

TRAVEL  
INSIDER

CANADA

CANADA IS

WONDER

📍 Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia

Escape into the wilds of western Canada on an unforgettable autumn adventure. Spot bears, get swept up in an aurora and prepare for the unexpected.

📍 Stanley Park, Vancouver

# THE WEST COAST

## Top stays in British Columbia

### The Magnolia Hotel & Spa, Victoria

Head straight to this boutique stay's spa for a soothing hot stone massage then get cosy by the fireplace in your Signature Corner Room with uninterrupted views of the Parliament Buildings. [magnoliahotel.com](http://magnoliahotel.com)

### Fairmont Pacific Rim, Vancouver

Stay on the waterfront in cutting-edge luxury with high-tech rooms and marble baths. The rooftop has a pool, firepits and a hot tub, plus views of Stanley Park and the North Shore Mountains. [fairmontpacificrim.com](http://fairmontpacificrim.com)

# VANCOUVER

# YUKON

## Top stays in Yukon

### Edgewater Hotel, Whitehorse

This Downtown stay overlooking the Yukon River features modern rooms decorated with local art. [edgewaterhotelwhitehorse.com](http://edgewaterhotelwhitehorse.com)

### ✈️ Fly Qantas direct from Sydney to Vancouver, with connecting flights to Vancouver Island.

**Heed the call of the wild on British Columbia's west coast as you spot seals basking on rocky shores, whales breaching in the Pacific Ocean and bears lolling about in streams.**

#### Encounter grizzlies

In September and October, rivers running through the Great Bear Rainforest, which stretches north from Vancouver Island to Prince Rupert, heave with spawning salmon. Family-friendly

Farewell Harbour Lodge ([farewellharbour.com](http://farewellharbour.com)) on Berry Island – a 30-minute water taxi from Alder Bay – offers full-day excursions to secluded estuaries where grizzlies gather for their pre-hibernation feast.

#### Road-trip around Vancouver Island

The northern town of Port Hardy is the gateway to Cape Scott Provincial Park's wild landscapes. Here, dense rainforests give way to sheer cliffs and rock-strewn beaches. In Telegraph Cove during autumn, the marine population outnumbers humans and the waters brim with humpbacks.

A leisurely 2.5-hour drive south, the Comox Valley's verdant farmland stretches to the water's edge. Locals

restaurant in Courtenay ([localscomoxvalley.com](http://localscomoxvalley.com)) puts the season on a platter with squash, wild mushrooms and apples fresh from the orchard. Match your meal with a glass of organic Ortega from Beaufort Vineyard & Estate Winery ([beaufortwines.ca](http://beaufortwines.ca)) or a crisp Coastal Black Estate cider ([coastalblack.ca](http://coastalblack.ca)) – both produced just up the road.

Continue on to Cowichan Valley and explore an outdoor gallery of First Nations art along the colourful streets of Duncan, also known as the "City of Totems". Throughout the self-guided Totems Tour ([duncan.ca](http://duncan.ca)), you'll see detailed pieces, such as the Centennial Pole, which towers more than 10 metres above Charles Hoey Park and features bold depictions of humans and wildlife.

Conclude your Vancouver Island odyssey in British Columbia's cosmopolitan capital, Victoria, home to ornate Baroque and Renaissance-style Parliament Buildings and the luxurious Fairmont Empress hotel ([fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com)), a stately edifice overlooking the busy harbour.

Walk among ancient oaks in the city's sprawling Beacon Hill Park and learn about traditional carving and weaving at the First Peoples Gallery of the Royal BC Museum ([royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)) then fill up with a hearty lunch at nearby 10 Acres Bistro ([10acres.ca](http://10acres.ca)). With its own veggie crops, orchard and livestock, the restaurant serves up an autumn bounty of succulent pork chops with earthy root vegetables.

### 🚢 Victoria to Vancouver 3.5 hrs by car with a 90-minute ferry crossing

**With its bold blue skies and golden leaves, the autumnal beauty of BC's biggest city is on full display. It's the perfect time for outdoor expeditions without the crowds.**

#### Take a walk on the wild side

In Stanley Park, walk or cycle along the 10-kilometre Seawall loop to take in the glorious foliage of red and orange maples and Douglas firs reflected back in the waters of Burrard Inlet. Gain a deeper understanding on a walk through the park with Talaysay Tours ([talaysay.com](http://talaysay.com))

as an Indigenous guide shares ancient practices and wisdom that's been passed down through generations of Coast Salish and Squamish People.

Queen Elizabeth Park is the city's highest point, offering unmatched skyline and mountain views, while the tranquil stream and waterfall of Quarry Gardens provide respite from the city action. Follow neighbouring Main Street back towards Downtown to discover side streets adorned with murals and microbreweries such as Electric Bicycle Brewing ([electricbicyclebrewing.com](http://electricbicyclebrewing.com)).

#### Dive into nature in North Vancouver

Take a 12-minute journey on the SeaBus from Downtown Vancouver to the North Shore and spend time exploring The Shipyards District ([theshipyards.com](http://theshipyards.com)), a lively waterfront precinct filled with food trucks, craft breweries and boutique stores. Chat with local artisans, enjoy live music and soak up the community vibes.

North Vancouver's rugged wilderness is also within easy reach with dozens of hiking trails leading you to serene spots to practise some soul-soothing forest bathing. For a sky-high thrill, zipline above Grouse Mountain's lofty canopy ([grousemountain.com](http://grousemountain.com)), catching sweeping views of Vancouver and the surrounding peaks as you glide over the treetops.

