



VICTORIA DESTINATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW



Introduction

Although Victoria is in British Columbia, it feels more like England than Canada. The city was founded in the 1800s as a Hudson Bay Co. trading post and outpost of the British Empire, populated by settlers attracted to its mild climate. Historic Victoria boasts several grand buildings, lots of shops, and aesthetic touches reflecting its English heritage. Today, part of the city's charm comes from old-world traditions juxtaposed with new-world experiences.

Victoria is also a modern, prosperous provincial capital with a diversified economy. The education, tourism and technology sectors are strong, and specialty farming has burgeoned in the nearby Saanich Peninsula and up-island Cowichan Valley. The result is a city with an international reputation for good restaurants and a penchant for outdoor activities such as whale-watching, sea kayaking, sailing and cycling. For a city of its size and scale, Victoria has an energetic, eclectic buzz. And it's only a short ferry ride or flight away from Vancouver.

Sights—Beacon Hill Park for many mature trees and glorious gardens; The Butchart Gardens; the view from Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site; the Parliament Buildings.

Museums—The Emily Carr House for her artwork; the history of the area and its trades, like deep-sea diving, at the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Memorable Meals—Both levels of Ferris' Oyster Bar & Grill for great food and atmosphere; Rebar Modern Food for a delicious juice bar and health-conscious cuisine; tea at the Fairmont Empress Hotel; takeout fish-and-chips from the Inner Harbour's Red Fish Blue Fish; Olo Restaurant for local food with a fresh twist.

Late Night—A brew or two at Spinnakers Gastro Brew Pub on the Inner Harbour; inspired libations at Clive's Classic Lounge; local musicians at Hermann's Jazz Club.

Walks—A slow walk around the Inner Harbour; a historic walk through Chinatown; a guided tour of the city's haunted addresses.

Especially for Kids—The Victoria Bug Zoo; Victoria Butterfly Gardens; a ride on the Victoria Harbour Ferries; Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea; the petting zoo at Beacon Hill Park.

Victoria radiates out from its Inner Harbour, where most of the historic buildings, sites and attractions are located. The city's layout is compact, with two main streets, Government and Douglas, running parallel to the harborfront. East-west cross streets, many of them one-way, are generally on an orderly grid system, with few digressions from that pattern.

Heading northbound along Government Street, you'll intersect with Old Town, Bastion Square and Chinatown. Douglas Street begins at Mile Zero, a landmark that indicates the beginning of the Trans-Canada Highway and overlooks the Pacific Ocean and precipitous Olympic Peninsula. Venture north, and Douglas Street flanks Beacon Hill Park and the Royal British Columbia Museum, then defines the eastern edge of downtown. To the east are the picturesque neighborhoods of Rockland, Fairfield and Oak Bay, as well as Craigdarroch Castle and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Though Spain first claimed what is now Victoria, the English established the first European settlement in 1843, when James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company set up a trading post there. Victoria's protected harbor on the southern coast of Vancouver Island offered a safe refuge for clipper ships, and Douglas' good relations with the native population helped the settlement grow quickly.

In an era known for its formality and elegance, early Victoria must have seemed like the wild frontier to the first British settlers, particularly in 1858, when more than 25,000 miners passed through on their way to the Cariboo Gold Rush. But the new Victorians were intent on civilizing the wilderness, taking with them their fine English china, their architectural ideas, their gardens and their tradition of tea (still staunchly upheld by visitors). They set about creating a society based on a half-remembered, half-imagined England.

The capital of British Columbia, Victoria is filled with heritage buildings and reminders of those early days. The city has a long-standing reputation for being sedate, but it is quickly outgrowing the label. Besides being the province's government hub, Victoria is home to several colleges and universities, and the city has attracted many global technology firms, bringing more young people to the city. The influx has sparked a revitalization in the central area, with old-world-style buildings being converted into restaurants, lounges and hip cafes on every downtown block.

Location

Large cruise ships dock at Ogden Point, about 1 mi/2 km southwest of downtown. The terminal has gift shops, restrooms, foreign-currency exchange and pay phones. If your cruise line has made arrangements, you can take a shuttle downtown for Can\$11. Taxis also wait in front of the terminal. There's public bus service to the downtown area, or you can walk—it takes about 20 minutes to get to the city's center.

Small cruise ships often dock in Victoria's Inner Harbour. The Tourism Victoria Visitor Centre is located along the Inner Harbour on Wharf Street across from the Fairmont Empress Hotel. <http://www.victoriacruise.ca>.

Shore excursions include a tour of the Legislature Buildings, tea at the Empress Hotel or another teahouse, a horse-drawn carriage ride and a visit to Craigdarroch Castle. Also offered are trips to the Butchart Gardens, an electric-bike outing, an English-style pub tour, and an art gallery and wine-tasting visit. For ocean and rain forest enthusiasts, there are whale-watching trips and travel to an adventure zipline facility in nearby Sooke.

Potpourri

With all its outdoor activities, it's no surprise that Victoria has been rated among the fittest cities in Canada.

Victoria's Maritime Museum is home to North America's oldest operating birdcage elevator.

The Fairmont Empress Hotel serves 500,000 cups of tea annually.

Victoria is home to what is recognized as the narrowest street in Canada: Fan Tan Alley. The city also boasts the oldest Chinese temple in Canada: Tam Kung Temple on Government Street in Chinatown.

Victoria arguably has the most microbreweries in Canada per capita (showcased in its beloved Ale Trail), as well as the country's oldest licensed brewpub, Spinnakers Gastro Brewpub.

The B.C. Legislature buildings on the Inner Harbour dazzle year-round with 3,560 lights.

SEE & DO

Sightseeing

Victoria's most noted landmarks are the more than 100-year-old, green-domed Parliament Buildings on the south side of the Inner Harbour. At night, the buildings, which were designed by one of British Columbia's most renowned architects, Francis Rattenbury, are outlined by thousands of tiny lights. During the day, you can take a free tour of their interiors. Be sure to stroll through the beautifully kept gardens at the residence of the lieutenant governor of British Columbia (the British Crown's representative to the province) on Rockland Avenue.

Besides the Parliament Buildings, the city's most impressive structure is the grand, ivy-covered Fairmont Empress Hotel, which was also designed by Rattenbury. Built in 1908, the hotel dominates the waterfront and attracts many tourists.

The city also has a wealth of museums—some of which are also historic homes. Don't miss the kid-friendly Royal British Columbia Museum. Next door to the museum is the Helmcken House, once the home of a pioneer doctor and legislator. Craigdarroch Castle is a lavishly decorated mansion that has a stunning view of the city. North of downtown, overlooking the scenic Gorge Waterway, is Point Ellice House. This Victorian manor serves tea amid its luxuriant gardens and lawns.

The area's best-known floral displays can be found at The Butchart Gardens, in nearby Brentwood Bay. (You won't believe the area was once a barren stone quarry.)

Historic Sites

Craigdarroch Castle

Situated in a quiet, posh area northeast of downtown, this lavish 39-room mansion overlooks the city. It was built in the 1890s for coal baron Robert Dunsmuir and his wife, Joan, though Dunsmuir didn't live to see the project completed. The 25,000-sq-ft/2,323-sq-m mansion is a pleasing medley of Roman arches, Jacobean dormers and Elizabethan chimneys. The castle is not wheelchair-accessible. Daily 10 am-4:30 pm. Can\$14.25 adults. 1050 Joan Crescent (off Fort Street), Victoria.

1050 Joan Crescent
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8S 3L5
Phone: 250-592-5323
<http://thecastle.ca>

Phone 250-592-5323. <http://thecastle.ca>.

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites

About 15 minutes from downtown Victoria on Esquimalt Harbor, this park is a wonderful place for a picnic lunch and a hike. (There are picnic tables on the grounds.) A short hiking trail takes you through the woods to a machine-gun post and searchlight emplacements from the 1890s. The Fisgard Lighthouse, dating from 1860, resides along the shore. In the park you'll see plants and animals found nowhere else in Canada. Daily 10 am-5:30 pm. Can\$3.90 adults. 603 Fort Rodd Hill Road, Victoria. Phone 250-478-5849. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/roddhill>.

Hatley Park National Historic Site

West of the city in what is now Royal Roads University, this park is beautifully landscaped with lakes and Japanese, Italian and English gardens. The magnificent 40-room castle overlooks the Esquimalt Lagoon, a bird and wildlife sanctuary. You can see the Strait of Juan de Fuca from many parts of the park, with Washington's Olympic Mountains in the background. There's also a museum in the castle basement. Daily 10 am-4 pm. Can\$9.50 to access gated gardens; Can\$18.50 for a one-hour tour of the castle; access to the general grounds is free. 2005 Sooke Road, Victoria. Phone 250-391-2600. Toll-free 800-788-8028. <http://www.hatleypark.ca>.

Helmcken House

Built in 1852 for Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, this is the oldest house in British Columbia on its original site that is open to the public. This elegant Victorian home has period furnishings and some of Dr. Helmcken's original medical instruments. Adjacent to the house is Thunderbird Park, which has a collection of First Nations totem poles and a First Nations building, the Mungo Martin House. Daily noon-4 pm. Free admission with a Royal British Columbia Museum ticket. 10 Elliot Square, Victoria. Phone 250-356-7226. Toll-free 888-447-7977. <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/events/calendar/event/59132/helmcken-house>.

Parliament Buildings

The domed and turreted Parliament Buildings were designed by Francis Rattenbury and completed in 1898. Paintings in the lower rotunda depict Canadian history. If the legislature is in session, you can slip into the viewing balcony over the chambers and listen to the political debate. Summer hours daily 9 am-5 pm; winter hours Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Free guided tours offered year-round. 501 Belleville St., Victoria. Phone 250-387-3046. <http://www.leg.bc.ca>.

