

# Welcome to BC & the Canadian Rockies

*Sigh-inducing mountains, mist-shrouded forests and epic tooth-and-claw wildlife: this is Canada's legendary outdoor wonderland. And it's served alongside a full menu of distinctive, ever-inviting communities.*

## Grand Outdoors

A large, lung-filling intake of breath is the usual response upon encountering this region's sparkling diorama of sawtooth peaks, dense forests, ethereally colored lakes and crenulated coastlines ever-whipped by dramatic ocean waves. It's the vast scale of this seemingly infinite wilderness that strikes most visitors, triggering a humble response in the face of nature's grand scheme. There has never been a more persuasive argument for blissful tree-hugging – but of course 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.

## Epic Adrenaline Rushes

Steely calved West Coasters have been discovering ways to interact with the outdoors for decades, and there are hundreds of operators here that can help you do the same. From skiing or mountain biking on Whistler's spectacular slopes, to hiking the flower-studded alpine meadows in Banff National Park or surfing with the beach nuts 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 that will call your name like a siren song.

## Urban Adventures

It's easy to be seduced by the outdoors but this region also offers sparkling city action. Urbanites will enjoy the Edmonton arts scene and Calgary's contemporary cowboy vibe, but it's British Columbia that offers the best city-based shenanigans, with two very different approaches. Provincial capital Victoria frames its cool scene with a backdrop of historic buildings, while Vancouver, Western Canada's largest city, provides a full menu of tasty neighborhoods that are ripe for exploration. From slick Yaletown to hipster-haven Main St and from cool Gastown to the 'gayborhood' of West End, you'll never run out of places to explore on foot.

## Foodie Explorations

Discovering its local foodie mojo in recent years, this region serves up a full menu of juicy seafood, ranchland steaks, and fruit and veggies piled high at an ever-expanding array of seasonal farmers markets. Restaurants fall over themselves to showcase these delicious local ingredients, but it's Vancouver, possibly Canada's top dining city, that leads the way. Alongside the Okanagan Valley and its wine-producing satellite regions, and a surge in regional artisan distilleries, there's been a tidal wave of new microbreweries, making BC the country's top destination for traveling beer fans.



## Why I Love BC & the Canadian Rockies

By John Lee, Writer

My first Western Canada visit included spine-tingling sightings of deer, bears and a hulking moose that eyed me quizzically from the edge of a Rocky Mountains forest. Coming from the UK, I was deeply and instantly smitten. But although I've now lived here for 25 years, I'm still enthralled. Whether you're gliding along the mountain-framed coastline on a ferry, watching eagles whirling en masse overhead, or simply sipping a hoppy ale in a tiny Vancouver micro-brewery tasting room, it's easy to believe this is the best place on earth.

**For more about our writers, see p320**