



# CALLAGHAN COUNTRY

## *Routes of wilderness*

### CALLAGHAN LODGE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q. Where is Callaghan Country?**

**A.** Callaghan Country is located in the Southern Coast Mountains of British Columbia, Canada. Just 110 km (68 miles) north of Vancouver and 20 km (12.4 miles) southwest of world-famous Whistler Resort, Callaghan Country's base is directly adjacent to the new Whistler Olympic Park – venue for all of the Nordic and ski jumping events for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

**Q. Where is Callaghan Lodge?**

**A.** 12.5km (7.7 miles) from the main staging area, in the Upper Callaghan Valley.

**Q. How do I get from Whistler to the Callaghan Country staging area?**

**A.** From Whistler, head south west on Highway 99 back towards Vancouver. Approximately 13 km (8 miles) from Whistler Village, turn right off Highway 99 onto the Callaghan Valley Access Road. Follow the main route about 8.5 km. You will see a turn on your left. Turn left, cross over a bridge and follow the signs into our base facility.

**Q. What type of packages do you offer and what do the packages include?**

**A.** We offer Ski-In / Ski-Out packages and All-Inclusive packages that include snow coach or snowmobile transfers from the Callaghan Country staging area. All of our packages are based on double / twin occupancy. Please add 15% for individuals wishing to book a private room.

All of our packages include trail tickets (which are also valid at Whistler Olympic Park), all meals and non-alcoholic beverages (coffee, tea, milk, juice, and hot chocolate). Ski-in / Ski-out packages include a luggage transfer. Make sure to arrive at the base no later than 12:30pm, as the luggage transfer departs at 1pm daily. **Keep in mind that our trail tickets are also valid at neighbouring Whistler Olympic Park**, so be sure to set aside some time to head over to check this amazing facility out.

All-inclusive packages include return snow coach or snowmobile transportation to the lodge, as well as complimentary use of the lodge's Nordic equipment (snowshoes and XC skis).

The decision on whether to use snowmobiles or the snow coach to access the lodge is an operational one that depends on the size of the group, as well as trail and snow conditions. Should snowmobiles be used, please note that guests will ride double unless they wish to pay extra for a 'single rider' option.

**Q. How is the ski in to the lodge?**

There are two Nordic routes to access the lodge. The first is the 13.5 km ski up the Callaghan Mainline to Callaghan Lake and then onto Parkway to Upper Wild Spirit trail to the lodge. This route is designated as an intermediate level ski and it offers incredible views of the Callaghan Valley including the peaks of Black Tusk, Metal Dome, Brandywine, and Mt. Callaghan. The bulk of the climbing is along the first few kilometers of the trail.

The second option is to ski up the shorter, but more difficult Wild Spirit trail. This 12.5km ski features some tough climbs as it winds its way through the stunning old growth forests of the Callaghan Valley. Skiers are advised that we use the Lower Wild Spirit trail to access the lodge via snowmobile and / or Snow Coach, so you should expect to encounter some machine traffic on the trail. We do try to maintain a classic track to the right side of the trail.

It takes an average skier in reasonably good shape about 3 hours to ski (classic) to the lodge, and about half that time to ski out. Elite skiers have been known to skate ski to the lodge in about one hour and out in 30 minutes!

**Q. What isn't included in the package price?**

- Ground transfers from Whistler or Vancouver to the staging area (we'd be happy to coordinate these arrangements on your behalf)
- Alcoholic beverages (please feel free to bring your own – ask us for packing instructions to prevent breakage en route)
- Certified guiding (we can coordinate guiding through the Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau for those ski touring guests who wish to hire a guide)
- Ski touring and backcountry safety equipment (we can coordinate rentals on your behalf or recommend outfitters where the gear is available for sale)
- Winter outerwear (see our packing list and if you require assistance obtaining the appropriate gear, let us know)
- Taxes
- Gratuities for service excellence

**Q. What is the Snow Coach like?**

**A.** The Snow Coach is a converted Ford F-350 Crew Cab that seats 5 guests in the cab and up to five guests in the passenger pod mounted into the box of the truck (depending on the amount of gear being transferred as well as snow / trail conditions). The wheels on the truck have been replaced with tracks, providing the traction needed for the truck to travel on snow. The Snow Coach can not operate in heavy snow conditions, so snowmobiles are used as a means of secondary transportation.

