

Gastown & Chinatown

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Catfe (p89)

Communing with a clutch of friendly felines and triggering a purr or two at British Columbia's first cat-themed cafe.

2 Alibi Room (p88)

Tucking into the city's best array of regional craft beers while rubbing shoulders with the locals at one of the long, can-

dlelit tables; small sampler glasses recommended.

3 Dr Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (p82)

Sinking into a state of calm while watching the bobbling turtles and admiring the gnarly bonsai trees.

4 Vancouver Police-Museum (p81)

Discovering the city's murky, sometimes murderous past at this hidden-gem museum.

5 Skwachays Lodge (p220)

Staying the night in Vancouver's artsy First Nations hotel; ground-floor art gallery recommended.



For more detail of this area see Map p272 and p273 ➔

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Gastown and Chinatown are part of the Downtown Eastside, which some locals will tell you is a dangerous area. These are generally locals who haven't been here. The neighborhood certainly has many social challenges and a high proportion of residents with addiction or mental-health issues. You're far more likely, however, to be asked for 'spare change' in the city center, and muggings here are rare. Stay street smart and avoid the fetid back alleys and side streets (especially at night).



Best Places to Eat

- Tacofino (p83)
- Ask for Luigi (p86)
- Bao Bei (p88)
- Bestie (p86)
- Purebread (p83)



Best Places to Drink

- Alibi Room (p88)
- Juniper (p92)
- Keefer Bar (p92)
- Brickhouse (p92)
- Catfe (p89)



Best Places to Shop

- Eastside Flea (p94)
- Erin Templeton (p94)
- Community Thrift & Vintage (p94)
- Salmagundi West (p94)
- Lynn Steven Boutique (p95)

Explore Gastown & Chinatown

Radiating from the jaunty Gassy Jack statue in brick-paved Maple Tree Sq, the main thoroughfares of compact Gastown are Powell, Water, Carrall and Alexander Sts. You'll find plenty of shops and restaurants on Water St, while its adjoining side streets are home to a more recent wave of hip bars, stores and coffee shops. Wandering southeast from Maple Tree Sq, you'll enter the heart of the Downtown Eastside, where many of the neighborhood's poorest residents reside. Hastings St runs across Carrall and is this rougher area's main drag. A block across is Chinatown, denoted by its flare-roofed buildings and dragon-topped street lamps. The entire Gastown and Chinatown district is easily explored on foot and makes for a fascinating afternoon of urban wandering. Couple this with an end-of-day drink or dinner in some of the city's best bars and restaurants.

Local Life

➤ **Bars** Avoid downtown's Granville Strip drunks on a bar crawl of Gastown's top watering holes. You'll find hipster locals as well as more BC craft beer than you can shake a merry stick at. Be sure to include the excellent Alibi Room (p88).

➤ **Shops** Chinatown is teeming with traditional grocery stores, where looking is just as much fun as buying. You'll find interesting items such as lizards splayed on sticks. For a different scene, peruse the cool boutiques of Gastown.

➤ **History** Vancouver's best heritage buildings line this area, from tile-topped apothecaries to handsome century-old stone edifices repurposed as cool bars and restaurants. Make sure you look higher than shop level for glimpses of this evocative past.

Getting There & Away

➤ **Train** SkyTrain's Waterfront Station is at the western edge of Gastown, near the start of Water St. Stadium-Chinatown Station is on the edge of Chinatown and a 10-minute stroll south of Gastown.

➤ **Bus** Bus 14 heads northwards from downtown's Granville St then along Hastings, which makes it handy for both Gastown and Chinatown. Buses 3, 4, 7 and 8 also service the area.

➤ **Car** There is metered parking throughout Gastown and Chinatown, with some non-metered parking east of Main St.