

welcome to BC & the Canadian Rockies



Jaw-Dropping Nature

Sighing is the usual reflex when encountering this region's dense diorama of sawtooth peaks, ethereally colored lakes and crenulated coastlines battered by dramatic ocean waves. But it's the vast scale of this seemingly infinite wilderness that strikes most, triggering a humbled, heart-calming response in the face of nature's grand scheme. There has never been a more persuasive argument for tree-hugging, although when it comes to the area's astonishing wildlife, from whales and grizzlies to wolves and moose, it's best to keep the hugging to a minimum.

Active Pursuits

It's not just about the aesthetics here either. Locals with calves-of-steel have been discovering ways to interact with nature for decades and there are hundreds of operators that can help you do the same. From skiing and snowboarding on Whistler's Olympic slopes, to hiking the alpine meadows in Banff National Park or surfing with the West Coast beach bums in Tofino, there are more ways to work up a sweat here than you can swing a paddle at. Which reminds us: these are prime kayaking waters, with tree-lined lakes and rough-and-tumble ocean routes awaiting.

Soul-stirring mountains, mist-shrouded coastal forests and epic tooth-and-claw wildlife – this is Canada’s outdoor wonderland. And it comes with adrenalin-pumping activities and a full menu of lively local scenes.

(left) Moraine Lake, Banff National Park, Alberta (p223).
(below) Punnets of Canadian berries.



Eat, Drink & be Merry

Currently noshing its way into a slow-food golden age, British Columbia has amazing farmers markets, juicy seafood, lush Okanagan fruit, velvet-soft ranchland steaks and crunchy veggies flavored by the region that they’re grown in. Restaurants fall over themselves to showcase the region’s finest food, but it’s Vancouver, arguably Canada’s top dining city, that leads the way. And alongside the grape-tastic Okanagan and its wine-producing satellite regions, there’s been a surge in local beer-making. A tasty round of microbreweries has popped up, making this a thirst-slaking paradise for traveling beer nuts.

Festival Central

Timing is everything if you want to party with the locals at some of the region’s annual events. From ice wine-quaffing at January’s Winter Okanagan Wine Festival to waving a maple-leaf flag (and donning a face tattoo) at regional Canada Day celebrations on July 1, you’ll never be far from a happening. Vancouver lures with its street parades, Chinese New Year, Pride Week and the Santa Claus Parade among them, while excellent arts events include Edmonton’s Fringe Theatre Festival, and the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival. Food and drink are also a big focus: Vancouver Craft Beer Week and Whistler’s Cornucopia will have you feasting like a naughty bacchanalian.

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