**Q. Do I need to know how to drive a snowmobile?**

**A.** No, but you do need to be at least 16 years of age to drive, and must have a valid driver's license. All of our snowmobiles come with standard safety features and they are comfortable and easy to drive. If you, or someone in your party does not feel comfortable driving or riding on a snowmobile (and you've booked an All-Inclusive package), please let us know in advance so that we can make alternate arrangements. Before departure, each group will be given a comprehensive safety orientation and machines and trails are maintained regularly to reduce the risk of accidents. That being said, accidents can (and do) happen – usually due to people driving too fast or not paying attention. In the event of an accident, the driver of the machine will be responsible for any resulting damage to the snowmobile.

**Q. What are some key elevation and weather statistics for Callaghan Country?**

- Total tenure area: 3,500 hectares / 8,610 acres
- Elevation at Alexander Falls base facility: 810 m / 2,650'
- Elevation at Callaghan Lodge: 1,370 m / 4,500'
- Peak elevation of Powder Mountain: 2,377 m / 7,800'
- Peak elevation of Mount Callaghan: 2,407 m / 7,900'
- Average Annual Snowfall: 1,097cm / 36'
- Average Annual Snowpack: 365cm / 12'

**Q. How long does it take to get to Callaghan Lodge?**

- A.** It takes an average skier in reasonably good shape about 3 hours to ski (classic) to the lodge. Elite skate skiers can do it in about 1 hour. It takes about half as long to ski out.

On average it takes about 45 minutes by snowmobile and about an hour and fifteen minutes by snow coach to reach the lodge. This can change dramatically though depending on the weather. If it is snowing heavily, it can sometimes take more than 2 hours to reach the Lodge! The trip to the lodge is definitely a part of the adventure experience at Callaghan Country!

**Q. How should I dress for the trip?**

- A.** If you are traveling by snowmobile, you should arrive at the staging area dressed in **warm winter clothes**. This means heavy mitts or gloves, toques (warm hat), neck warmer, long underwear, warm socks, fleece jackets, and weatherproof outer jackets and snow pants. Snowboarders can wear their snowboard boots for the snow coach / snowmobile journey, but skiers **must** have a pair of warm winter boots for the ride. If you do not have the appropriate boots or winter gear, please let us know in advance so that we can coordinate a rental from Whistler's Winter Wear (we will also need to know the appropriate sizes). There is an additional charge for the rental of outerwear.

If you are traveling by Snow Coach, it is not as important to dress in warm winter clothes, however keep in mind that you will need these clothes once you arrive at the lodge, so it might be best to wear them to start out.

**Q. Is it true that Callaghan Country gets more snow than Whistler?**

- A.** Absolutely. The Callaghan Valley is located in the Coastal snowbelt – guaranteeing abundant snowfalls and a very reliable snowpack. The valley is ringed on three sides by glaciated terrain; as the warm moist maritime air pushes up over the glaciers of Brandywine, Metal Dome, and Powder Mountains, the air gets super-cooled. To the north and east, are the Pemberton Ice Cap and the Rainbow Glacier, which means that Callaghan Country is a natural dumping ground for lots of the white stuff.

**Q. What is the weather like?**

- A.** The key point to keep in mind is that we are located in the Coastal snowbelt which means that we definitely see our share of winter storms. We also have lots of great blue sky days, but if you are prepared for snow, you will not be disappointed. Despite the copious amounts of snow that the area receives each winter, the region enjoys the same moderate Pacific temperatures as other Northwest ski areas.

**Q. Can I come to Callaghan Country just for the day?**

- A.** **Yes!** We offer a variety of day packages to suit a range of preferences and budgets. For those keen to ski to and from the lodge for the day, we offer a \$20 trail ticket. For people wanting

'gravity-assisted' access, we offer a one-way snow coach transfer and trail ticket for \$51.50. Callaghan Country trail tickets are also valid at the neighbouring Whistler Olympic Park.

