



Day Trips from Vancouver

Victoria p192

A scenic floatplane hop or languid ferry ride from the mainland, British Columbia's historic waterfront capital fuses heritage charm, excellent attractions and a pub-tastic craft-beer scene.

Whistler p198

The region's favorite outdoor wonderland, this gable-roofed, mountain-framed ski village offers year-round thrills including skiing, rafting and zip-lining.

Richmond & Steveston p203

Hosting North America's best Asian dining and night night market scenes, Richmond also incorporates the pretty seaside village of Steveston, home to a couple of great historic attractions.

Southern Gulf Islands p207

Arriving via scenic floatplane or ferry ride from the mainland, such as Salt Spring and Galiano feel as if they're million miles away from the city.

Victoria

Explore

With a wider-metro population approaching 380,000, this picture-postcard provincial capital was long-touted as North America's most English city. Thankfully, the tired theme-park version of old-fashioned England is no more. Fueled by an increasingly younger demographic, a quiet revolution has seen lame tourist pubs, eateries and stores transformed into the kind of brightly painted bohemian shops, coffee bars and innovative restaurants that would make any city proud. It's worth seeking out these enclaves on foot, but activity fans should also hop on their bikes: Victoria has more cycle routes than any other Canadian city. Once you've finished pedaling, there's BC's best museum, a park fringed by a windswept sea-front and outdoor activities from kayaking to whale-watching.

The Best...

- ➔ **Sight** Craigdarroch Castle (p192)
- ➔ **Place to Eat** Red Fish Blue Fish (p196)
- ➔ **Place to Drink** Drake (p197)

Top Tip

For a meal with a difference, show your ID at security and nip inside the old-school, white-tablecloth politicians' dining room in the Parliament Buildings; it's open to everyone.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Air** The delightfully scenic downtown-to-downtown floatplane services operated from Vancouver by Harbour Air (www.harbourair.com) take around 30 minutes.
- ➔ **Boat** BC Ferries (www.bcferreries.com) services from mainland Tsawwassen arrive at Swartz Bay, a transit-bus ride from Victoria (bus 70).
- ➔ **Bus** BC Ferries Connector (www.bcfconnector.com) buses take passengers from downtown Vancouver to downtown Victoria via the ferry.
- ➔ **Car** Drive to BC Ferries' Tsawwassen terminal, board the Victoria-bound ferry, then hit the island's Hwy 17 into Victoria (32km).

Need to Know

- ➔ **Area Code** 250
- ➔ **Location** 112km southwest of Vancouver
- ➔ **Tourist Office** **Tourism Victoria Visitor Centre** (Map p194; ☎250-953-2033; www.tourismvictoria.com; 812 Wharf St; ☀8:30am-8:30pm mid-May-Aug, 9am-5pm Sep-mid-May; ☎70)

SIGHTS

From the province's main museum to heritage houses and kid-friendly attractions, there's a full range of attractions here.

★ CRAIGDARROCH CASTLE MUSEUM

Map p194 (☎250-592-5323; www.thecastle.ca; 1050 Joan Cres; adult/child \$14/5; ☀9am-7pm mid-Jun-Aug, 10am-4:30pm Sep-mid-Jun; ☎; ☎14) One of Canada's finest stately home attractions, this elegant turreted mansion illuminates the lives of the city's Victorian-era super-rich. Lined with sumptuous wood-paneling and stained-glass windows, the rooms are teeming with period antiques, giving the impression the residents have just stepped away from their chairs. Climb the tower's 87 steps for distant views of the Olympic Mountains. Save time to read up on the often tragic story behind the family that lived here.

★ MINIATURE WORLD MUSEUM

Map p194 (☎250-385-9731; www.miniatureworld.com; 649 Humboldt St; adult/child \$15/10; ☀9am-9pm mid-May-mid-Sep, 9am-5pm mid-Sep-mid-May; ☎; ☎70) Tucked along the side of the Empress Hotel, this old-school hidden gem is a must-see, especially if you appreciate the craft of extremely intricate model-making. Lined with dozens of diminutive diorama scenes, divided into themes from Camelot to space and from fairyland to Olde England, it has plenty of push-button action, several trundling trains and the chance to see yourself on a miniature movie-theater screen. An immaculately maintained reminder of innocent yesteryear attractions.

ROYAL BC MUSEUM MUSEUM

Map p194 (☎250-356-7226; www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca; 675 Belleville St; adult/child from \$16/11; ☀10am-5pm daily, to 10pm Fri & Sat mid-May-Sep; ☎; ☎70) Start in the natural history gallery of BC's best museum and