Point Ellice House

This lovely house overlooking the scenic Gorge Waterway is a piece of quintessential Victoriana: You can try your hand at croquet and take tea amid luxuriant gardens and lawns. But first tour the rambling Italianate home where some members of Victoria's elite lived in the 1800s. Thursday-Monday 11 am-4 pm. Can\$10 adults for tour only. Can\$38 for tea and tour (reservations required). 2616 Pleasant St. (off Bay Street), Victoria. Phone 250-380-6506. <http://www.pointellicehouse.ca>.

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

Housed in an 1889 mansion, as well as seven modern galleries, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is home to British Columbia's largest collection of public art, including many works by Emily Carr and other treasures such as Col. Lewis Broome's king-sized dollhouse. On the grounds is a Japanese garden with the only authentic Shinto shrine in North America—fitting, because the gallery also contains the finest public collection of Japanese art in Canada. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Thursday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Can\$13 adults. 1040 Moss St., Victoria. Phone 250-384-4171. <http://aggv.ca>.

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9C 2W8
Phone: 250-478-5849
<http://www.pc.gc.ca/roddhill>

2005 Sooke Road
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 5Y2
Phone: 250-391-2600
<http://www.hatleypark.ca>

10 Elliot Square
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 9W2
Phone: 250-356-7226
<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/events/calendar>
house

501 Belleville St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-387-3046
<http://www.leg.bc.ca>

2616 Pleasant St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8T 4V3
Phone: 250-380-6506
<http://www.pointellicehouse.ca>

1040 Moss St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 4P1
Phone: 250-384-4171
<http://aggv.ca>

Emily Carr House

The birthplace and home of Victoria painter and writer Emily Carr, this restored 1864 house offers insights into Carr's life and works. You might also see the work of other Canadian artists. Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-4 pm May-September. Can\$8 adults. 207 Government St. (south of downtown), Victoria. Phone 250-383-5843. <http://www.emilycarr.com>.

Robert Bateman Centre

Robert Bateman is known as the world's greatest wildlife artist, and this downtown gallery in the former Steamship Terminal displays dozens of his original works. A gallery of birds has recorded bird songs to accompany the pieces. Daily 10 am-5 pm. Admission Can\$10 adults. 470 Belleville St., Victoria. Phone 250-940-3630. <http://batemancentre.org>.

Royal British Columbia Museum

This museum is an exceptional treasury of human history. Dioramas and exhibits about deep-sea exploration, the province's natural habitats and its native peoples are some of the most ambitious and spectacular you'll see anywhere. A 400-seat National Geographic IMAX theater shows spectacular eco-oriented films. Daily 10 am-5 pm. Admission Can\$17 adults; IMAX films cost extra. 675 Belleville St. (next to the Parliament Buildings), Victoria. Phone 250-356-7226. Toll-free 888-447-7977. <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca>.

Abkhazi Gardens

Considered one of Canada's most significant gardens, this discreet one-acre/.4-hectare property was developed over 40 years, starting in 1946, by Prince and Princess Abkhazi, a European couple with an exotic and war-torn background. Considered an exceptional example of West Coast garden design, it features dramatic rocky slopes, magnificent Garry oaks, maples, rhododendrons and other alpine and woodland species. The site includes the couple's modernist home and a teahouse, with seatings for lunch and tea until 4 pm. Daily 11 am-5 pm April-September, Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm October-March. Suggested donation Can\$10. 1964 Fairfield Rd., Victoria. Phone 778-265-6466. <http://www.abkhaziteahouse.com>.

Beacon Hill Park

You don't have to leave the city to see lovely gardens. You can roam the colorful paths of this park, which starts just three blocks from the Inner Harbour. Its expanse includes flowers, lakes, playgrounds and a petting zoo. Other attractions include sports fields, a band shell and the world's tallest freestanding totem pole. The 128-ft/39-m masterpiece was created by renowned Kwakwaka'wakw artist Mungo Martin in 1956. The children's farm is open March to mid-October daily 10 am-5 pm. Suggested donation for petting zoo is Can\$3.50 adults. Douglas Street (at Dallas Road), Victoria. Phone 250-361-0600. <http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/parks/beacon-hill.html>.

Victoria Bug Zoo

This miniature zoo is devoted to multilegged creatures. There are more than 40 species, including an ant farm. Monday-Friday 11 am-4 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. Can\$14 adults. 631 Courtney St., Victoria. Phone 250-384-2847. <http://www.victoriabugzoo.ca>.

Recreation

Victoria has evolved into a year-round recreational destination. You can bicycle through the city and out to the suburbs on a converted rail line or hike through old-growth forests in parks north and west of the city. There are tide-pool beaches to explore along the coast. Golfers will be delighted with the area's scenic courses, most of which are open year-round. The city is also a starting point for whale-watching, kayaking and fishing charters off the coast of Vancouver Island.

207 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 2K8
Phone: 250-383-5843
<http://www.emilycarr.com>

470 Belleville St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 1W9
Phone: 250-940-3630
<http://batemancentre.org>

675 Belleville St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 9W2
Phone: 250-356-7226
<http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca>

1964 Fairfield Rd.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8S 1H4
Phone: 778-265-6466
<http://www.abkhaziteahouse.com>

Douglas Street
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 3W6
Phone: 250-361-0600
<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/parks/t-hill.html>

631 Courtney St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1B8
Phone: 250-384-2847
<http://www.victoriabugzoo.ca>

Bicycling

A fun way to discover Victoria's great outdoors is to follow the many bicycle paths—such as the Lochside Trail, Seaside Cycling Route and the Galloping Goose—that wind through the city and surrounding neighborhoods.

The 37-mi/60-km Galloping Goose was constructed on an old Canadian National Railroad right-of-way and is wide and mostly flat, with gradual grades. It connects several municipalities and shopping areas and serves as a scenic commuting route along the southernmost coastline. Easily accessible at several points, the trail begins downtown and ends at the site of an abandoned gold-mining town just beyond Sooke.

Cycle BC

This company rents an impressive selection of bicycles for about Can\$24 per day or Can\$7 per hour, including helmet and lock. Daily 10 am-4 pm; hours can vary with weather so call ahead. Rates from Can\$8 per hour. 685 Humboldt St. (along the Inner Harbour), Victoria. Phone 250-380-2453. Toll-free 866-380-2453. <https://victoria.cyclebc.ca>.

685 Humboldt St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1A6
Phone: 250-380-2453
<https://victoria.cyclebc.ca>

Southern Vancouver Island's many sheltered coves and inlets, including Victoria's Inner Harbour, make for some of the world's finest kayaking and canoeing. Several outdoor and adventure companies in Victoria rent kayaks and canoes, as well as offer lessons and tours. To make arrangements, contact Tourism Victoria's information center on Wharf Street. Phone 250-953-2033. Toll-free 800-663-3883.

Ocean River Sports

This company rents seagoing and white-water kayaks and canoes. Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm. Kayak rentals start at Can\$40 for two hours or Can\$75 per day. 1824 Store St. (Inner Harbour), Victoria. Phone 250-381-4233. Toll-free 800-909-4233. <http://www.oceanriver.com>.

1824 Store St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1S5
Phone: 250-381-4233
<http://www.oceanriver.com>

British Columbia's coastal waters offer superb sportfishing year-round. Charter trips to catch salmon and halibut start around Can\$75-\$120 per hour (less if you're part of a big group). Fees generally include bait, tackle and gear. Many operators can arrange to have your catch packaged for traveling. You can make arrangements through Tourism Victoria's information center on Wharf Street. Phone 250-953-2033. Toll-free 800-663-3883.

Adam's Fishing Charters

Operating from the dock in the Inner Harbour, this company runs midsize cruiser-class boats around the southern tip of Vancouver Island year-round. Full-day rates Can\$925; half-day rates Can\$750. 812 Wharf St., Victoria. Phone 250-370-2326. <http://www.adamsfishingcharters.com>.

812 Wharf St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9A 1P3
Phone: 250-370-2326
<http://www.adamsfishingcharters.com>

Because of Victoria's moderate climate, most local golf courses are open year-round. You'll find everything from spectacular vistas and full-scale championship links to shorter, less-difficult courses.

Bear Mountain

Jack Nicklaus and son Steve designed this 18-hole course, one of two resort courses. It is part of the larger Bear Mountain Resort, with several restaurants. Daily. 1999 Country Club Way, Victoria. Phone 250-744-2327. Toll-free 888-533-2327. <http://www.bearmountain.ca>.

1999 Country Club Way
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 6R3
Phone: 250-744-2327
<http://www.bearmountain.ca>

Cordova Bay Golf Course

This 18-hole, par-71, very playable championship course has wonderful views of Mount Baker. 5333 Cordova Bay Road (about 20 minutes north of downtown), Victoria. Phone 250-658-4444. <http://www.cordovabaygolf.com>.

5333 Cordova Bay Road
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8Y 2L3
Phone: 250-658-4444
<http://www.cordovabaygolf.com>

Olympic View Golf Course

This challenging course's 18 holes are played around two waterfalls and 12 lakes. 643 Latoria Road (15 minutes north of downtown), Victoria. Phone 250-474-3673. <https://www.olympicviewgolf.com>.

643 Latoria Road
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9C 3A3
Phone: 250-474-3673
<https://www.olympicviewgolf.com>

Scenic trails are seemingly everywhere for those wishing to combine exercise with sightseeing. At China Beach, a 20-minute stroll in dense Sitka spruce opens up to one of South Vancouver Island's best beaches and awe-inspiring ocean vistas. The 29-mi/47-km Juan de Fuca Marine Trail is a hiking trail that can be tackled in its entirety over several days or in smaller sections.