**Q. How should I pack for my trip?**

**A.** The key point to note here is that a trip to Callaghan Lodge is all about **wilderness adventure**. You should try and pack light because everything must be transported in a snowmobile trailer or in the back of the snow coach to the Lodge. Everything you bring should fit into one duffel bag (or backpack) and a ski equipment bag. Please see our *Winter Packing List* handout for a list of recommended gear. In addition to your ski clothes and equipment, don't forget to bring warm and cozy lodge clothes – there's nothing like a hot shower, a pair of fleece pajamas and warm down booties or slippers at the end of an exhilarating winter day of playing outside in the mountains!

**Q. Do we need to bring sleeping bags or towels?**

**A.** No. All of the rooms in the Lodge feature cozy goose down comforters, and come with pillows and sheets. We also provide towels and face cloths, but **you should bring your own toiletries**.

**Q. Is there indoor plumbing and electricity?**

**A.** Yes! Unlike most other remote lodges, Callaghan Lodge has running water, indoor plumbing, and electricity. That being said, because the electricity is via a generator, it is only available when the generator is turned on. **You should bring a headlamp or flashlight because there isn't any power at night**, and please leave your hairdryers and other devices requiring electricity at home.

**Q. Can I bring my children?**

**A.** Children are welcome to come in for the day, but regretfully we cannot accept overnight reservations for kids under the age of 13. If you wish to reserve the entire lodge, exceptions to this rule can be made.

**Q. Can I bring my dog?**

**A.** In a word, No. While we at Callaghan Country all love dogs, we need to be sensitive to the needs of all of our guests, and some people are not able to be around dogs.

**Q. Can we rent out the entire Lodge?**

**A.** Definitely. The Lodge makes an ideal location for small group getaways of any kind. Lodge rental rates are based on a group size of 24 people. Please be aware that renting out the lodge does not guarantee 100% exclusive use of the facility or our operating area. As a Nordic ski area, our trail system is open to the public, and the lodge's first floor (reception room, bathroom, and dining room) is also open to the public.

Lodge rentals include exclusive overnight use of the lodge, as well as exclusive use of the second and third floors of the lodge. The main floor of the lodge (including the dining room) will remain open to the public, however we do make every effort to minimize any impacts that may be caused (i.e. scheduling specific times for privacy in the dining room for lunch, closing off a particular area at a specific time for a wedding ceremony, etc.). You should also know that there is a 2-night minimum on lodge rentals during Christmas week.

**Q. What kinds of activities are available at the Lodge?**

**A.** We offer a variety of winter recreation activities, suitable for every age and activity level. For cross country skiers, we maintain a network of track-set classic cross country ski trails – depending on weather and snow conditions, we have the ability to track-set up to 42km of

trails. There is virtually unlimited rolling terrain through old-growth forests and across sub-alpine meadows available for Nordic ski touring. There are also several sets of snowshoes available, and a great tobogganing hill just steps away from the lodge.

**Q. Can I skate ski at the Lodge?**

**A.** While we do maintain a network of track-set ('classic') cross country trails throughout the winter, due to the copious amounts of snow that the area receives we cannot guarantee that skate skiing will be available at all times. We try our best to maintain a skate ski lane on most of our trails; please be sure to check our website for up to date trail and weather information.

**Q. What about backcountry ski touring?**

**A.** Surrounded by peaks and glaciers, Callaghan Lodge is an ideal venue for backcountry ski touring (also known as alpine ski touring, randonnée skiing, ski mountaineering, backcountry skiing, and ski hiking). The area features an incredible variety of terrain including high alpine bowls, glaciers, glades, pillow drops and gently rolling hills.

To be enjoyed to the fullest, guests should be of intermediate skiing ability or better, in good physical condition, and capable of handling the challenges of ascending and descending in a variety of snow conditions. We do not provide or rent any of the ski or safety equipment necessary for backcountry skiing, but we can put you in touch with local outfitters who do.

Please know that **backcountry ski touring is not without risk**. We strongly recommend that any groups wishing to go ski touring are knowledgeable and experienced in backcountry travel and avalanche safety. All ski touring parties will be responsible for self-rescue and will be required to read and sign a Self-Guided Release of Liability or Waiver of Claims Agreement prior to their departure.

