

Title:

Five Must Do Things In Vancouver British Columbia

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Vancouver is an incredibly vibrant, multicultural city experiencing tremendous growth in anticipation of the 2010 Winter Olympics. Considered one of the world's most livable and beautifully-situated cities, Vancouver offers a wealth of interesting experiences for the curious visitor. Here we present a few old favorites for travelers to enjoy, as well as one or two places off the beaten path for the curious adventurer.

1) Canada Place

The first stop for anyone coming to Vancouver should be to walk along the spectacular promenade of Canada Place at Waterfront Station. Constructed as the Canadian pavilion for the World Expo 1986 and now housing the city's Convention Center, a stroll around Canada Place allows the visitor to take in the beautiful harbor of Burrard Inlet, with its vista of snow-capped mountains, Stanley Park, and the modern glass towers of Coal Harbour nearby.

Canada Place also showcases the dynamism of Vancouver's economic might and place in the global market. The inlet seethes with container ships bound outward to China and parts beyond. In the summertime cruise ships from the world's major lines dock along the pier en route to Alaska. Floatplanes taking off for the wild natural coves of the Inside Passage and helicopters departing for Vancouver

Island augment the energetic scene.

It was here that the Canadian Pacific Railway completed the transcontinental railway in 1889, bestowing on Vancouver the nickname of 'Terminal City'. Since then Vancouver has changed from being the 'end of the line' and is now considered the 'Gateway to Asia' and the Far North. It's a perfect introduction to the city of Vancouver and shouldn't be missed by the curious traveller.

2) Spanish Banks

For another perspective on the city ride out the beaches at Spanish Banks, on the north shore of Point Grey. In summer with the tide out, the golden sands of the lovely beaches seem to stretch out to infinity. The water remains shallow and warm with the tide in during the hot months, but at any time of year the view remains breathtaking, with the tall modern condominium towers of Vancouver sparkling in the distance like shards of light within the green jade bowl of the mountains beyond.

Treat yourself to a visit at the Jericho Sailing Association and share an enormous platter of nachos served up on the delightful terrace. From your commanding perch you can watch boating hobbyists and windsurfers at play on the water or see stately craft from the nearby Royal Vancouver Yacht Club pull up their sails. Further inland, Ultimate Frisbee players sprawl out on the green fields and tennis courts attract some of the city's best players.

The area of the park was once a seaplane base and military camp during the Second World War and now contains a youth hostel, with a local community centre and theatre. It's a perfect spot for a picnic or just to escape the hustle and bustle of the city and well worth the visit.

3) Sushi in the West End

Vancouver is world-famous for its venerable Chinatown and the hundreds of restaurants contained therein. The city has been a home for Asian immigrants since the construction of the railway in the 19th century. Those who braved the voyage to the 'Gold Mountain' brought with them culinary traditions that have enlivened the palates of generations of Vancouverites. In addition to Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean neighborhoods Vancouver once had a thriving Japantown along East Hastings, now sadly in decline.

These days, thousands of English language students from Japan and Korea have turned the area along west Robson Street and Denman into a miniature Tokyo or Seoul. One of the best ways to sample some of the city's delights is to visit a

few of the many restaurants offering affordable and delicious all-you-can-eat buffets of sushi and sashimi.

Shabusen restaurant at the corner of Burrard and Robson is a great place to start, with its wide selection and wonderful Korean barbecue specials on the weekends, when you can cook spicy marinated chicken, beef and pork at your own personal brazier. Another great stop is Tanpopo restaurant near the corner of Denman and Davie streets, with its wealth of fresh wild salmon, tasty gyoza dumplings, salty spinach ohitashi salad and a marvelous outdoor patio where you can watch the world go by at nearby English Bay.

Be prepared to leave both restaurants perfectly satisfied as you continue your exploration of the multicultural feast that is Vancouver.

4) Nightlife in Gastown

For a night on the town Vancouver has a lot to offer the adventurous. The Granville Street strip is where revelers head to dance and drink the night away under the flashing neon signs of the heritage Orpheum and Vogue theaters at such bustling nightclubs as Republic, Tonic, and Ginger 68, to name but a few.

Gastown along Water Street is where the first European settlement was created back in the old lumber camp days and the locale saw one of Vancouver's first saloons opened up by legendary 'Gassy' Jack Deighton in the late 1800's. On the cobbled streets one may find some excellent watering holes that continue the tradition set by Vancouver's pioneers.

Close to the original site of 'Gassy' Jack's own Deighton Hotel is the charming Irish Heather Bistro, home of the best pints of Guinness in the city. In the rear, built into the snug walls of the old city jail, is a cozy glassed-in patio that hosts live Irish and Scottish music most nights. The 'Heather' boasts a progressive menu which combines old pub standards together with modern flair.

For a more raucous scene try the Blarney Stone pub across the street. A genuine Irish dance hall crammed with University Students on the weekends, the Blarney Stone is known throughout town as a wild and rowdy place to make new friends and have a good time. There's free foosball tables on the upper level and be prepared to hoot and holler along with the fiddles and drums all night long.

These are just a few of Vancouver's many active hotspots. Recommendations for music venues, concerts and movies can be found in the entertainment section of the free weekly cultural paper 'The Georgia Straight', found everywhere downtown. Pick one up and you won't fail to find something for every taste.

5) Sports in the City

Vancouver boasts several professional sports franchises and a history of excellence. In 1915 the Vancouver Millionaires hoisted up the renowned Stanley Cup on the ice at the old Denman Arena, the first indoor artificial-ice hockey rink in North America.

Since then the city's teams include the locally-beloved Vancouver Canucks of the National Hockey League and defunct Vancouver Grizzlies of the NBA. The 1994 and 2000 Grey Cup Champion British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League play at BC Place Stadium, site of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Throughout the year there is always a game on somewhere for fans of every sport and every budget.

Some of the best fun can be had with Vancouver's minor league teams. The Oakland Athletics affiliate Vancouver Canadians of the Single 'A' NorthWest Baseball league play in a jewel of a ballpark at Nat Bailey Stadium near Queen Elizabeth Park. It's a fun afternoon of baseball in a lovely pastoral setting for young and old alike that will often end with music and fireworks, or a visit by the mayor.

If Canucks tickets are too expensive or difficult to find a great alternative in the winter are the Vancouver Giants of the Western Hockey League. This young team plays at the historic Pacific Coliseum on the grounds of the P.N.E. fairground and come off a championship 2006 season.

Vancouver is also seeing a resurgence of interest in soccer, notably with the resurrected Vancouver Whitecaps. The team was champion of the North America Soccer League in 1979 during the height of 'soccernania' in Canada and the United States, winning the Soccer Bowl in New York City that year. They currently play at Swangard Stadium close to a Skytrain station in Burnaby and there is talk of a new downtown stadium in anticipation of Vancouver hosting the 2007 U-20 World Cup.

Stanley Park is named after the Governor-General of Canada who donated the Stanley Cup to hockey and the city waits for its next championship and the eyes of the world in 2010 for the Olympics. With so much to do and see, a visit to Vancouver is more interesting than ever. It's a chance to share the excitement and enjoy the hospitality of this 'City of Tomorrow'.