East Sooke Regional Park

Just outside the city and bordering the Strait of Juan de Fuca, this park offers everything from casual strolls (including a wheelchair-accessible pathway) to full-day treks. The park's woodland trails meander through

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 2Z8
Phone: 250-478-3344
<https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation->

old-growth forest to hidden coves. Phone 250-478-3344.
<https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails/find-park-trail/east-sooke>.

Goldstream Provincial Park

This park offers old-growth forests and trails, and up-close views of spawning salmon in late fall. Visitors center open daily 9 am-4:30 pm. 2930 Trans Canada Highway (just north of the city), Victoria. Phone 250-478-9414. <http://www.goldstreampark.com>.

Mount Douglas Park

Only a 20-minute drive from downtown Victoria, Mount Douglas promises a wide variety of terrain with walks ranging from 30 minutes to four hours. It's all there—from deep evergreen forests with lush fern undergrowth to Garry Oak meadows, plus views from the mountaintop. Daily 7 am-11 pm. Cedar Hill Road, Victoria. Phone 250-475-5522. <http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-culture/parks/parks-trails-amenities/signature-parks/mount-douglas-park.html>.

Adrena Line Zipline Adventure

Located in Sooke, west of Victoria, this site runs from old-growth forest down to coastal waters. With eight ziplines, it promises an exhilarating experience up to 150 ft/45.7 m off the ground at speeds of up to 38 mi/61 km per hour. Can\$89 adults. 5128C Sooke Road, Sooke, Victoria. Phone 250-642-1933. Toll-free 866-947-9145. <http://adrenalinezip.com>.

Westshore Motorcross Park

This family-oriented dirt-motorcycle facility includes classes on motorcycle use for all ages along with recreational and performance events. All gear can be rented. Wednesday-Friday 11 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-3:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-3 pm. Rental from Can\$56 adults. 2207 Millstream Road, Langford (at the back), Victoria. Phone 250-590-8088. <http://www.westshoremx.com>.

Nightlife

Pubs are a big part of Victoria's nightlife, so they're good places to start your night. Most bars and clubs close at 2 am, but you may find a few that are open till dawn.

Bars, Taverns & Pubs

Bard & Banker

This Scottish-style pub is a gorgeous two-story space outfitted with brass fittings, a long wooden bar and elegant chandeliers. The name draws on the building's history: Robert Service worked as a bank teller there before heading north to the Yukon and writing his epic poems, including *The Cremation of Sam McGee*. The menu highlights British pub favorites and local draft beers. Live local music is performed free of charge most nights. Daily 11 am-1 am. 1022 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-953-9993. <http://www.bardandbanker.com>.

Canoe Brewpub, Marina and Restaurant

Join the locals on the biggest waterfront patio in Victoria or head inside to enjoy the soaring timberframe and brick construction. Sip handcrafted beer or a great wine from a spectacular wine list. Sunday-Wednesday 11:30 am-11 pm, Thursday-Saturday 11:30 am-1 am. 450 Swift St., Victoria. Phone 250-361-1940. <http://www.canoebrewpub.com>.

Clive's Classic Lounge

Libations and spirits with house-made garnishes, in-house syrups and mixologists who get it. Chill to the lounge tunes a la *Mad Men*. Sunday-Thursday 5 pm-midnight, Friday 4 pm-1 am, Saturday 5 pm-1 am. 740 Burdett Ave., Lobby Level, Victoria. Phone 250-361-5684. <http://www.clivesclassiclounge.com>.

[culture/parks-trails/find-park-trail/east-sooke](#)

2930 Trans Canada Highway

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 5T9

Phone: 250-478-9414

<http://www.goldstreampark.com>

Cedar Hill Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8X 2W7

Phone: 250-475-5522

<http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-culture/parks/parks-trails-amenities/signature-parks/mount-douglas-park.html>

5128C Sooke Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9Z 0E2

Phone: 250-642-1933

<http://adrenalinezip.com>

2207 Millstream Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 0J7

Phone: 250-590-8088

<http://www.westshoremx.com>

1022 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1X7

Phone: 250-953-9993

<http://www.bardandbanker.com>

450 Swift St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1S3

Phone: 250-361-1940

<http://www.canoebrewpub.com>

740 Burdett Ave., Lobby Level

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1B2

Phone: 250-361-5684

<http://www.clivesclassiclounge.com>

Irish Times Pub

Housed in a historic, two-story stone building on the edge of Bastion Square, this popular venue offers modern pub fare and generous pints. Daily 11 am-1 am. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1200 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-7775. <http://www.irishtimespub.ca>.

Spinnakers Gastro Brew Pub

Stop in for traditional pub grub featuring locally sourced organic ingredients, seafood and house-brewed beers. The patio is a particularly lovely spot in summer, where you can linger over Inner Harbour views. Daily 8 am-11 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 308 Catherine St., Victoria. Phone 250-386-2739. <http://www.spinnakers.com>.

Sticky Wicket Pub and Restaurant

This is a pretty good replica of a wood-paneled British public house. There are several bars, nooks and crannies, and a rooftop patio with volleyball courts. It's located in the Strathcona Hotel, along with a host of other drinking spots and a nightclub. Daily 11:30 am-2 am. 919 Douglas St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-7137. <http://www.strathconahotel.com>.

Swans Brewpub

This is a great spot for fish-and-chips and burgers, as well as traditional beers and English ales. The bar is also noted for its fine-art collection. There's live music every evening. Monday-Saturday 11 am-1 am, Sunday 11 am-midnight. \$-\$\$\$. No cover charge. Most major credit cards. 506 Pandora Ave. (located in the Swans Hotel), Victoria. Phone 250-361-3310. Toll-free 800-668-7926. <http://www.swanshotel.com>.

Veneto Tapa Lounge

This stylish and urban lounge features an extensive cocktail menu and great innovative tapas to share. Sunday-Thursday 11:30 am-midnight, Friday and Saturday 4 pm-1 am. 1450 Douglas St. (located in the Hotel Rialto), Victoria. Phone 250-383-7310. <https://www.hotelrialto.ca/dine/veneto-ristorante>.

Paparazzi

Victoria's only LGBTQ nightclub is a popular spot for dancers of all orientations. DJs play everything from the latest pop hits to retro music from the '80s and '90s, and the club hosts karaoke nights and drag performances. Daily 4 pm-2 am. 642 Johnson St., Victoria. Phone 250-388-0505. <http://www.paparazzinightclub.com>.

The Mint

DJ music played weekend nights is as big a draw as the delicious Nepalese and Tibetan dishes. Daily 5 pm-2 am. 1414 Douglas St., Victoria. Phone 250-386-6468. <http://themintvictoria.com>.

Hermann's Jazz Club

In business for more than 30 years, this downtown club regularly hosts all kinds of jazz and blues musicians, from local talent to international acts. There's also a dance floor for a good time. Cover charge varies. 753 View St., Victoria. Phone 250-388-9166. <http://www.hermannsjazz.com>.

Logan's Pub

This low-key venue in the Fernwood neighborhood is home to Victoria's thriving independent music scene, with occasional visits from local bands that have made it big. Monday-Friday 3 pm-1 am, Saturday 11 am-1 am, Sunday 11 am-midnight. Check website for upcoming shows. 1821 Cook St., Victoria. Phone 250-360-2711. <http://www.loganspub.com>.

Performing Arts

1200 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y5
Phone: 250-383-7775
<http://www.irishtimespub.ca>

308 Catherine St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9A 3S8
Phone: 250-386-2739
<http://www.spinnakers.com>

919 Douglas St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2C2
Phone: 250-383-7137
<http://www.strathconahotel.com>

506 Pandora Ave.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1N6
Phone: 250-361-3310
<http://www.swanshotel.com>

1450 Douglas St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2G1
Phone: 250-383-7310
<https://www.hotelrialto.ca/dine/veneto-ristorante>

642 Johnson St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1M6
Phone: 250-388-0505
<http://www.paparazzinightclub.com>

1414 Douglas St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2G1
Phone: 250-386-6468
<http://themintvictoria.com>

753 View St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1J9
Phone: 250-388-9166
<http://www.hermannsjazz.com>

1821 Cook St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8T 3P5
Phone: 250-360-2711
<http://www.loganspub.com>

Victoria boasts a vibrant cultural community, with year-round entertainment for every taste. World-class concerts and shows attract loyal audiences of Islanders hungry for culture and, not surprisingly, usually sell out in advance. In summer, the city is host to a number of music festivals that attract visitors from afar, including Symphony Splash (<http://www.victoriasymphony.ca>) and JazzFest (<http://www.jazzvictoria.ca>).

Dance

Ballet Victoria

This classically trained ballet company performs contemporary and children's works in addition to traditional ballets throughout the year. 643 Broughton St., Victoria. Phone 250-380-6063. <http://www.balletvictoria.ca>.

Victoria Jazz Society

The society hosts concerts September-May and produces annual events such as JazzFest in June and the Vancouver Island Blues Bash in September. Monday-Friday 9:30 am-4:30 pm. 977 Alston St., Victoria. Phone 250-388-4423. Toll-free 888-671-2112. <http://www.jazzvictoria.ca>.

Victoria Symphony

Vancouver Island's largest performance-arts ensembles have regular concerts at the historic 1,416-seat Royal Theatre on Broughton Street. Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm. 620 View St., Suite 610 (administrative offices), Victoria. Phone 250-385-6515. <https://victoriasymphony.ca>.

Belfry Theatre

Formerly a church, this intimate venue is home to professional productions by local troupes. Box office opens one hour before performances. 1291 Gladstone Ave., Victoria. Phone 250-385-6815. <http://www.belfry.bc.ca>.

Langham Court Theatre

Home to the Victoria Theatre Guild and Dramatic School, this 177-seat space with a solid reputation for amateur fare is tucked into the culturally oriented Rockland neighborhood, close to downtown. 805 Langham Court, Victoria. Phone 250-384-2142. <http://www.langhamtheatre.ca>.

