

Forever Young

CANADA'S FIFTY PLUS NEWSMAGAZINE



Articles Travel

Postcard Perfect

July 9, 2018

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By Anne Bokma

B.C.'s capital city, long touted as a prime spot for "newlyweds, nearly-deads and flower beds," is attracting Canadians of all ages, thanks in part to a booming tech sector that's drawing young people and a year-round mild coastal climate (imagine just two annual sprinklings of snow) that's enticing anyone who'd rather snorkel than shovel the white stuff.

A building boom is evident in the cranes that compete with seagulls up in the air and the constant buzz of construction on the streets down below.



Contests



Beertown contest

January 27, 2019



Wonderbra contest

January 27, 2019



CeraVe contest

December 30, 2018



The Post movie contest

November 25, 2018

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The place is buzzing in other ways too. Conde Nast named it the second best small city in the world (after San Miguel de Allende, Mexico), "Travel + Leisure" lists it as one of the top 10 cities in the world, "The New York Times" calls it one of the world's top small urban destinations and Amazon Canada hails it as the country's most romantic city. With Pacific Ocean views, Washington's Olympic Mountains in the distance and an abundance of green spaces, is it any wonder people are clamouring to come here?

A move to Victoria might not be possible, but a visit is. Here are nine ways to make the most of your time on this island destination:

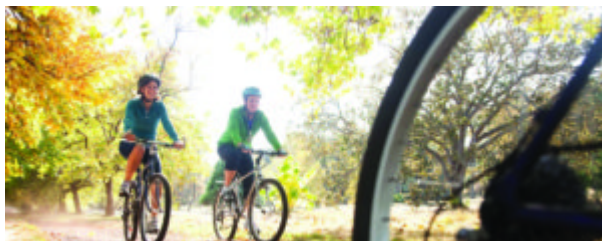
1. **Hit the Inner Harbour:** Order a platter of fresh local oysters on the patio of the landmark Steamship Terminal and watch the visiting yachts, water taxis, ferries, whale-watching boats and floatplanes come and go in a beautiful waterfront setting located smack in the centre of the city. (Vancouver is a 90 minute ferry ride away; Seattle is three hours.)
2. **Dine like royalty:** The famously stout Queen Victoria, the city's namesake, favoured a bountiful selection of food and the tantalizing gastronomic pleasures of restaurants such as Nourish Kitchen and Cafe (which makes wholesome dishes using ingredients from its own backyard garden) and The Marina Restaurant (where you can feast on an unforgettable oceanfront view as well as fancy seafood and regional cuisine) would have thrilled this royal known for her 50-inch waist.
3. **Get around by bike:** The best way to see the city is on two wheels and Victoria has more cycle routes than any other Canadian city. The Pedaler offers several guided tours, including Eat, Drink, Pedal, a rolling feast of culinary sampling stops. Its Castles, Hoods & Legends tour tells the sometimes scandalous stories of the people behind some of the city's iconic landmarks, including coal baron Robert Dunsmuir, once the wealthiest man in B.C. who build the majestic 35-room Craigdarroch Castle in the 1880s and whose untimely death began a riches-to-rags unravelling of his family's empire. Then there's the headspinning tale of the married celebrated architect Francis Rattenbury, designer of Victoria's elegant legislative building and the Empress Hotel, whose torrid 1923 love affair with a much younger woman eventually forced him to leave Victoria for England where he was bludgeoned to death by his new wife's teenage lover.



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4. **Gawk at gorgeous gardens:** Thanks to its sub-Mediterranean climate, Victoria starts blossoming as early as February, thus its “City of Gardens” moniker. Four of the best are the Butchart Gardens, with more than one million plants in 700 varieties, the 200-acre Beacon Hill Park with an amazing display of blue flowering camas (and equally vibrant blue peacocks wandering at will), the formal gardens of Government House, the official residence of the lieutenant governor, and the lavish Hatley Castle gardens where 120 gardeners and groundskeepers once tended the 1908 estate.
5. **Get cultured:** Two attractions are devoted to a couple of Canada’s most famous artists: the Emily Carr House is the gingerbread-style childhood home of B.C.’s best-known painter, and The Robert Bateman Centre offers a definitive collection of the renowned naturalist painter. The Royal B.C. Museum is your best bet to learn all about the province’s history. Its Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs, an exhibition with more than 300 original artifacts of ancient Egyptian life, is on view until December.
6. **Sleep in style:** Both the legendary Fairmount Empress, which has just received a \$60 million facelift to return the grande dame to her former glory, and the luxurious Hotel Grand Pacific, which offers complimentary access to the upscale Victoria Athletic Club, offer stunning views of the Inner Harbour.
7. **Take time for tea:** Afternoon tea is steeped in British history and you don’t have to look far to find a tea shop with a triple-tiered stand filled with finger sandwiches and sweet treats. The Fairmount Empress Hotel, where elegantly dressed women in oversize hats crook their pinkies and shell out \$75 for high tea, reigns above them all, serving half a million cups of tea to 100,000 guests annually.
8. **Check out Canada’s oldest Chinatown:** Victoria’s Chinatown dates to 1858 when Chinese prospectors arrived in the city on their way to the gold rush. A 90-minute guided walking tour with Discover the Past offers a fascinating look at the history of this two-block section, including its famous ornate entrance, The Gate of Harmonious Interest, and Fan Tan Alley, once a secret passageway to gambling rooms and opium dens and now home to trendy boutiques.



9. **Splurge at a spa:** After running around all day as a tourist, you'll be ready to put your feet up — or better yet, lie your whole body down on a massage table for some serious pampering. The Spa Magnolia, located beside the luxury Magnolia boutique hotel and the new Parisian-inspired Courtney Room restaurant, has organic products, friendly staff and a relaxation room with a water feature, comfy chairs, herbal tea and magazines. It's enough to make you feel like royalty.

No doubt Queen Victoria would approve.

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