

A Few Ferry Travel Tips for Mayne Islanders

Village Bay is the only Southern Gulf Island port of call with two berths. They — and our geographic location — make us a natural transfer hub to the other islands. There are a number of advantages to having two berths; there are also drawbacks when delays result in several vessels vying for berth space at the same time.

First things first:

- Buy an Experience Card that gives you discounted fares to and from Swartz Bay (SB) and Village Bay (VB), among the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) and most other minor BCF routes. You can purchase a card at any BC Ferries (BCF) ticket booth. If you travel frequently on the SB/SGI route, the savings are significant.
- BC senior passengers (not vehicles) travel for free on all BCF routes Monday to Thursday.
- Spend some time on BCF's website: bcferries.com
- Check BCF's Current Conditions page before you travel. Current Conditions by Route shows the capacity available on upcoming sailings and any cancellations or delays; Ferry Tracking shows you where each ferry is in relatively real time.
- Create an account with BCF so you can sign up for Service Notices that alert you to any sailing delays or cancellations that might affect your travel plans. Having an account also gives you the flexibility to book and change reservations.
- Follow the Mayne Community Page on BCF's website: bcferriesprojects.ca/mayne-island There's an FAQ section with instructions on how to sign up for Service Notices.
- Subscribe to BCF's Mobile App: bcferries.com/app
- Always have a back-up plan in case your ferry home is cancelled. Keep water, snacks and an overnight bag with you. BCF makes every effort to get everyone to and from their destinations but staffing shortages, vessel mechanical issues and inclement weather can all cause service interruptions.
- If you are alerted to a delay or cancellation that doesn't appear to involve your sailing, don't take for granted that your sailing isn't affected. BCF may make modifications to your vessel's route to help cover for another sailing that has been cancelled.
- If you have to be somewhere early in the morning for an important appointment or flight, consider going over the night before.
- Whenever possible: carpool, travel as a foot passenger, on a bike or on the Mayne Island Assisted Living (MIALS) community bus that goes to Sidney and Victoria every Tuesday. The bus has assured loading on the direct early morning sailing to SB and the direct afternoon sailing back to VB. It's a great way to get to a medical appointment, do some shopping or visit friends and family. To book a seat at a nominal cost, call 250.213.6191.
- If you are travelling to Swartz Bay or Tsawwassen for a medical appointment or diagnostic procedure, your fare may be covered through the provincial government's Travel Assistance Program. For more information, search: Travel Assistance Program (TAP BC).
- For easy reference when you are travelling, keep a current printed BCF schedule handy. Ask for one at the ferry terminal or when you're on a vessel.
- Check out Mayne Island resident Emmanuel Borsboom's very user-friendly ferry schedule at ferries.borsboom.io

Travelling between Village Bay and Swartz Bay – Route 5/ 5a

Q. Is this a reservable route?

A. No, so you'll want to arrive at the terminal early enough to get on the sailing you're aiming for. "Early enough" depends on the sailing you want to take and the time of year. The busiest sailings are the weekday 7:05 am direct sailing from VB to SB and the return direct afternoon sailing at 4:20 pm.

If you're driving, be at the terminal at least 45 minutes ahead of sailing time. If you're cycling or travelling as a foot passenger, you've got a lot more leeway – 10 minutes ahead at VB and 15 at SB.

Travelling between Village Bay and Tsawwassen – Route 9

Q. Is this a reservable route?

A. Yes, and you'll definitely want to make reservations because this route is 100% reservable for vehicles **and** foot passengers. If your sailing is fully booked, there's no allowance for any additional vehicles or passengers — including any passengers a vehicle driver adds after making a reservation.

And if you can't book a direct sailing, you can always book a thru fare via Swartz Bay.

Q. What if I have an important medical appointment and need to get to the mainland on a ferry that's already fully booked?

A. Call BCF's Customer Service and explain your situation: 1.888.223.3779

Travelling anywhere on BCF:

While it can be frustrating, ferry travel is a fact of Gulf Island life.

Keep in mind that ferry capacity is reached by the number of passengers on board, not the number of vehicles. That's why you may see vehicle space on a ferry that leaves you and your car behind.

BCF terminal staff and vessel crews do their best to get us to and from our off-island destinations safely and on time. So please travel with patience and a smile.

Key Contacts at BC Ferries:

If you have issues you want to bring forward to BCF's attention, call BCF Customer Care at 1.888.223.3779 or comment on BCF's Facebook page [Facebook.com/BCFerries/](https://www.facebook.com/BCFerries/). You can also reach BCF through their website at [bcferries.com/contact-us](https://www.bcferrries.com/contact-us) their Twitter (X) account @BCFerries, or email engagement@bcferries.com

You are welcome to copy us on any issues/concerns you take forward to BCF.

SIGI Ferry Advisory Committee members from Mayne Island:

Our SIGI committee consists of 3 members from each of the Southern Gulf Islands: Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna. Your Mayne Island reps are diana@dianaking.ca megferris74@gmail.com and davemaude@hotmail.com

Read our monthly updates in the MayneLiner and on our Mayne Ferry Advisory Committee Facebook @ [facebook.com/MayneFAC](https://www.facebook.com/MayneFAC)

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