McPherson Playhouse

This 772-seat playhouse, built in 1912, presents the city's widest variety of live performances. 3 Centennial Square (in the 600-block of Pandora Avenue), Victoria. Phone 250-386-6121. Toll-free 888-717-6121. <http://www.rmts.bc.ca>.

The Victoria Operatic Society

Known for its Broadway-style stage productions performed throughout the year at the McPherson Playhouse. 744 Fairview Road, Suite 10, Victoria. Phone 250-381-1021. <https://vostheatre.ca>.

Alix Goolden Hall

A jewel box of a performance hall, this centrally located 800-seat venue was once a church sanctuary and now hosts the Victoria Conservatory of Music and visiting performers, including readings by noted international writers. 907 Pandora Ave., Victoria. Toll-free 866-386-5311. <http://vcm.bc.ca/alix-golden-hall>.

Spectator Sports

Active Victorians fervently support amateur and semiprofessional sports, including a WHL hockey team (two levels away from the National Hockey League). Sports tourism in the city is growing.

Hockey

Victoria Grizzlies

This home-town division of the Canadian Junior A Hockey League plays

643 Broughton St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2C1

Phone: 250-380-6063

<http://www.balletvictoria.ca>

977 Alston St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9A 3S5

Phone: 250-388-4423

<http://www.jazzvictoria.ca>

620 View St., Suite 610

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1J6

Phone: 250-385-6515

<https://victoriasymphony.ca>

1291 Gladstone Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8T 1G5

Phone: 250-385-6815

<http://www.belfry.bc.ca>

805 Langham Court

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 4J3

Phone: 250-384-2142

<http://www.langhamtheatre.ca>

3 Centennial Square

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1P5

Phone: 250-386-6121

<http://www.rmts.bc.ca>

744 Fairview Road, Suite 10

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9A 5T9

Phone: 250-381-1021

<https://vostheatre.ca>

907 Pandora Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V3P4

<http://vcm.bc.ca/alix-golden-hall>

1767 Island Highway

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 1J1

home games at the Q Centre during a September-March season. 1767 Island Highway, Victoria. Phone 250-385-1555.
<http://www.victoriagrizzlies.com>.

Victoria Royals

This Western Hockey League team plays home games at the 7,006-seat Memorial Centre. Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Can\$18-\$28 adults. 1925 Blanshard St., Victoria. Phone 250-220-7889.
<http://victoriaroyals.com>.

Victoria Shamrocks

Victoria is fiercely proud of its world-class lacrosse program, a game with French Canadian and Native American ancestry. The Victoria Shamrocks are the local favorite. Q Center, 1767 Island Highway, Victoria. Phone 250-478-7625. <http://www.victoriamshamrocks.com>.

Phone: 250-385-1555
<http://www.victoriagrizzlies.com>

1925 Blanshard St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8T 4J2
Phone: 250-220-7889
<http://victoriaroyals.com>

Q Center, 1767 Island Highway
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9B 0A5
Phone: 250-478-7625
<http://www.victoriamshamrocks.com>

Shopping

Victoria's main shopping district is on and around Government Street, where you'll find picturesque British-style storefronts and specialty boutiques.

On Lower Johnston Street, known as LoJo, you'll find fashion boutiques and chic specialty shops. Serious antiques collectors should visit Antique Row, located on Fort Street between Blanshard and Cook streets. Market Square, between Pandora Avenue and Johnson Street, is also a fun place to browse. Its shops are housed in and around an open courtyard.

Those in pursuit of youthful and exotic clothing and other fashions, furnishings and art objects might venture north as far as Herald Street and along Chinatown's Fisgard Street (including Fantan Alley), and on the harbor front, Wharf and Store streets in the area known as the Design District.

Shopping Hours: Stores are generally open Monday-Wednesday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm.

Antique Stores

Command Post of Militaria

For nearly three decades, this shop has sold a wide range of military collectibles and surplus items dating from World War II to the present. Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm. 1306 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-4421. <https://www.facebook.com/the-command-post-militaria-268147410027902>.

Pacific Antiques

Among the specialties there are English and Irish porcelains, along with antique silver and Asian ceramics. 829 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-388-5311. <http://www.pacificantiques.com>.

Munro's Books

This Victoria institution is located in a central heritage building. One of the original owners was Alice Munro, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013. Monday-Wednesday 9 am-6 pm, Thursday and Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday 9:30 am-6 pm. 1108 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-382-2464.
<http://www.munrobooks.com>.

Russell Books

This three-story bookstore in Victoria's downtown is one of the city's largest used-book retailers. Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 747 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-361-4447.
<http://www.russellbooks.com>.

Hudson's Bay Company

The store opened as a Victoria trading post in 1843. Today it's part of a nationwide department store chain where you can buy nearly every type of merchandise, including the traditional HBC centuries-old goods, such as thick wool "point blankets" once traded for furs. Monday-Wednesday and Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 1150 Douglas St. (in The Bay Centre), Victoria. Phone

1306 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y8
Phone: 250-383-4421
<https://www.facebook.com/the-command-post-militaria-268147410027902>

829 Fort St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-388-5311
<http://www.pacificantiques.com>

1108 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y2
Phone: 250-382-2464
<http://www.munrobooks.com>

747 Fort St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3E9
Phone: 250-361-4447
<http://www.russellbooks.com>

1150 Douglas St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2C8
Phone: 250-385-1311
<http://www.thebay.com>

250-385-1311. <http://www.thebay.com>.

Alcheringa Gallery

Contemporary indigenous art of the Northwest Coast, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and aboriginal Australia is the specialty of this shop minutes from the Inner Harbour. Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 15 pm. 621 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-8224. <http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com>.

Artina's

This shop carries handcrafted Canadian jewelry in myriad styles, including works by First Nations artists. Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday-Sunday 10 am-9 pm. 1002 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-386-7000. <https://artinas.com>.

Fortune Gallery

Contemporary art gallery working with established and emerging artists. The building is historic and located in the midst of neon-hued Chinatown. Tuesday-Friday 11 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday noon-5 pm. 537 Fisgard St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-1552. <https://www.fortunegallery.ca>.

Bastion Square

Within historic Fort Victoria with an original courthouse, law chambers, and what were brothels and warehouses during the Gold Rush era, this area becomes a lively outdoor market during summer, with vendors selling arts and crafts and street entertainment. It also houses year-round shops, pubs and restaurants, with seasonal patios. View Street (between Wharf and Government streets), Victoria. <http://www.tourismvictoria.com>.

Market Square

At the heart of old Victoria, the square and courtyards comprise about 25 businesses, including small boutiques, eateries and a craft brewery. Square hours (individual stores may differ) Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday and holidays 11 am-5 pm, slightly later in summer. 560 Johnson St., Victoria. Phone 250-386-2441. <http://www.marketsquare.ca>.

Mayfair Shopping Centre

Situated between Douglas and Blanchard streets, this major Victoria mall features about 120 different retailers. Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; Wednesday-Friday 10 am-9 pm. 3147 Douglas St., Suite 221, Victoria. Phone 250-383-0541. <http://www.mayfairshoppingcentre.com>.

Capital Iron

Established in 1934, this eclectic store sells everything from fishing gear to hardware to home decor. Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm. 1900 Store St., Victoria. Phone 250-385-9703. <http://www.capitaliron.net>.

Choux Choux Charcuterie

A tiny shop serving up a little taste of France using free-range pork, local rabbits and other regional meats. Fans say it has the best pate in town. The well-stocked cooler provides specialty cheeses that are perfect as picnic fare. Tuesday-Friday 10 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. 830 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-382-7572. <https://www.chouxchouxfortst.com>.

Cowichan Trading Co.

There you'll find fine crafts by First Nations artists, including masks, moccasins, and hand-knitted and numbered Cowichan sweaters. Monday-Wednesday 9 am-6 pm, Thursday-Saturday 9 am-7 pm, Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 1328 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-0321. <http://www.cowichantrading.com>.

Dig This

621 Fort St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1G1

Phone: 250-383-8224

<http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com>

1002 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W1X7

Phone: 250-386-7000

<https://artinas.com>

537 Fisgard St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W1R3

Phone: 250-383-1552

<https://www.fortunegallery.ca>

View Street

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

<http://www.tourismvictoria.com>

560 Johnson St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3C6

Phone: 250-386-2441

<http://www.marketsquare.ca>

3147 Douglas St., Suite 221

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8Z 6E3

Phone: 250-383-0541

<http://www.mayfairshoppingcentre.com>

1900 Store St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-385-9703

<http://www.capitaliron.net>

830 Fort St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1H8

Phone: 250-382-7572

<https://www.chouxchouxfortst.com>

1328 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y8

Phone: 250-383-0321

<http://www.cowichantrading.com>

Started in the early 1980s as a source for quality gardening items, this store is stuffed full of everything (except the actual plants) that gardeners would want. Monday-Saturday 10 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 480-777 Royal Oak Drive, Victoria. Phone 250-727-9922. <http://www.digthis.com>.

Hemp & Co.

This store is devoted to environmentally friendly principles. Sells casual clothing made from natural hemp fibers. Monday-Saturday 10 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 1312 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-4367. Toll-free 866-383-4367. <http://www.hempandcompany.com>.

Idar

Idar (first name only) is a local designer of fine jewelry, using precious metals and hand-picked gemstones, described as a modernist blend of Nordic, West Coast and ancient Celtic designs. Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm. 946 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-3414. <http://www.idar.com>.

Irish Linen

A Victoria institution, this store has stood almost a century in its 1884 Italianate building, with original lamps and glass cases. It sells hand embroideries from the Madeira Islands, Belgium and Ireland, as well as the latest Irish linens, from tablecloths to baby blankets, made with ecologically friendly fibers. Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-4:30 pm. Shorter winter hours. 1019 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-6812. <http://www.irishlinenvictoria.com>.

