

# Welcome to Vancouver

*Walkable neighborhoods, drink-and-dine delights  
and memorable cultural and outdoor activities  
framed by dramatic vistas; there's a glassful of  
great reasons to love this lotusland metropolis.*

## Neighborhood Villages

Downtown is just the start of Vancouver. Walk or hop transit and within minutes you'll be hanging with the locals in one of the city's many diverse and distinctive 'hoods. Whether you're discovering the coffee shops of Commercial Dr or the hipster haunts of Main St, the indie bars and restaurants of Gastown or the heritage-house beachfronts and browsable stores of Kitsilano, you'll find this city perfect for easy-access urban exploration. Just be sure to chat to the locals wherever you go; they might seem shy or aloof at first, but Vancouverites love talking up their town.

## Taste-Tripping

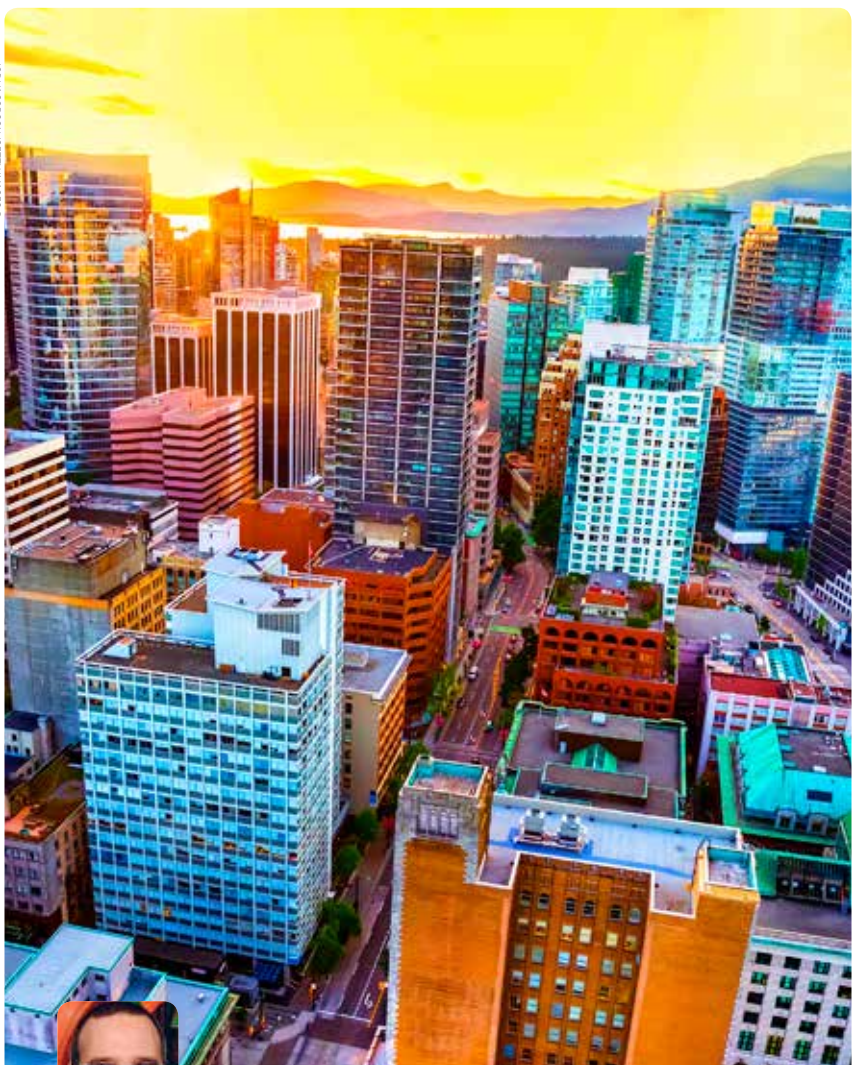
Don't tell Toronto or Montreal but Vancouver is the real culinary capital of Canada. Loosen your belt and dive right into North America's best Asian dining scene, from chatty Chinese restaurants to authentic *izakayas* (Japanese neighborhood pubs), or taste a rich smorgasbord of fresh-caught seafood, including seasonal spot prawns and juicy wild salmon. The farm-to-table movement has also revitalized the notion of West Coast cuisine – anyone for succulent Fraser Valley duck and a side dish of foraged morels? And we haven't even started on the nation-leading craft-beer scene, plus the city's emerging craft liquor producers.

## Creative Culture

As the city awaits its long-anticipated new Vancouver Art Gallery building, there's already a rich and ever-spreading canvas of cultural action to dive into around the city. Dig deeply and you'll uncover a diverse grassroots scene that operates like a locavore movement for culture-lovers. Mingle with the regulars at eclectic festivals, sparkling theatrical events, toe-tapping live music, waterfront Shakespeare shows and a camera-ready menagerie of public art – as well as the city's independent galleries and a huge, party-like open-house art crawl that lures locals and visitors to East Vancouver every November.

## Outdoor Wonderland

Those snow-dusted mountains that are peeking at you from between downtown's glass towers? They're less than 30 minutes away by car. Vancouverites really can ski in the morning and hit the beach in the afternoon – although it's far more relaxing to chill out and take your time. The North Shore nature doorstep offers snow sports, mountain biking and leisurely rainforest viewing, while the city itself is studded with sandy beaches, forest trails, kayaking routes, seawall bike lanes and Canada's urban green-space jewel, the mighty and highly beloved Stanley Park.



## Why I Love Vancouver

By John Lee, Writer

Eagles whirling overhead, sunset-framed beaches, and the unfurling ocean and mountain diorama from Stanley Park's breathtaking seawall. Although I moved here in the 1990s, I've never stopped gazing at Vancouver's natural charms. For me, it's this astonishing backdrop that sets the glass-towered metropolis apart. But I'm a city boy at heart and I'm also delighted that Vancouver is continuing to develop as it grows up. From amazing dining to a thriving art scene, this young West Coast city keeps moving forward – and I don't just mean the gratifying excellent craft-beer scene (although, personally, that really helps).

**For more about our writer, see p288**