

VANCOUVER

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season in winter. The downtown area is nestled below the majestic mountain ranges, which includes Whistler and Mt. Bachelor ski resorts. This makes it a unique place where you can ski and sail in the same day. Vancouver is accessible by every major mode of transportation, including trains from Toronto and five buses daily between Vancouver and Seattle, a mere three-hour trip. For auto travelers, the BC Ferry system offers sailings between Washington State and Vancouver and Vancouver and Victoria.

The Waterfront Hotel is walking distance from the cruise terminal and is an excellent choice for great views of the harbor and Stanley Park, as well as being centrally located to many of Vancouver sites.

Just a few blocks from the hotel is a lovely sea of tranquility planted in the heart of bustling Chinatown. Walk or use surface transportation to visit the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden. It is modeled after the private classical gardens developed in the city of Suzhou and is the only authentic Ming Dynasty garden ever constructed outside China. No modern equipment was used -- not even a single nail, and all materials were shipped from China. Let the docents sweep you away with charming stories that highlight the meaning of the elements in the garden as well as the Chinese cul-

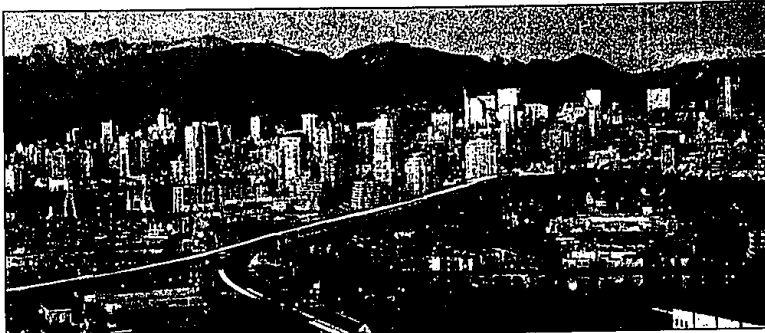
ture. For a magnificent panoramic view of the city and outlying districts, take the glass elevator to the Lookout in Harbour Centre. This is one of the tallest buildings in Vancouver.

VISIT PARKS

Queen Elizabeth Park, just a short drive up the hill from the waterfront, is located on the highest point in Vancouver. Enjoy superb views of the city, harbor and North Shore Mountains while strolling through the park's other highlights: Rose, sunken and quarry gardens. At the center of the park is exquisite Bloedel Floral Conservatory. Enter the atmosphere-controlled triadetic dome and experience an exotic tropical paradise full of free-flying tropical birds and impressive plant displays.

Stanley Park is a must-see attraction. Min Vancouver trails, bike rentals, and an awesome aquarium, in the largest city park in Canada. For a relaxing overview of the park take an hour-long horse drawn tour or ride a rented bike around the park.

Gastown, named for a tavern owner nicknamed Gassy, is an area with restored 19th century buildings and cobblestone streets. Specialty and antique shops, art galleries, and restaurants abound. Be sure to see the world's only steam-powered clock, located on Water Street in the downtown core, driven by the city's extensive underground steam heating system for office buildings.



Night view of greater Vancouver nestled in snow-capped mountains.

Vancouver has an enormous variety of restaurants. For a unique eating experience, try Hon's Wun-Tun House on Robson Street or on Keefe Street in Chinatown.

At many of the trendy restaurants, don't be surprised if you get served something looking like black tar artistically drizzled over olive oil. It turns out to be a balsamic vinegar reduction and is surprisingly delicious with bread or seafood. It mimics a very expensive, aged, balsamic vinegar, sometimes used with deserts in Italy.

There are four foods that say "Vancouver": They are: Geoduck (giant clams), found at the Radisson President Hotel; nanaimo bars (sweet and

chocolate) at the Lazy Gourmet; alder-grilled salmon at Aqua Riva; and hot smoked salmon at Heron's Restaurant at the Waterfront Hotel.

If you must escape the food of Vancouver to preserve your waistline, consider jumping on a ferry to Victoria. The ferry from the outskirts of Vancouver to Victoria is available for both autos and foot traffic. There is also a day trip to Victoria downtown from downtown Vancouver, including two spectacular ferry rides (for \$50 Canadian).

There's excellent bus service on Victoria, which will even take you directly to the famous Butchart Gardens. This massive display garden always has

flowers in bloom with seasonally changing gardens. Created from a spent rock quarry by the owner's garden-happy wife, you can easily spend a couple of hours in breathtaking beauty. While we visited, stunning giant dahlias and richly colored fuchsias were blooming. It is worth signing up to take the free guided one and a half-hour tour.

Turn of the century architecture embraces you with civility and charm in downtown Victoria. As you stroll along the waterfront Causeway you'll be surrounded by the Parliament Buildings (1893), the Empress Hotel (1908), the glass-roofed tropical conservatory of the Crystal Garden (1925), and the Royal British Columbia

Museum. Government Street is lined with 19th century storefronts.

For a royal experience, treat yourself to high tea at the Empress hotel, and then browse through the gallery-like gift shops. The Empress has been a landmark in the city and a focal point in the inner harbor for over ninety years.

If you want yet another totally different taste of the north-west, jump on another ferry to Seattle and spend a couple of days soaking up the history and culture that made both John Crapper and Bill Gates (and company) famous. From opera to aircraft, and kayaking to klonkling there's something for everyone.

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Author Yale Strom/klezmer music: Nov. 17 • 3:30 p.m.

KIDS PROGRAMS!

Author Rainey Friedman: *Jerome's Jam* • Nov. 17 • 1 p.m.
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FOR ALL!

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