Jade Victoria

This jewelry store boasts one of the largest collections of carved jade from multiple sources, including Canadian nephrite jade, mined in northern B.C. The official B.C. gemstone, the jade is often depicted in pieces that reflect Canada's aboriginal history and Arctic experience. Flexible summer hours-usually from 9 am through the evening. 911 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-384-5233. <https://jadestore.com>.

Rogers Chocolates

This beloved Victoria chocolatier is famed for its large, rich creams. Daily 9:30 am-7 pm. 913 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-881-8771. Toll-free 800-663-2220. <http://www.rogerschocolates.com>.

Salt Spring Soapworks

Originating on the B.C. gulf island of the same name, this artisan-style business produces hand-made soaps and herbal products for women, men and children. Monday-Saturday 10:30 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 10:30 am-5:30 pm, slightly later in summer. 8 Fan Tan Alley, Victoria. Phone 250-590-6550. <http://www.saltspringsoapworks.com>.

Silk Road

This is an avant-garde, Asian-style loose-tea and equipage shop. Also an aromatherapy and natural spa. It smells delicious. Monday-Friday 10 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 1624 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-382-0006. <http://www.silkroadteastore.com>.

Smoking Lily

This is an iconic clothing and accessories store. Unique garments are locally designed and made, often with silk-screen techniques. Mostly for women, but there are items for men (particularly T-shirts) and kids (including toys), too. Monday-Thursday and Saturday 10 am-6:30 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. 1713 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-382-5459. <https://smokinglily.com>.

W&J Wilson

This long-established clothier (located in the same historic building since 1862) specializes in classic but fresh European, American and Canadian

480-777 Royal Oak Drive
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-727-9922
<http://www.digthis.com>

1312 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y8
Phone: 250-383-4367
<http://www.hempandcompany.com>.

946 Fort St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2K5
Phone: 250-383-3414
<http://www.idar.com>

1019 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1X6
Phone: 250-383-6812
<http://www.irishlinenvictoria.com>

911 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1X5
Phone: 250-384-5233
<https://jadestore.com>

913 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1X5
Phone: 250-881-8771
<http://www.rogerschocolates.com>

8 Fan Tan Alley
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8K 2T8
Phone: 250-590-6550
<http://www.saltspringsoapworks.com>

1624 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Z3
Phone: 250-382-0006
<http://www.silkroadteastore.com>

1713 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Z4
Phone: 250-382-5459
<https://smokinglily.com>

1221 Government St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y6

designer fashions for women and men. Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-4 pm. 1221 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-7177. <http://wandjwilson.com>.

Phone: 250-383-7177
<http://wandjwilson.com>

Itinerary

Day Trips

To **Cowichan Valley**. A 45-minute drive north of Victoria, this mild farming pocket has been dubbed "the Provence" of North America. Fine organic produce, artisan cheeses and reputable wines contribute to the culinary well-being of the area. More than a dozen farms, markets and wineries can be visited year-round. Don't miss nearby Cowichan Bay, a seaside village where much of the region's bounty can be found in quaint shops and restaurants. <http://www.cvrld.bc.ca>.

To **Sooke**. West of Victoria, Highway 14 (the Island Highway) leads to the lovely region of Sooke, on the outer tip of Vancouver Island. Rain forest, rocky cliffs, spectacular beaches and wildlife abound there. East Sooke Regional Park has terrain for casual walking or full-day treks, and there's swimming in the natural pools at Sooke Potholes Regional Park (<http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks>). Reserve a table at the renowned Sooke Harbour House, famed for its creations using organic ingredients sourced from nearby farms. <http://www.sookeharbourhouse.com>.

To **Sidney**. The pedestrian-friendly village of Sidney-by-the-Sea, a 20-minute drive from downtown Victoria on the Saanich Peninsula, is known for its many bookstores (it's dubbed "booktown"), several annual arts festivals, summer street market, ecofriendly shopping, and fashion and home decor shops. It also hosts the famed Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea, and supports numerous water sports and activities, including fishing, boating and kayaking. <http://www.sidney.ca>.

Victoria has become a year-round venue for whale-watching. Gray whales are generally spotted during migration in March and April. Three pods of about 80 orca (killer whales) are found off the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The best time to see them is May-October.

Discover the Past

This group offers guided walking tours, including a tour of Chinatown and another of the city's reputedly haunted addresses. Tours depart from various locations. Tours given daily in summer, Friday and Saturday only the rest of the year. Can\$15 adults. Phone 250-384-6698. <http://www.discoverthepast.com>.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-384-6698
<http://www.discoverthepast.com>

Eagle Wing Tours

Offering longer tours and great comfort, this carbon neutral whale-watching company offers a guaranteed whale sighting. Prices vary according to tour package, but are usually around Can\$125 adults. 12 Erie St. (Fisherman's Wharf, near Pier 2), Victoria. Phone 250-384-8008. Toll-free 800-708-9488. <http://www.eaglewingtours.com>.

12 Erie St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-384-8008
<http://www.eaglewingtours.com>

Orca Spirit Whale-Watching Adventures

This company with certified guides runs guided whale-watching and off-season marine wildlife tours in a high-powered covered cruiser or open Zodiacs. It also offers bike rentals. High standards for wildlife-viewing ensure an environmentally friendly experience. Can\$128 adults. 950 Wharf St. (in the Harbour Air seaplane terminal), Victoria. Phone 250-386-2277. Toll-free 877-733-6722. <http://www.orcaspirit.com>.

950 Wharf St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1T3
Phone: 250-386-2277
<http://www.orcaspirit.com>

Prince of Whales

This group operates a high-speed, covered cruiser and Zodiac-style open boats from Inner Harbour. Interpretive guided tours pursue various species off southern Vancouver Island. 812 Wharf St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-4884. Toll-free 888-383-4884. <http://princeofwhales.com>.

812 Wharf St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1T3
Phone: 250-383-4884
<http://princeofwhales.com>

Tally Ho Sightseeing

These relaxed trips in horse-drawn carriages go past the city's main sights. The tours depart from the Parliament Buildings near the harbor. Prices vary. Phone 250-514-9257. Toll-free 866-383-5067. <http://www.tallyhotours.com>.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 1X3
Phone: 250-514-9257
<http://www.tallyhotours.com>

Victoria Harbour Ferry Company Ltd.

Tours of Victoria's harbor and Gorge Waterway depart from the dock in front of the Fairmont Empress Hotel in downtown Victoria. The H2O Taxi offers 17 stops around the harbor. Boats run March-October. Can\$30 adults. 1234 N. Wharf St., Victoria. Phone 250-708-0201.

1234 N. Wharf St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 1A1
Phone: 250-708-0201
<http://www.victoriaharbourferry.com>

<http://www.victoriaharbourferry.com>.

Victorian Garden Tours

Led by a seasoned horticulturalist, these personalized tours of Victoria's stunning private gardens offer glimpses into the city's most noteworthy residences and useful insights from local gardeners. 2-145 Niagara St., Victoria. Phone 250-380-2797. <http://www.victoriangardentours.com>.

To help you make the most of your time in Victoria, we've designed two different itineraries.
PLAN A

A Castle Tour, Tea and Window Shopping

Make a reservation for tea at the Fairmont Empress Hotel and another for dinner at Il Terrazzo or Catalano Restaurant. Then walk north along Government Street to peruse local art galleries and chocolate and tea shops. Turn left onto Johnston Street or Pandora Avenue for a peek at the colorful shops and street life of Victoria's Old Town, and then stroll south along Wharf Street for a few blocks before heading right on Fort Street, past Douglas to a strip known as Antique Row. For a light lunch or a snack, try The Blue Fox Cafe.

Take a short cab ride to Craigdarroch Castle for a tour. Finish the afternoon with tea at the Fairmont Empress and an energizing walk around the Parliament Buildings and the Inner Harbour. By the time you arrive at Il Terrazzo or Catalano, you should be ready for a fine dinner, Italian style.

PLAN B

Parliament and Flowers, Followed by Tea

Start by making three reservations: a late-morning tour to The Butchart Gardens, tea at the Fairmont Empress Hotel and a late dinner at Ferris' Oyster Bar & Grill. Then head downtown for the morning tour of the Parliament Buildings, or spend an hour or two in the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Afterward, meet your tour bus and ride to Butchart Gardens. Plan to spend two or three hours at the gardens before returning to the Fairmont Empress Hotel in time for tea—sandwiches, exquisite pastries, scones with clotted cream and preserves. Work off some of the calories with a brisk sunset stroll along the waterfront (Chinatown might be a reasonable goal). By then you'll be ready for a relaxing dinner.

DINING

Dining Overview

Although Victoria's culinary scene was once confined to an indulgent afternoon tea, conventional dinner and a few English pubs, the city and wider region have blossomed into a distinguished dining destination. According to local hearsay, Victoria now boasts the second-highest number of restaurants per capita in North America, after San Francisco. Eateries range from those specializing in local fare, fresh from the nearby Cowichan Valley and mainland British Columbia, to those serving gourmand European cuisine and a wide range of Asian offerings. There are excellent breakfast eateries and takeaways in the downtown area.

Because of the stiff competition, creativity is paramount. Fish-and-chips, a local specialty, is served in a variety of styles, from traditional to fusion, all within a few blocks. Most restaurants are located in the inner city and along the coast.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than Can\$15; \$\$ = Can\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = Can\$26-\$40; \$\$\$\$ = more than Can\$40.

AURA

Breathtaking waterfront restaurant and patio setting overlooking the Inner Harbour. East-meets-West fusion cuisine sourcing fresh and local ingredients (especially seafood) in imaginative combinations. Daily 7 am-9 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. 680 Montreal St., Victoria. Phone 250-414-6739. <http://www.aurarestaurant.ca>.

