experienced guides accommodate differences in walking pace.



The lodge boasts massive windows spanning the lower and upper floors, and 12 en suite guest rooms are in a quiet wing to one side, complete with heated floors, luxurious linen and queen-sized beds. West coast seasonal produce is featured on the menu; their signature dish is wild salmon baked on a cedar plank. There are loads of veggies, dessert every other day, and no alcohol. Packed lunches are filling, healthy and plentiful. Allergies and special diets can be catered for.

The retreat attracts people in their 30s and 40s whose busy lifestyles have limited the amount of time they have for physical exercise or for playing a sport they once enjoyed. Bring citronella insect repellent, comfortable hiking boots and sunscreen. Expect to be relaxed, tired and rejuvenated, and to take home a plan of action to keep you on track. Stay at least a week – two-to-three-week stays are common.

From Vancouver International Airport catch a commuter plane to Comox airport (www.pacific-coastal.com) or an Airporter shuttle (www.yvrairporter.com) to the Greyhound station (www.greyhound.ca) and take the bus to Courtenay, from where pickups can be arranged.



We hiked out to Cruikshank Canyon. I was hot and getting tired, when the trail ended on a wide, flat ledge. A cool breeze lifted my mood and swept my mind clear. We were standing atop a 1500-ft sheer cliff face stretching as far as the eye could see. In a few minutes we were watching a bald eagle slowly spiralling upwards on the currents. A hush settled over me, and the hike back took on a meditative quality.

Elain Evans