

Nitinat Kiteboarding Guide (Nitinaht)

Written by BayAreaKite
Monday, 27 July 2009 07:49 -

I've been coming to Nitinat Lake on Vancouver Island, B.C., for the past three summers, and can easily say it's no ordinary kite spot. Sure, it boasts the most consistent 20-plus knot winds in North America, but that's not what makes the area so special.

For me, a photographer always looking for some different angle on a place, Nitinat is a gold mine. For starters, the only way in is on highly active, pothole-infested logging roads, overrun by rampaging, giant logging trucks. Then there's the fact that Nitinat Lake is on native-owned land, and apart from a small native village (Dididat) on the south shore of the lake, there are no other urban amenities or luxuries anywhere near the place. There are designated camping spots, but most people perch their tents amongst the giant, deformed, old-growth driftwood that gets washed up on the beach, or which sometimes ends up mysteriously erect in the water, providing for wild scenery and even wilder obstacles.

On any given day the perpetual fire-pit fiesta on the beach starts with the first wind and slowly builds up during the day into a full-blown beach party by nightfall, with its multiple guitar heroes and circulating peace pipes. Then there's the hand-built sauna that rises from the ashes year after year, or the bashed-in bottle cap collection on the face of an extra-large pizza size chunk of old-growth tree stump that was made by a local older dude who's spent the entire season on his artwork.

Nitinat is unique to say the least. It's far removed from reality and the real world. It is its own secluded, bare-bones kite paradise, where kite hippies, kite yuppies, pros, a couple of kite schools, windsurfers, the local natives, and just plain strange people coexist in organic harmony.

Closest airport: YYJ

Best wind: July and August

Average kite size: 7—10m

Cost factor: Low

Local shop: Nitinat Visitors Centre – Has basic groceries, a gas station, kite supplies (North and Dakine), a phone, and a café.

Wind and surf forecast resources: Environment Canada Website – Look at temperature gradients from the West Coast of Vancouver Island to the inland. Also check out www.wunderground.com/global/stations/71483.html

View [Best Kiteboarding Destinations](#) in a larger map

Getting There: There are two ways in, depending on where you're coming from. If you come from Victoria, drive north on the Trans-Canada Hwy One about one hour from Victoria, make a

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left on Cowichan Valley Hwy 18. From Lake Cowichan take the North Shore Road through Youbou. From Youbou it's another 52 km on rough, active logging roads. Follow Nitinat Main Logging road.

If you take the ferry to Nanaimo the route is through Port Alberni. From Port Alberni it's 70 km away by taking the road to Bamfield, then turn off at Franklin River and follow the Little Nitinat River to Nitinat. Follow Bamfield Road and South Main.

Prices: Ferries from Vancouver are about \$72 for one person and vehicle and an extra \$10/person.

The Nitinat Lake Recreation Site is \$10/person per night.

The Nitinat Motel is \$80/night for a kitchenette and \$60 for a standard room.



Checklists of things to take: All your kite gear, full camping gear (stove, fuel, water, food, and beer). Nitinat Lake Campsite is classified as "Primitive." That means there are no amenities besides an outhouse and flat spots to lay your tent.

Gear transport and local rental options: Wake up, grab your board and kite, and walk 20 feet... enough said. Speak with Marie at Elevation Kiteboarding (604-848-5197) about rentals, lessons, and assisted downwinders (she has a Jetski).

The wind and how it works: The consistent thermal westerly wind turns on around 10 a.m. and shuts down around 4 p.m. everyday, all summer long. If you see a fog bank at the west end of the lake, you know it's gonna howl.

Ten must dos:

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Location information website: www.cbc.com, vancouverisland.com, nitinaht.ca