680 Montreal St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 1Z8
Phone: 250-414-6739
<http://www.aurarestaurant.ca>

Cafe Brio

Art-filled and warmly inviting, this place, housed in an Italian villa, has been buzzing with dedicated locals from the minute it opened its doors in 1997. Showcasing regional and organic foods meant to satisfy and comfort, the menu evolves with availability of the local market. Charcuterie made on-site. Dishes also available in half-orders. Tuesday-Saturday from 5:30 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. 944 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-0009. <http://cafebrio.com>.

944 Fort St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 250-383-0009
<http://cafebrio.com>

Canoe Brewpub & Restaurant

Nestled in a rustic heritage building above the waterfront, Canoe is a hip

450 Swift St.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

watering hole with a generous patio. Quality bar food, burgers and entrees. Extensive craft-beer and wine list. Sunday-Wednesday 11:30 am-11 pm, Thursday-Saturday 11:30 am-1 am. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 450 Swift St., Victoria. Phone 250-361-1940. <http://www.canoebrewpub.com>.

Mo:Le

Mo:Le uses organic and local ingredients. A local institution, this space features local art on exposed brick walls. Daily for breakfast and lunch. \$. Most major credit cards. 554 Pandora Ave., Victoria. Phone 250-385-6653. <http://www.molerestaurant.ca>.

Victoria Public Market

This casual favorite of the Victoria culinary scene is a hive of local producers and small eateries. Farmers, bakers, cheese-makers, preservers, pie-makers, brewers, vintners, olive-oil vendors and seafood shops are among the vendors at the Hudson building market. There is also a farmers market on Wednesday, open 11 am-3 pm. Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm. \$\$\$. 1701 Douglas St., Victoria. Phone 778-433-2787. <http://victoriapublicmarket.com>.

American

Bon Appetit Cafe

This cafeteria-style eatery is located on the top floor of The Bay, with wide views over the Inner Harbour. The food is simple, home-style cooking. It's not high cuisine, but it's affordable. Daily for breakfast and lunch. \$. Most major credit cards. 1150 Douglas St., Victoria. Phone 250-385-1311.

John's Place Restaurant

This crazy-busy American-style diner has an eclectic menu and colorful atmosphere. Be prepared for a wait. Monday-Friday 7 am-3 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8 am-3 pm. Reservations available. \$. Most major credit cards. 723 Pandora Ave., Victoria. Phone 250-389-0711. <http://www.johnsplace.ca>.

Don Mee Seafood Restaurant

Located (with dazzling neon signage) in Chinatown since 1923, this is a traditional Cantonese and Szechuan restaurant. Also serves dim sum. Monday-Friday 11 am-9:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-9:30 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 538 Fisgard St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-1032. <http://www.donmee.com>.

J&J Wonton Noodle House

This casual Chinese eatery boasts a wide-ranging menu. Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-8:30 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1012 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-0680. <http://www.jjnoodlehouse.ca>.

Siam Thai

Siam Thai's central location and bustling yet pleasant atmosphere make it a preferred choice for lovers of Thai curries. Daily 11:30 am-9 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 512 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-9911. <http://siamthai.ca>.

Brasserie L'Ecole

Formerly a Chinese schoolhouse, this upscale, cozy bistro draws kudos for its classic French-country style. Tuesday-Saturday 5:30-11 pm. Reservations not accepted. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1715 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-475-6260. <http://www.lecole.ca>.

Saveur Restaurant

This restaurant offers seasonal dishes with plenty of vegetarian options, as well as excellent wine pairings. Tuesday 5-9 pm, Wednesday and Thursday 10 am-9 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am-10 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 658 Herald St., Victoria. Phone 250-590-9251.

Phone: 250-361-1940

<http://www.canoebrewpub.com>

554 Pandora Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-385-6653

<http://www.molerestaurant.ca>

1701 Douglas St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 0C1

Phone: 778-433-2787

<http://victoriapublicmarket.com>

1150 Douglas St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-385-1311

723 Pandora Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1N9

Phone: 250-389-0711

<http://www.johnsplace.ca>

538 Fisgard St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1R4

Phone: 250-383-1032

<http://www.donmee.com>

1012 Fort St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 3Z9

Phone: 250-383-0680

<http://www.jjnoodlehouse.ca>

512 Fort St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1E6

Phone: 250-383-9911

<http://siamthai.ca>

1715 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Z4

Phone: 250-475-6260

<http://www.lecole.ca>

658 Herald St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-590-9251

<http://saveurrestaurant.ca>

<http://saveurrestaurant.ca>.

Foo Food

The Asian street food inspiration is clear in the fresh, flavorful and inexpensive dishes at Foo. Butter chicken, Thai red curry and fried rice are standards. The tiny take-out counter has a few indoor seats. Monday-Saturday 11:30 am-10 pm, Sunday 11:30 am-9 pm. \$. Most major credit cards. 769 Yates St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-3111. <http://victoria.foofood.ca>.

Il Terrazzo Ristorante

You can choose from pastas, wood-oven specialties or fresh seafood—all served next to one of six cozy fireplaces or on a heated patio. Noted wine list. Monday-Friday from 11:30 am. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 537 Johnson St. (off Waddington Alley, behind Willie's Bakery), Victoria. Phone 250-361-0028. <http://www.ilterrazzo.com>.

Pagliacci's

This place features casual Italian-style dining in a lively yet cozy atmosphere. Daily 11:30 am-10 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1011 Broad St. (off Fort Street), Victoria. Phone 250-386-1662. <http://www.pagliaccis.ca>.

Pizza Prima Strada

Imported Italian flour, house-made fennel sausage from North America's only pure-bred water-buffalo herd (only 45 minutes away) and wood-fired ovens create truly authentic Italian pizza. Sunday-Thursday 11:30 am-9 pm, Friday and Saturday 11:30 am-10 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 105-230 Cook St., Victoria. Phone 250-590-8595. <http://www.pizzeriaprimastrada.com>.

Zambri's

There you'll find classically inspired Italian cuisine made with locally grown vegetables and free-range meats served with a strong Italian wine list. Tuesday-Thursday 11:30 am-9 pm, Friday 11:30 am-10 pm, Saturday 10:30 am-10 pm. Reservations recommended on weekends. \$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 820 Yates St. (in the Atrium Building), Victoria. Phone 250-360-1171. <http://www.zambris.ca>.

Perro Negro Restaurant

Perro Negro Restaurant is a casual Spanish tapas bar, specializing in small plates and charcuterie and Spanish wines, particularly ports and sheries. Thursday-Sunday for dinner. Reservations not accepted. \$. Most major credit cards. 538 Yates St., Victoria. Phone 250-360-1824 ext. 3. <http://www.ferrisoysterbar.com>.

Vegetarian

Lotus Pond

The entirely vegan menu, based on Buddhist principles, includes a flavorful range of vegetable, mock-meat and grain dishes. Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday 11 am-8 pm, Wednesday 11 am-2:30 pm, Sunday 4-8 pm. \$. Most major credit cards. 617 Johnson St., Victoria. Phone 250-380-9293. <https://lotuspondvictoria.ca>.

Rebar Modern Food

A popular, casual eatery serving seasonal vegetarian foods and juices. It also serves seafood. Monday-Thursday 11:30 am-8 pm, Friday 11:30 am-9 pm, Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-8 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 50 Bastion Square, Victoria. Phone 250-361-9223. <http://www.rebarmodernfood.com>.

Venus Sofia Tea Room & Vegetarian Eatery

Grandma might be eating a scone and sipping from fine china, but she could be sitting next to a purple-haired hipster. Shabby-chic decor and

769 Yates St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1L4

Phone: 250-383-3111

<http://victoria.foofood.ca>

537 Johnson St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1M2

Phone: 250-361-0028

<http://www.ilterrazzo.com>

1011 Broad St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2A1

Phone: 250-386-1662

<http://www.pagliaccis.ca>

105-230 Cook St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 3X3

Phone: 250-590-8595

<http://www.pizzeriaprimastrada.com>

820 Yates St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1L8

Phone: 250-360-1171

<http://www.zambris.ca>

538 Yates St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1K8

Phone: 250-360-1824

<http://www.ferrisoysterbar.com>

617 Johnson St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1M5

Phone: 250-380-9293

<https://lotuspondvictoria.ca>

50 Bastion Square

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-361-9223

<http://www.rebarmodernfood.com>

540 Fisgard St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1R4

healthy indulgences including gluten-free, vegan and dairy-free options. Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-5 pm. \$-\$\$\$ 540 Fisgard St., Victoria. Phone 250-590-3953. <http://www.venussophia.com>.

Shine

This small corner cafe is a local favorite for weekend brunch. The options are classics: eggs Benedict, omelettes and vegan brunch. The service is fast and friendly. There is a second location at 1548 Fort St. Monday-Friday 7 am-2 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8 am-3 pm. \$. Most major credit cards. 1324 Blanshard St., Victoria. Phone 250-595-2134. <http://www.shinecafe.ca>.

Fol Epi

Heritage and whole grains are milled and transformed into ethereal baked creations on-site each day. Line up early for the perfect croissants. Daily 7:30 am-5 pm. \$. 101-398 Harbour Road, Victoria. Phone 250-477-8882. <http://www.folepi.ca>.

Murchie's Tea & Coffee Ltd.

Opened in 1894, Murchie's is still blending special teas. The tea room is always busy with locals and tourists. Monday-Saturday 7:30 am-6 pm, Sunday 8 am-6 pm. 1110 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-3112. <http://www.murchies.com>.

The Blue Fox Cafe

This funky, casual eatery is located on Antique Row. It's a busy spot, so be prepared for a wait on weekends. Monday-Friday 7:30 am-4 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8 am-3 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 101-919 Fort St., Victoria. Phone 250-380-1683. <http://www.thebluefoxcafe.com>.