**Q. Do you offer guided backcountry ski touring?**

**A.** We work with the Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau to provide certified A.C.M.G. (Association of Canadian Mountain Guides) guiding services, and would be happy to coordinate a guide on your behalf. The guides that we work with have an intimate knowledge of both the terrain and the snow pack, so hiring a guide ensures that your group gets the safest and most enjoyable ski experience possible. They know the best travel routes and the best places to ski in all weather and snow conditions. These professional and friendly guides will help you to learn more about the area, the backcountry experience, and avalanche safety. They'll even give you a few pointers on ski technique if you so desire. The daily rate to hire a guide will range between \$449.00 - \$829.00 per day, depending on the size of your group and the length of the trip. The price includes the rental of backcountry safety equipment (avalanche beacons, probes, and shovels).

**Q. Is there a hot-tub or a sauna at the Lodge?**

**A.** Unfortunately, we do not have either at present. The Callaghan project is not yet complete, and there are plans to construct a sauna within the next year. Three of the 8 bedrooms do feature private bathrooms (complete with bathtubs) and there is a shared shower room for guests staying in rooms without private bathrooms.

**Q. Is there a television at the Lodge?**

**A.** No, we do not. After all, our guests come here to get away from it all! The Lodge is run on propane, and we only have a limited supply of electricity. We do have a pool / ping pong table however, and lots of books, magazines, and board games. We even have a house guitar. You'll be amazed at how much fun you can have without a T.V.

**Q. Is there a telephone at the Lodge?**

**A.** We do have a cellular telephone that will work most of the time (it won't work in storm situations). We also have a radio for emergencies. If you have a cell phone, you can bring it. If it is an analog or 'tri-mode' phone, it might work. If you want to leave a contact number for friends or family, please give them our reservations number (604.938.0616), and we will make sure to relay any messages to you.

**Q. Do you sell alcohol at the Lodge?**

**A.** While we are not licensed to serve alcohol, you are welcome to bring your own. You should also pack your own mix. Please be aware that anything you do bring has to be transported to the Lodge in a snowmobile trailer or snow coach. Cans of beer are better than bottles (although they should still be separated from each other to prevent impact punctures). Any glass bottles should be wrapped in plastic (just in case) and then well-packed to protect from breakage. We cannot accept responsibility for alcohol that gets damaged along the way.

**Q. Can I bring my own snowmobile?**

**A.** No. In December, 2008, the Upper Callaghan Valley was declared a winter non-motorized zone by the BC Provincial Government, through Section 58 (1) of the Forest and Range Practices Act. As such, the area is closed to snowmobiles from November 1<sup>st</sup> – May 15<sup>th</sup>. We have special permission to operate our own snowmobiles, the snow coach and our grooming equipment – expressly for the purpose of transporting guests and maintaining the trails.

**Q. Do you offer snowboarding, or snowmobile assisted skiing?**

**A.** Our focus is on providing self-propelled wilderness recreation, so we only use our snowmobiles to access the lodge. From there, anybody who wants to go skiing or snowboarding has got to 'earn their turns'. It's true that this requires a fairly high level of physical effort, but trust us: there is nothing quite like standing at the top of a mountain, looking out over the vast landscape, anticipating the 2,000' powder run that is about to be yours, and knowing that you got yourself there under your own steam. It is truly exhilarating.

**Q. Do I need to sign a waiver?**

**A.** Yes. Backcountry recreation is not without risk. Reliable prediction of factors such as weather, snow and terrain conditions is impossible. All guests will be required to read and sign a comprehensive Release of Liability and Waiver of Claims Agreement prior to departure for the Lodge. A copy of the waiver can be found at our website at <http://www.callaghancountry.com/rates/documents/CallaghanWAIVER-GUIDED2005.pdf>

In addition, please note that adventure sport activities are not recommended for individuals who are pregnant, or who suffer from back or neck pain, or who have heart or respiratory distress. If in doubt, please contact your physician prior to booking.

**Q. What applicable taxes are charged on your packages?**

**A.** The 5% Goods & Services Tax is charged on the full package amount. We also charge an 8% Provincial Hotel Tax on the accommodation portion of the package. The accommodation portion is determined by multiplying the total package amount by 15%.

***For more information, please contact:***

The Adventure Coordinator

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