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Minor ferry routes: summer fares canned

BC Ferries has eliminated the peak season fares on minor routes. Except for the Tsawwassen–Gulf Islands run, all other minor route fares will be the same year-round.

‘This step,’ said the announcement, ‘has been taken to help simplify the tariff.’ This may be interpreted to indicate that even BC Ferries’ mighty computers can’t keep track of the fares any more.

Not that it means that summer fares will be reduced: ‘In moving to a year-round fare, peak and off-peak rates were blended to calculate the 7.25% price cap increase.’ The mathematical definition of ‘blended’ is not given. The fares went up again on April 1, slightly softened by the continuation of a small fuel cost rebate.

Seasonal pricing was originally introduced some years ago, ostensibly to encourage people to travel in the off-season. Most passengers said they didn’t have a choice as to when they traveled.

BC Ferries have been encouraging travelers to use their Experience Card, which gives them any discounts available, provided they pay in advance. The discount they get, BC Ferries advise, is greater than travelers would get on a group fare, so group fares have been eliminated on all minor routes except for Tsawwassen–Gulf Islands, where there were no discounts anyway.

The ‘blended’ and increased fares apply on the following routes:

- Buckley Bay–Denman West
- Campbell River–Quathiaski Cove, Quadra
- Chemainus–Kuper Island–Thetis Island
- Whaletown, Cortes–Heriot Bay, Quadra
- Crofton–Vesuvius Bay, Salt Spring
- Denman–Hornby
- Nanaimo–Descanso Bay, Gabriola
- Port McNeill–Alert Bay–Sointula
- Powell River–Blubber Bay, Texada
- Swartz Bay–Fulford Harbour, Salt Spring
- Brentwood–Mill Bay, Vancouver Island
- Comox–Powell River
- Earls Cove–Saltery Bay, (Sunshine Coast)
- New Brighton–Keats Landing–Langdale (Howe Sound)
- Horseshoe Bay–Snug Cove, Bowen
- Horseshoe Bay–Langdale (Sunshine Coast)
- Swartz Bay–Otter Bay, Pender Island–Village Bay, Mayne Island–Sturdies Bay, Galiano Island–Lyll Harbour, Saturna Island.

Seasonal fares still apply on Route 9 & 9A, Tsawwassen–Sturdies Bay–Village Bay–Lyll Harbour–Otter Bay–Long Harbour (Salt Spring), as do increases. ☞

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