The White Heather Tea Room

This is a good option for high tea or lunch. The tearoom is located in the lovely, historic Oak Bay neighborhood. Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1885 Oak Bay Ave., Victoria. Phone 250-595-8020. <http://whiteheather-tearoom.com>.

Habit

Ethical and ecosensitive, Habit is keen to make a difference in coffee culture. Funky digs, local art and simple spaces. There is a second location at 808 Yates St. Monday-Friday 7 am-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8 am-6 pm. 552 Pandora Ave., Victoria. Phone 250-294-1127. <http://habitcoffee.com>.

Macchiato Caffe

The decor is reminiscent of a clean-lined cafe in Europe, and espressos are created with perfect *crema*. Locals line up for the paninis made with ingredients from Italian Food Imports deli a few blocks away. Monday-Friday 7 am-5 pm, Saturday 8:30 am-4:30 pm. 1002 Broad St., Victoria. Phone 250-385-8900. <http://macchiatocaffe.ca>.

Fairmont Empress Hotel

There's no better way to dig down to Victoria's British roots than to indulge in the Fairmont Empress Hotel Tea Lobby, a tradition for more than a century. There are seatings noon-3:45 pm. Also consider a dinner in the Empress Room, an elegant old-world setting. The service and cuisine—a blend of classic and Northwest fare—are exceptional. Daily for breakfast, tea and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 721 Government St., Victoria. Phone 250-384-8111. <http://www.fairmont.com/empress-victoria>.

The Marina Restaurant

Located in the venerable and affluent Oak Bay neighborhood, this restaurant serves seafood and Continental cuisine. Monday-Saturday 11:30 am-9 pm, Sunday 9 am-9 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1327 Beach Drive, Victoria. Phone 250-598-8555. <http://www.marinarestaurant.com>.

Phone: 250-590-3953

<http://www.venussophia.com>

1324 Blanshard St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2J1

Phone: 250-595-2134

<http://www.shinecafe.ca>

101-398 Harbour Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V9A 0B7

Phone: 250-477-8882

<http://www.folepi.ca>

1110 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Y2

Phone: 250-383-3112

<http://www.murchies.com>

101-919 Fort St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 3K3

Phone: 250-380-1683

<http://www.thebluefoxcafe.com>

1885 Oak Bay Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8R 1C6

Phone: 250-595-8020

<http://whiteheather-tearoom.com>

552 Pandora Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-294-1127

<http://habitcoffee.com>

1002 Broad St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1Z9

Phone: 250-385-8900

<http://macchiatocaffe.ca>

721 Government St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1W5

Phone: 250-384-8111

<http://www.fairmont.com/empress-victoria>

1327 Beach Drive

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8S 2N4

Phone: 250-598-8555

<http://www.marinarestaurant.com>

10 Acres Kitchen

Previously known as Pescatore's, this centrally located seafood restaurant specializes in locally sourced ingredients and seasonal and regional catches. Monday-Saturday 11:30 am-1 am, Sunday noon-midnight. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 620 Humboldt St., Victoria. Phone 250-385-4512. <https://10acres.ca/commons>.

Barb's Fish & Chips

Victoria's most popular fish-and-chips restaurant, located on a floating dock on Fisherman's Wharf. March-October daily 11 am until dark. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1 Dallas Road (Fisherman's Wharf), Victoria. Phone 250-384-6515. <http://barbsfishandchips.com>.

Fernwood Inn

Situated in an up-and-coming neighborhood, the Fernwood Inn restaurant offers fresh, modern fare in a casual dining room. Monday-Saturday 11:30 am-10 pm, Sunday 11 am-10 pm. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1302 Gladstone Ave. (across from the Belfry Theatre), Victoria. Phone 250-412-2001. <http://www.fernwoodinn.com>.

Ferris' Upstairs Seafood and Oyster Bar

Also known simply as The Ferris Grill, this casual spot serves local seafood and meats on a regional theme. The oyster bar, upstairs from the main restaurant, serves up local bivalves. Monday 11:30 am-10 pm, Tuesday-Sunday 11:30 am-11 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 536 Yates St., Victoria. Phone 250-360-1824. <http://www.ferrisoysterbar.com>.

Haultain Fish & Chips

In business since 1924, this is a Victoria classic. Branch out from the signature halibut and try cod, prawns, oysters, calamari or scallops. Tuesday-Saturday 11:30 am-7 pm. \$-\$\$\$. 1127 Haultain St., Victoria. Phone 250-383-8332. <http://www.haultainfishandchips.com>.

Lure Seafood Restaurant and Bar

Lure specializes in regional seafood and offers spectacular views over the Inner Harbour. Sunday-Thursday 6:30 am-11 pm, Friday and Saturday 6:30 am-midnight. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 100 Harbour Road (Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort), Victoria. Phone 250-360-5873. <https://www.marriott.com/hotel-restaurants/yyjvo-delta-hotels-victoria-ocean-pointe-resort/lure-restaurant-&-bar/5702446/home-page.mi>.

Red Fish Blue Fish

Housed in a former shipping container, this seafood taqueria offers a creative spin on traditional fish-and-chips. Daily 11 am-7 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. 1006 Wharf St., Victoria. Phone 250-298-6877. <http://www.redfish-bluefish.com>.

620 Humboldt St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 4G4

Phone: 250-385-4512

<https://10acres.ca/commons>

1 Dallas Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 0B2

Phone: 250-384-6515

<http://barbsfishandchips.com>

1302 Gladstone Ave.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8R1S1

Phone: 250-412-2001

<http://www.fernwoodinn.com>

536 Yates St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1K8

Phone: 250-360-1824

<http://www.ferrisoysterbar.com>

1127 Haultain St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-383-8332

<http://www.haultainfishandchips.com>

100 Harbour Road

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 0G1

Phone: 250-360-5873

<https://www.marriott.com/hotel-restaurants/yyjvo-delta-hotels-victoria-ocean-pointe-resort/lure-restaurant-&-bar/5702446/home-page.mi>

1006 Wharf St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250-298-6877

<http://www.redfish-bluefish.com>

SECURITY

Personal Safety

Victoria poses no great dangers, but be aware of your surroundings and use common sense: Don't walk along dark streets at night, and don't leave items visible in your car (lock your belongings in the trunk).

Areas to avoid after dark are the parks and parking lots immediately adjacent to the Johnson Street Bridge, the corner of Johnson and Wharf streets, and Cormorant Street between Douglas and Quadra streets—the city's homeless population, as well as some drug addicts, tend to congregate in those vicinities. Violent crime is extremely rare.

Southwestern British Columbia is an active earthquake zone. Check with your hotel for emergency evacuation procedures.

Excellent medical care is available in Victoria. Numerous walk-in clinics are located in and around downtown, and the city's two major hospitals are within 20 minutes of downtown. The Royal Jubilee Hospital at 1952 Bay Street is open 24 hours with an emergency department. Phone 250-370-8000.

http://www.viha.ca/patient_care_centre.

In the case of an emergency, dial 911. Visitors from the U.S. should make sure that they have adequate out-of-country health insurance.

A community with tree-lined residential streets, Victoria on the whole has a steady, reliable road system with paved sidewalks, and routes outlined for cyclists, making mobility a non-issue for both able-bodied visitors and those with mobility challenges.

However, some historic properties might not be wheelchair-accessible because of their early construction methods, so it's best to contact these venues in advance for wheelchair-accessibility details.

The Federal Government's Canadian Transportation Agency publishes *Take Charge of Your Travel: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities*, which you can download free online. <https://www.otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/take-charge>.

Visitors with disabilities can access a number of local organizations that offer citywide services. For public transit, see the BC Transit Bus Pass (<http://www.bctransit.com/regions/vic/fares/bcbuspass.cfm>). For mobility-aid practice sessions, contact the Victoria Regional Transit System. Phone 250-385-2551.

The Victoria International Airport is wheelchair accessible. For passengers needing assistance, commissionaires are located throughout the building. When seeking assistance, advance notice to the air carrier is recommended. For people escorting those with special needs and who are not flying, there is an escort pass available to provide additional assistance to the departure gate.

Victoria taxis are well-equipped for people with disabilities. Approximately 15% of taxis are wheelchair-accessible; reservations are not required when requesting a lift-equipped vehicle, but are recommended during busy periods.

For airport shuttles, the HandyDART is a public transit service designed to accommodate people with disabilities, though you must register by mail in advance of using the service. Phone 250-727-7811.

BC Ferries provides a variety of accessible services to ensure a safe and comfortable passage to visitors with disabilities. Phone 888-223-3779. <http://www.bcferries.com>.

In addition, there are many accessible accommodation options in British Columbia. *Hello BC* includes an accessibility rating, identified by a logo found under the "Ratings, Affiliations & Accreditations" section of the property's listing. <http://hellobc.com>.

Access Victoria markets several "barrier-free" accommodations, and provides some information on accessibility to major sites, venues and transportation. Toll-free 888-593-4247. <http://www.accessvictoria.com>.

Those with transportation or other travel-related disability issues can contact the Victoria Disability Resource Centre for more information. Phone 250-595-0044. <http://www.drcvictoria.com>.

Do use the term "indigenous" to describe British Columbia's first peoples. Victoria takes a lot of pride in its indigenous heritage.

Don't wear torn jeans or T-shirts to high tea at the Empress—or anywhere else. Locals tend to dress nicely when dining out.

Do respect pedestrian and traffic signals. Canadians are generally law-abiding people and like to see their rules respected.

Don't be confused by terms for the larger Canadian coinage. A Can\$1 coin is called a "loonie," for the loon it depicts on the side opposite the queen. The Can\$2 coin is called a "toonie."

Do remember to carry your umbrella in the spring, fall and winter months.

Do be mindful of dogs in off-leash areas usually harboring along trails.

FACTS

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 363,100.

