

Surfing in Tofino with Samba Days

June 9, 2013 ~ Other Outdoor Stuff, Products & Gear



As a [Samba Days](#) Sambassador, I recently had the chance to go to Tofino and do some surfing.

I went with my friend Jeremy and to add a level of adventure to the trip, we decided to cycle instead of drive. While I commute to work by bike, I wouldn't call myself a 'cyclist' and have never ridden more than 50km in a single day before. The trek to Tofino would be a little over 200km in 2 days.

I left my house bright and early in the morning and cycled to Park Royal Mall, where I met Jeremy, and from there we carried on to Horseshoe Bay. We caught the 8:30am ferry to Nanaimo and then the real fun began. It was pouring rain and we had to detour to a bike shop to get the gears adjusted on Jeremy's borrowed bike. After a quick pit-stop we were off and running again, this time to Parksville, where my grandparents live. We had planned to stop for an hour for lunch, but after drying off, eating some good food, and with some gentle persuasion from my grandfather we decided to throw our bikes into the back of his pickup and get a lift to Port Alberni. We stopped en-route at the famous Coombs Market, Cathedral Grove, and Coombs Country Candy (in Port Alberni).

Jeremy's girlfriend Angela happens to be working in Port Alberni temporarily, so we met with her and then went to meet [@jwindh's](#) for dinner. Jacqueline had been introduced to me on Twitter when I was looking for advice on cycling into Tofino. She had given us lots of terrific advice about the somewhat hazardous road in, and it was great to meet her and enjoy a warm dinner.

The next morning we were off bright and early again on our bikes. Next stop – Tofino!

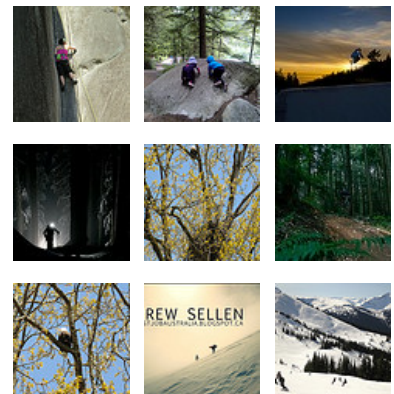
Leaving Port Alberni it was nice and dry, but it didn't take long for the rain to start hammering us again. We were about 2 hours and 50km into the 110km ride to Tofino when Jeremy popped his front tire. No problem, that's why you carry a spare tube, right? However, things went downhill from here. When we fidgeted with replacing the tube in the wet, cold, and with shivering hands, we managed to pop the spare tube. Not good!

After about 45 minutes of standing on the side of the highway being pelted with rain, we decided to not to try and repair the tube with a patch kit, and instead decided to call it quits on cycling. Thumbs up and it was 4 or 5 pickup trucks later (about 30 minutes) before an elderly and friendly local from Ucluelet gave us a lift into town.

We met with my friend Destiny who lives in Ukee and had a few pints at a great local bar called [Hanks](#) (apparently the only eat in town with 'real' beer). I particularly loved how the bar was closed when we

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(apparently the only spot in town with real beer). I particularly loved how the bar was closed when we arrived in town but Destiny was able to text the owner to open the doors for us. Only in a small town like Ukee! After a few hours, Angela came in after she finished work in Port Alberni, and we drove to our campsite in Tofino. Once there, we spent the next few days enjoying the weather (which actually cleared up and was nice), the beaches, the food, and of course, the surfing!

The surfing was great, and as much fun as I thought it would be. We used our Samba Days gift card to get all the gear (boards, gloves, boots, wetsuit) from [Live to Surf](#), and they helped us strap the boards onto the van. From the shop, it was a quick 5 minute drive to Chesterman's beach where we spent hours tiring ourselves out in the waves.

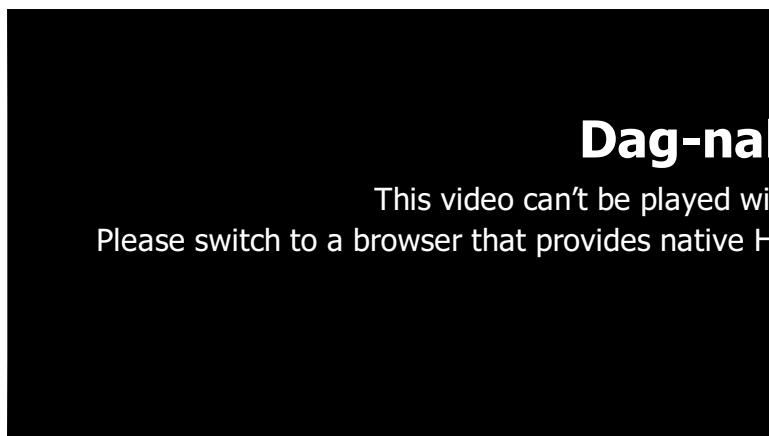


I'm a bit of a wimp with cold water, but was completely surprised how the temperature never bothered me. The thick wetsuit did a great job of keeping me warm and comfortable, and the shining sun did its part to help. We were in some pretty small beginner-sized waves, but I still found it intimidating at first. It was also a lot harder than I thought it would be. Having a skateboard as a kid, and being an okay snowboarder, I figured it would be pretty easy to get up on the board and keep my balance. Not so much. In all the hours of being on the water, I really only ever caught a few waves that I actually surfed. But you have to start somewhere and the whole day was a lot of fun.

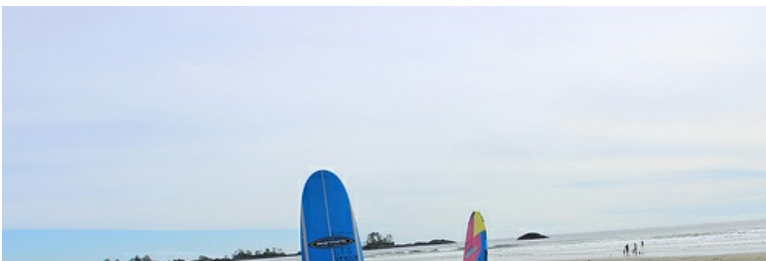
I'll definitely be heading back to Tofino to do some more surfing in the future.

If you haven't checked out the Samba Days gift I definitely recommend it. They work like any gift card, except that instead of giving someone a card for a retail store, you choose a theme pack (like Adventure, Getaway, Golf, Gourmet, etc), and the end user can choose from a big list of cool experiences they want to do in that theme (like surfing). Its a really neat idea, and I think a better gift than regular gift cards. They'd make for a great [Father's Day present](#) also.

Luckily I had my trustee GoPro camera with me for the trip and made a 7 minute video of the journey which you can check out below (skip to the 3 minute mark if you are only interested in the surfing).



[Tofino Trip, May 2013](#) from [Karl Woll](#) on [Vimeo](#).



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