#### Eat like a locavore

Join Vancouver Foodie Tours ([foodietours.ca](http://foodietours.ca)) for a two-hour tasting of British Columbia's bounty at the Granville Island Public Market ([granvilleisland.com](http://granvilleisland.com)), where bustling stalls

offer artisanal cheeses, fragrant herbs and ripe wild berries. Sample everything from freshly pressed apple cider to spiced pumpkin loaf.

#### Take a Whistler-stop tour

The 120-odd-kilometre Sea-to-Sky road trip from Vancouver to Whistler starts with road-hugging cliffs before climbing into dramatic alpine terrain. Feel the mist on your skin at Shannon Falls, glide 880 metres over Howe Sound on the Sea to Sky Gondola or take the 5.5-kilometre Tantalus View Trail for glacier-topped vistas.

In Whistler, the great outdoors beckon – mountain biking, hiking, canoeing and ziplining are all on your doorstep – and there are insights into the region's history to be found, too. Visit the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre ([slcc.ca](http://slcc.ca)) to see

the hand-carved canoes and immersive displays of Indigenous art, traditions and stories.

### ✈️ Vancouver to Whitehorse 2.5-hour flight

**On cool and clear September days the trails and rivers of the Yukon are yours to explore. By night, the aurora shimmers over the art-filled streets of Whitehorse, the adventure-loving capital of Canada's westernmost territory.**

#### Feel the spirit of the north

Sitting snugly along the Yukon River, Whitehorse has streets flanked by mountains and wide-open skies that change colour with the day's journey.

Locals in knitted tuques and hiking boots gather at cafés and roasters such as Midnight Sun ([midnightsuncoffeeroasters.com](http://midnightsuncoffeeroasters.com)) and streets double as canvases, brightened by murals that weave traditional stories into the urban landscape. Winding along the waterway through pine and spruce forest, the 15.5-kilometre Yukon River Loop trail provides scenic routes for a leisurely hike towards the cliffs of Miles Canyon.

Artists at Yukon Artists at Work ([yaaw.com](http://yaaw.com)) bring the wilderness indoors, crafting pieces inspired by the raven-filled forests, expansive tundra and clear northern skies. Members love sharing their skills with the community – visitors are invited to watch the artists and take part in workshops.

When evening arrives, drive out to Eclipse Nordic Hot Springs

([eclipsenordichotsprings.ca](http://eclipsenordichotsprings.ca)) to soak in mineral-rich pools as you gaze up at the wonder of the Northern Lights. Venture to more remote spots on a private tour with Epic North ([epic-north.com](http://epic-north.com)) and roast marshmallows by the fire as the green, blue and red hues of the aurora flicker above.

#### Live the stories of the land

This recreation of an Indigenous village allows visitors to experience the traditional ways of the Southern Tutchone. Wander through earth lodges built using ancient methods, guided by interpreters who share insights on hunting techniques, tools crafted from bone and

stone, and a profound connection with the land.

#### Bask in Kluane's beauty

Head 90 minutes further west along the Alaska Highway to reach Kluane National Park. This UNESCO World Heritage site, home to expansive ice fields and Canada's highest peak, Mount Logan, showcases the Yukon's vast countryside.

Book a day tour with Arctic Range Adventure ([arcticrange.com](http://arcticrange.com)) to visit spots like Kathleen Lake, its deep blue waters mirroring surrounding peaks, and Rock Glacier, where a short hike is rewarded with sweeping views of boreal forest and lakes. The Da Kú Culture Centre ([dakuculturalcentre.ca](http://dakuculturalcentre.ca)) in Haines Junction honours the Aishihik and Champagne First Nations people with exhibits dedicated to language, art and traditions.

**This is one of the world's great train rides. On the three-day Rainforest to Gold Rush journey across Canada's west, you'll only travel by day, which means you won't miss a single moment of spectacular scenery.**

Through glass-dome train windows and from the outdoor viewing platform, watch as Vancouver's coastal rainforests give way to glacial lakes, steep gorges and the sweeping majesty of the Canadian Rockies. Along the route, your onboard hosts share tales of the region's renowned past, intermittently alerting passengers to wildlife – a bear wandering near the tracks or an eagle soaring above.

Each GoldLeaf Service coach is its own fine-dining experience on wheels. Regionally inspired meals mirror the surroundings, with the culinary team plating up

Pacific fish, Alberta's famed beef and fresh herbs.

Breakfast options might include fluffy buttermilk pancakes layered with local honey and fruit from the Okanagan Valley, while lunch could feature farm-fresh Fraser Valley chicken or Lois Lake steelhead trout.

The three-day journey is studded with memorable moments – hugging the edge of Seton Lake to offer views of the turquoise waters; passing over Deep Creek Bridge, suspended high above thickly forested valleys. As the train approaches the grand Mount Robson, the

clouds of the mountain's own weather system shift around the jagged, nearly 4000-metre-high peak – the highest in the region. Along the way, you will disembark to spend your nights in hotels and experience the mountain resort of Whistler and the historic Gold Rush town of Quesnel along the Fraser River.

Autumn colours linger as you arrive at the gateway to Jasper National Park. There are remote trails to be hiked, pristine lakes for paddling and some of Canada's darkest skies – just the place for stargazing as you reflect on the wonders you've seen.

# ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