Languages: English.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Protestant, Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 8 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-8 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 250, area code; 236, area code;

Currency Exchange

Victoria primarily uses Canadian currency. U.S. currency is accepted at most private venues with some offering their own exchange rates, which in most cases will be less than what is offered at the current bank exchange.

There are many banks and currency-exchange bureaus downtown. Most banks have ATMs, some dealing in U.S. dollars, but you'll also find ATMs near the city's tourist attractions and shopping areas.

Most purchases in British Columbia are subject to 5% Goods and Services Tax (GST) and a 7% Provincial Sales Tax (PST). On accommodations, there is a 1% destination marketing fee, a 11% hotel room tax (8% provincial sales tax plus 3% city tax) and 5% for the federal goods and services tax, for an effective tax rate of 17%. For more information, visit <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/visitors>.

It's customary to tip waitstaff and bar attendants 15%, more if you want to reward exceptional service. Taxi drivers are also generally tipped 15%. In hotels, bell staff should be tipped Can\$2 per bag, and the chamber staff left Can\$2 per day.

Weather

Victoria's summer daytime temperatures average about 72 F/22 C. Nights are cool, even in July and August, when temperatures can be as low as 50 F/10 C. Winters are mild (temperatures range 40-50 F/5-10 C), but they can be gray and drizzly. Light rain is most frequent October-May, but not unusual year-round.

Victorians pride themselves on a neat but laid-back appearance when they venture out, so you should pack plenty of nice casual wear for sightseeing. For business travelers, neat and tidy is the rule. Business meetings are performed in suits or suit jackets and khakis for men. For women, pant suits are typical attire.

Layering is key to managing Victoria's variable humidity and temperature fluctuations. Take a sweater if you are visiting in summer, as nights can be cool. For winter, you'll want warm, waterproof wear for gray and drizzly days. Make sure to take a comfortable pair of walking shoes.

It's a good idea to pack an umbrella and a rain jacket, as well, because of the unexpected showers that can happen at a moment's notice.

Telephone

Pay phones are uncommon in Victoria and visitors should not rely on them. The best plan of action is to take along your own phone and get an international roaming plan or buy a disposable phone or SIM card after you arrive at a Rogers, Bell or TELUS store.

Hotels in Victoria usually offer complimentary internet access to their guests. There is free Wi-Fi available in the Bay Centre downtown. Wi-Fi also is available at many coffee shops in the area.

Serious Coffee

Free Wi-Fi is offered at all Serious Coffee locations in town. Monday-Friday 6:30 am-6 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm, Sunday 8 am-5 pm. 1280 Broad St. (downtown), Victoria. Phone 250-380-0272. <http://www.seriouscoffee.com>.

1280 Broad St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2A5

Phone: 250-380-0272

<http://www.seriouscoffee.com>

The Greater Victoria Public Library

The library provides free Wi-Fi at all of its branches. Tuesday-Thursday 9 am-9 pm, Friday-Sunday 9 am-6 pm. 735 Broughton St., Victoria. Phone 250-940-4875. <http://www.gvpl.ca>.

735 Broughton St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3H2

Phone: 250-940-4875

<http://www.gvpl.ca>

Canada Post

The main downtown post office. Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. 709 Yates St., Victoria. Toll-free 800-267-1177. <http://www.canadapost.ca>.

709 Yates St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1L0

<http://www.canadapost.ca>

The daily newspaper of record is the *Victoria Times-Colonist*; the national dailies are *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. They're available in hotels and convenience stores. Free dailies include *Victoria News Daily* (<http://www.vicnews.com>), which is distributed at convenience stores and small shops across the city.

Tourism-related publications that list events and attractions include *Victoria Vacation Guide* and *Where* magazine. The hip and local *Monday Magazine* (<http://www.mondaymag.com>) is a weekly newspaper stuffed full of everything that's current.

Eat magazine (<http://www.eatmagazine.ca>) is a bimonthly devoted to the culinary scene. Both *Taste* and *Victoria Dining Guide* are extensive annual foodie publications. These publications are found throughout Victoria and are usually available at hotels, restaurants and tourism information centers.

Transportation

Victoria's charm is best experienced on foot or bicycle. That allows you to enjoy the scent of flowers in hanging baskets along the water's edge and to discover the delights of the town's meandering alleys, public squares and gardens. Most museums, galleries and shops are located around the Inner Harbour or in the downtown core. Even those attractions a little farther afield are within a short cab ride. BC Transit also provides excellent service in and around the city.

Air

Victoria Intl (YYJ)

Victoria International Airport (YYJ) is the 11th busiest airport in Canada with more than 100 daily flights throughout North America serving over 2 million passengers per year. YYJ is the base for 11 airlines including Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge. It covers 1,198 acres of land approximately. Aircraft activity at YYJ is classified into four main categories: Commercial air carriers, Private/ Government, Military and Local. Non-stop service is provided by major airlines to multiple destinations such as Abbotsford, Cancun, Huatulco, Montreal, Seattle, Vancouver, and Toronto.

Security

Security at YYJ is managed by the Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) - a non-profit authority, Transport Canada and The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA). All of them ensure the safe and secure airport operations. The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is responsible for security screening of people and baggage, all security equipment at the airport, certification, and training of screening officers. It also works with Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on the Air Carrier Protection Program. Transport Canada department under the Government of Canada is responsible for security policies and programs ensuring the safety and security compliance in the airport.

NEXUS cardholders are pre-approved, low-risk and trusted travelers and these passengers can move on a dedicated fast-track security lane enabling them to get a convenient airport journey. The NEXUS card can be purchased for \$50 Canadian or \$50 U.S. that gives a five-year membership on approval. TSA Pre allows passengers to speed up at the security checkpoints without removing their shoes and light jackets thereby reducing their wait time to less than 5 minutes. Members of Trusted Traveler programs (NEXUS and SENTRI) need not enroll for the Pre-Check program (TSA Pre). Self-check-in can be done through self-check-in kiosks.

Connecting Transportation

YYJ provides a complimentary shuttle service between the airport and downtown Victoria. The last shuttle leaves the airport at 12:15 AM for Victoria daily. YYJ is served by BC Transit with up to 28 departures to and from the airport and the McTavish Transit Exchange providing several connections to Swartz Bay, the Saanich Peninsula, and Downtown Victoria.

Taxi service is a convenient mode of transport for the passengers to keep their oversized backpacks and luggage. Flyers can avail Yellow Cab of Victoria, a reliable and 24-hour taxi service outside the Terminals. It also provides wheelchair accessible vans for disabled people. Car rental service is provided by four on-site rental car companies such as Avis, Budget, Hertz, National. These counters are located in the Arrivals area directly across the Information Desk. YYJ is

201-1640 Electra Blvd

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8L 5V4

Phone: 250-953-7500

<http://www.victoriaairport.com>

also served by off-airport rental car companies. The off-airport customer pick-up area is situated across the crosswalk at the arrivals. YYJ is a bike-friendly airport that has a multi-use path connecting it to a regional trail system, bicycle assembly station and paid secure bicycle storage.

Rental cars are available at the airport as well as in town. Expect to pay Can\$100-\$110 a day for a mid-sized vehicle, though online deals can often be much less.

The minimum age to rent a vehicle is 18, but some private rental companies require drivers to be 21 and impose additional charges for those who are younger than 25.

The use of cell phones or other hand-held devices while driving is prohibited by law in British Columbia.

BC Transit runs public buses along regular routes downtown. One-way fares are Can\$2.50, depending on your age and how far you want to go. Exact change in Canadian currency is required. Day passes are also available for Can\$5. <http://www.transitbc.com/regions/vic/fares/default.cfm>.

Cruise ships berth at Ogden Point, a short taxi ride or 15- to 20-minute walk to downtown. Small passenger ships may dock or anchor in the Inner Harbour. Victoria Harbour Ferries, a passenger-only service with a dock in the Inner Harbour, travels to 17 destinations around the harbor, including several resorts.

<http://www.victoriaharbourferry.com/ferry-stops-fares>.

Taxis are easy to find. Fares around downtown range Can\$10-\$20.

In addition, Victoria Harbour Ferries (<http://www.victoriaharbourferry.com>) and H2O Taxi (<http://www.h2otaxi.com>) offer water-taxi service for pickup around the Inner Harbour.

For More Information

Recommended Reading

The Explorer's Guide to Victoria & Vancouver Island: A Great Destination by Eric Lucas (Countryman Press).

Moon Victoria & Vancouver Island by Andrew Hempstead (Avalon Travel Publishing).

Tourism Victoria

The visitors center has a wealth of information about the city. Daily 9 am-5 pm. 812 Wharf St., Victoria. Phone 250-953-2033. Toll-free 800-663-3883. <http://www.tourismvictoria.com>.

812 Wharf St.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1T3

Phone: 250-953-2033

<http://www.tourismvictoria.com>

EVENTS

Calendar

Local residents and visitors take part in and enjoy Victoria's celebrations—which cover the spectrum from floral displays to wine, boating and music festivals. There is at least one major event taking place almost every month.

Highlights include the Uno Festival of Solo Performance, which features world-class productions for single performers (May), International JazzFest (June) and the Art Gallery Paint-In (July). The popular Symphony Splash takes place in the Inner Harbour in early August. The Art of the Cocktail is a two-day festival held in late October. The Festival of Trees transforms the Fairmont Empress Hotel into a magically decorated forest each November and December.

During the months of May and June, Victoria hosts its annual garden tours. Some of the city's loveliest private gardens are open to the public as a fund-raiser for the Victoria Conservatory of Music.

Other festivals include the Victoria International Buskers Festival (July), Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival (late August), and the Victoria Fringe Theatre Festival (August).

For the latest festival information, contact Tourism Victoria. Phone 250-953-2033. Toll-free 800-663-3883. <http://www.tourismvictoria.com>.